



Generosity

The Paradox of Generosity

Discussion Questions:

1) This week we began a sermon series on generosity. We started by defining the word, “generosity.” *Generosity is an attitude expressed through the action of giving to God and others.*

What are your thoughts on this definition?

How important do you think generosity is?

Do you think it's important to God that you become more generous?

2) When the Bible talks about generosity, it often focuses on our hearts. It emphasizes openly giving our time, talents, or treasure. **Deuteronomy 15:10 Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this, the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.** Take a moment to process this verse as a group. Why do you think it is important to God that your heart is in the right place as you give?

Now, take a moment to read and discuss this similar verse. **2 Corinthians 9:7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.** Again, this verse focuses on our hearts as we give. Why do you think God loves a cheerful giver?

3) One way we can become more generous is by recognizing its origin. We can become more generous as we see how generous God has been to us. Take a moment to discuss each of these verses that describe God's generosity. **1 Timothy 1:14 Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus.**

3) Continued: Romans 8:31-32 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

I know the word used here is gracious, but the root word in Greek is the word for generous. So, this verse says we can be encouraged as we examine how generous God has been, knowing He will generously give us everything we need. Is this hard for you to believe?

2 Corinthians 8:9 You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty He could make you rich.

This verse speaks specifically of the generosity of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave up all things to become a man and again lay down everything, in fact - life itself, for us. That level of generosity is breathtaking. Discuss this together as a group. What does it mean when it says His poverty makes you rich?

How does it affect you to take time and focus on the generosity of God? Tell the story of a time when you felt God was incredibly generous to you personally.

4) As you begin studying the Bible on the topic of generosity, it becomes immediately apparent that there is a paradox of generosity. Being generous means to give; when we give things away, logic dictates that we should have less. But the Bible consistently teaches the more we give, the more we receive. For example, Jesus said **Luke 6:38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. Take a moment to discuss this together.**

We do not need scientific studies to help us believe what Jesus says. But there are an infinite number of studies that directly back up the words of Jesus. I'll quote now from a book that summarizes the studies. *"For people who want to be happy, to enjoy health, to lead purposeful lives, which we assume includes nearly everyone, this paradox of generosity is important to understand. It tells us that we ought not work to acquire, accumulate, save, grasp, keep, and spend for ourselves. Instead, we need to understand the paradox of generosity. We need to learn to share our resources generously with others. Then, we will likely find ourselves happier, healthier, and more purposeful in life. The data examined here shows that this is not simply a nice idea, but a scientific fact."*

What are your thoughts on this quote?

5) Take a moment to summarize your thoughts on generosity. What would the world be like if people were more generous with their time and resources? Do you want to be a generous person? Would you be willing to pray that God will give you more opportunities to be generous? What will you do this week in an attempt to be more generous?