
Series: Building for Tomorrow Understanding Genuine Generosity

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (NIV)

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ²Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. ⁵And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. ⁶So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

1. Generosity has nothing to do with how much you have.

v. 2 "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity."

- Generosity measures the capacity of the heart, not the wallet.
- Generosity is not dependant on our circumstances.

2. Generosity has nothing to do with obligation or compulsion.

v. 3-4 "For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints."

- When we are truly generous, we don't have to give, we get to give.
- Giving over and above our ability activates the blessing of God.

Psalms 112:5 (NIV)

Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice.

3. Generosity has always been on the heart of God.

v. 5 "And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will."

- We learn generosity by first giving ourselves to God.
- We practice generosity by giving ourselves to others.

Proverbs 11:24-25 (NLT)

It is possible to give freely and become more wealthy, but those who are stingy will lose everything. The generous prosper and are satisfied; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

4. Generosity takes giving to a completely new level.

v. 7 "But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

- God is always looking for our best, even when it comes to giving.
- The more we practice giving, the better we become.

Leviticus 19:9-10 (NIV)

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the Lord your God.

5. Generosity gives us a taste of what it is like to be Jesus.

v. 9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

- When we practice generosity, we look more like Jesus.
- We can never out give God.

Matthew 10:8 (MsgB)

Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

Generosity moves our focus from ourselves to God's Kingdom and allows us to be His instruments to bless others in ways we never imagined.