

Week 2: The Why and How of Generosity and Giving

- **WELCOME AND REVIEW (Treasure Principle Chapters 1-2)**

- What stood out to you from the reading?
 - "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." Jim Elliott
 - "It cost him everything he owned, but it gained him everything that mattered." Alcorn
 - "God expects us to act out of enlightened self-interest." Alcorn
 - "Present joy comes from anticipating future joy." Alcorn
 - "You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead." Alcorn
 - "God owns everything. I'm his money manager." Alcorn
 - "The cheerfulness often comes during and after the act of obedience, not before it." Alcorn
 - "[God's] grace is the action; our giving is the reaction." Alcorn
 - "Before anything else, giving is an act of worship." Alcorn

- **DISCUSS – SMALL GROUPS**

- Break Into small groups and discuss these two questions:
- What purchases have you made in the last couple of months which reflect an ownership attitude instead of a stewardship attitude (ones before which you didn't consult the Owner)?
- How do you plan to specifically change your approach to these types of decisions? (Be specific and practical here, guys.)

- **The History of Generosity**

- God Required the Firstfruits....the first of every 10 as an offering back to Him. He called, rescued, and blessed the people of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and required they acknowledge His lordship through the Law, which included a very strict tithe system where a 10th of everything was to be given back to the Lord.
- Leviticus 27:30,32 Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. ³² And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD.
- Deuteronomy 16:17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.
- In addition, there were several other types of offerings the Lord required for various circumstances...
- **Deuteronomy 12:6** and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.
- Like with every other part of the Law, the people of God failed to live up to the giving requirements, and fell under the judgment of God along with all of the other peoples of the world.
- A New Covenant : Matthew 5
 - As we'll see in this passage, Jesus, in NO case, lowered the standard of the law, but in ALL cases took it from a requirement of external obedience to a requirement for obedience **plus** pure motive.
 - Christ Came to Fulfill the Law, and establish a NEW COVENANT of Grace with "anyone who calls upon His name..."
 - In establishing a new covenant, here's how Jesus "amended" the old covenant...
 - "Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is

accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven...

- ²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother^[c] will be liable to judgment;
 - ²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
 - ³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic,^[h] let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.
 - ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...
 - Jesus, in NO case, lowered the standard of the law, but in all cases took it from a requirement of external obedience to a requirement for obedience plus pure motive.
 - Jesus made demands on us which we, in our own strength could NEVER live up to.
 - The same is true of his demands on our money.
- What does this discussion teach us about God?
 - What does this discussion reveal to you about yourself?

- **The Heart of Generosity**

- The generous heart is, simply, the heart that desires to use all resources God has provided to give God all the glory He deserves.
- Mt 19: 21 - Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”
- Being a Cheerful giver
 - **2 Corinthians 9:6-8** “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.”
 - **1 Chronicles 29:9** “Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart, and King David also rejoiced”
 - **Acts 5** They weren’t punished for not giving enough...generosity isn’t about how much, it’s about a heart that is abandoned to God. They contrived in their hearts to deceive the Holy Spirit. They were looking for recognition.

- **The Recipients of Generosity**

- Generosity to the Church
 - Luke 21:1-4 Widow’s Mite
 - 2 Cor 11:9 “brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need”
 - Philippians 4:18 “I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent...a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.”
- Generosity to the Needy
 - Acts 4:32-36 “There was not a needy person among them for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold...and it was distributed to each as any had need”
 - Acts 6 – Distribution to the widows

- How can we grow in having a willing heart to give to the church and the needy?

- **DISCUSS – SMALL GROUPS**

- Review the History of Generosity together...what stands out and provokes you?
- How have you previously thought about generosity?
- How do you think God would want you to specifically change as relates to generosity to the church? To the needy?
- What kind of accountability can the guys in the group provide to help you grow in generosity?
- Prayer
 - Look at the assignment for this week and pray for one another to have grace to honestly and faithfully respond to it.
 - Confess any lack of a cheerful and willing generosity and pray for one another.

- **ASSIGNMENTS:**

1) Read Chapters 3-4 of The Treasure Principle

2) Prayerfully evaluate your Generosity to the Church:

- What Percentage of your Gross Income did you give to the church last year?

- Where was your heart as it related to giving to the church on a scale of 1-10?

Begrudging

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Cheerful/Willing

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- Why?

- What did God use to help you to be generous to the church last year?

- What is ONE specific way you would like to grow as relates to generosity to the church?

3) Prayerfully Evaluate your Generosity to the Needy:

- How much did you give to the needy last year?

- Where was your heart as it related to giving to the needy on a scale of 1-10?

Begrudging

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Cheerful/Willing

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- Why?

- What is ONE specific way you would like to grow as relates to generosity to the church?

- What has God used to help you to be generous to the needy this year?

4) Write Down a prayer request in this area to share with your group.

5) List some practical and spiritual things that proved to be hurdles to giving last year.
