



Believe:
Generosity Passages Every
Pastor Should Know



This document is not intended to be a lexicon of all the times money or giving is mentioned in Scripture. It is intended to highlight several passages that address issues that most church leaders will encounter. Those leading the generosity effort need to be well-versed on the Biblical help provided about money.

Spend time reading each story and taking note of the different personal and corporate generosity principles that can help form your behavior and action. Many seasoned church leaders will be familiar with these stories, however, spend time looking for new insight. Pray for a heart of grace and faith, and seek new potential for the church and believers. Feel free to reflect upon these passages as you continue to craft your Generosity Theology.

Personal Giving and Faith Intersect

Genesis 4: Cain and Abel

From the first book of the Bible and only four chapters deep we find generosity and faith connecting. It is a part of human existence to seek to express and experience a faith relationship with God via our resources. Generosity and giving are long time practices and desires. This passage not only teaches us how timeless the discipline of giving is, but it also reveals that God speaks to us, leads us, and has a plan for our giving. We have the opportunity to walk in His favor or disfavor.

However, it is extremely important to note that God extended both clarity and grace. Cain knew what to do and chose not to do it. God gave him a chance at redemption, but he chose to walk the other way. We all need generosity. We will all fail at it. God will make both the path and grace available to us.

Exodus 32: Golden Calves

This story is powerful because it reveals the personal desire to use resources for a more secure connection with God. No one created a campaign to lead the people to be generous. They were in a life situation in which they felt insecure so they willingly sacrificed what resources they had to seek the favor of a god. Only it was the wrong god. Their leader, Aaron, joined in the sin and misled them. The Israelites had just experienced many miracles of God. They were certainly both tired and uncertain of their future. In reading Exodus 31, one finds that God had a plan for these resources. He desired their use in constructing the Tent of Meeting which would be used to increase His people's connection with Him. God had a different plan for their resources, He had trained the leaders, and He provided instruction. Godly generosity was possible, just not chosen.

Proverbs 11: Lifestyle of Giving

This chapter contains multiple practical life applications related to our resources. It addresses topics like ethics in the workplace (v. 1), the powerless nature of riches to secure eternity (v. 4, 18), what causes a city to experience prosperity (v. 11), the dangers of putting up security for another (v. 15), how wealth can be gained wrongly (v. 16), the rewards of giving freely (v. 24-25), blessings upon careers (v. 26), and the dangers of trusting money (v. 28).

Giving Gone Wrong

Acts 5: Ananias and Sapphira

This is a very sad story to read. It also reveals the work of both the Holy Spirit and Satan in regards to generosity. God had clearly spoken to Ananias and Sapphira about what to do with their resources. They decided not to obey God and then to lie about it. This is a case where the amount of giving really does matter. Complete surrender and trust is what God is after.

1 Samuel 13, 15: Saul

This is a story of getting both the amount and the timing of a gift wrong. Saul was instructed first to wait for Samuel to arrive before a sacrifice was made. He feared losing the loyalty of his men, so he offered the sacrifice without Samuel being present. Then he was instructed to take no plunder from a future victory. He took the best of the plunder and destroyed the rest. His intentions were to make a sacrifice of the best of the plunder. Saul gave two different times. God did not want a gift from Saul, nor did he want it at that time. This wrong sacrifice cost him his kingship and destiny. God speaks clearly to us about generosity. The amount is not necessarily what he is after.

Building Campaigns

Exodus 31, 36: Constructing the Tent of Meeting

This is the story of God's instructions to construct the Tent of Meeting. God wanted His people to have a place to meet with Him. There is quite an interlude of activities between Exodus 31 and 36. Giving doesn't go so well at first. Repentance and prayer is required. Then generosity creates a surplus.

1 Chronicles 28-29: Constructing the Temple

David receives instructions from God on the building of a permanent Temple for God's people to have a place to worship him. David leads well. He provides detailed guidance, then he is the first to give of his own resources. The

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leadership follow along with the people. This was a big project. David encourages the leaders to remain faithful, overcome discouragement, and see it through.

2 Chronicles 24: Restoring the Temple

The Temple had fallen under great disrepair and needed restoration. The leaders were instructed to go and collect an offering. They chose not to. There are many reasons church leaders shrink back from providing the opportunity for God's people to be generous. The king stepped forward to provide the needed leadership. Both the leaders and people were pleased. They gave gladly. The chest was filled and emptied repeatedly.

Haggai 1, Ezra 5: Rebuilding the Temple

The people knew that God's house was needing to be rebuilt. However, one excuse after another was found for not making it a priority. The resources were not the problem. However, prioritizing the resources towards generosity was. God had begun to withhold his favor upon the businesses which caused even more reasons to not press ahead with the rebuilding of the Temple. God's prophet steps to the forefront and leads the effort.

Nehemiah 1: Rebuilding the Wall

This project begins with a bit of bad news that breaks Nehemiah's heart. He enters a season of prayer and fasting. Then he takes great personal risks to see that the mission is accomplished. Along the way he encounters many reasons to experience danger and quit. Nehemiah presses forward with daring faith watching God provide and deliver along the way. God leverages resources from foreign kings and His people. Never underestimate what God will do when your heart aligns with his mission.

Generous Churches

2 Corinthians 8-9: Macedonia and Greece Churches

Romans 15

There is a need and God's people rise up. Personal poverty and distance to the need are both overcome. The church's leadership organizes a giving effort, collects, accounts, and distributes. There is great teaching about how God works when we all come together. His personal and corporate provision can not be measured this side of heaven. These two chapters contain challenge, teaching, encouragement, and promise.

Philippians 4: Philippi Gives To Paul

The church in Philippi had adopted Paul on his missionary journeys. They gave to Paul not just once, but repeatedly. They were a highly invested congregation in a missionary serving outside their local context.

1 Corinthians 16: Corinth

Paul instructed this church to be diligent in their giving discipline. He asked them to be prioritized in their giving, to be proportionate in their giving, and to be planned in advance in their giving. The need was great and one offering was not going to be enough. This instructs toward a great personal giving system. There is also instruction to the leaders in caring for the gifts.

3 John 1: Generosity To Traveling Ministers

The ancient church had cause to be generous on many fronts. They had needs to support both local ministries, global needs, and missionaries. The church must have a plan to be partners with God's kingdom work on many fronts.

Lifestyle Generosity

Exodus 34: It Is For All, All Year Long

This chapter provides a glimpse into how important generosity is to God. It is hard-wired into the giving of the covenant with God's people. A few different opportunities are mentioned. The giving of First Fruits is mentioned multiple times. Three times a year people are to bring offerings before the Lord. We are to stop what we are doing and make an offering, even if it prohibits us from earning more in that moment. No one is to come empty handed before the Lord. Everyone can enjoy the opportunity and promises of generosity. It is not reserved for the wealthy or those that are debt free.

Tithing

Genesis 14, 28: Abraham and Jacob Tithe *Hebrews 7:2*

Giving one tenth of personal possessions is a long-standing principle in Scripture. In this instance it was definitely modeled and taught in Abraham's family. The principle of tithing is a confirmation of trust in who owns and provides personal resources. The believer's trust is in the Provider, not the resources themselves.

Malachi 3: The Purpose and Power of Tithing

This passage reminds believers who own resources and that the tithe is holy to the Lord. It is far more full of promise than pain. Unfortunately, more weight is often given to verse 8 than 10 and those after it following. Churches can fault when leaning on the law and the church budget needs to promote tithing. Tithing is a personal promise and trust opportunity for each believer.

Matthew 23:23: Jesus And Tithing

Jesus affirms and encourages tithing. He also puts it in proper perspective of the high calling to live generously in other ways like justice, mercy, and faith. Giving money does not replace or overcome sins of lack of generosity in our personal relationships. Treating people with a gracious and giving spirit is just as important. Giving is not limited to money. We can give with our words, time, energy, prayers, and heart just to mention a few.

Non-Cash Gifts

Acts 2, 4: Early Church

One of the fruits of the first church was generosity. No one considered their possessions as their own. People shared and gave freely. No needs were found. It specifically refers to selling possessions and property to meet the needs of the church body. No campaign was instituted. People were moved by God and gave freely.

Unstoppable Generosity

Exodus 25, 35, 36: God Moves And People Are Willing

God supplies for the portable church! These three chapters repeat some important themes. Everyone whose heart was prompted was willing to bring gifts. It includes all men and women as well as all kinds of gifts. These offerings are described as "free will" which is different than "first fruits." These offerings were repeated day after day to an overflowing measure. The leadership actually asked the people to quit being so generous.

Giving to the Poor

Ruth 2: Boaz

God had blessed Boaz with business success. Widows, Ruth and Naomi, are led by God to this land of plenty from their land of famine. God preps Boaz's heart to provide for Naomi. Ruth is allowed to not only pick up what was left

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over in the fields, but was invited to enjoy many resources alongside of Boaz's workers. God blesses people with success, leads them to needs, and provides the opportunity for them to pass on the blessing.

Proverbs 19:17: Rewards Of Helping The Poor

This verse reveals that when people help the poor, they are actually serving the Lord and He will reward them. It is a glimpse into a future teaching of Jesus in Matthew 25 where one learns that when giving to the least you are actually giving to the Lord.

Wealth and Poverty

1 Samuel 2:7: God Sends Both

Neither wealth nor poverty determine someone's level of devotion to God. God is in charge of sending both wealth and poverty. As a matter of fact, most lives will experience seasons of both surplus and needs. Money comes and money goes. It should not be trusted in. God alone provides.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18: God Provides Careers

It is wrong to think that people provide for themselves. God gives talent, experience, and opportunity. He causes us to be hired and allows us to be fired. Business can both be blessed and cursed.

Blessed Career

Deuteronomy 28: Promise Blessing on Business

God desires to bless all that His people put their hands to. God is a God who worked during His six day work week activity. Then He took a Sabbath for rest, obedience, and blessing. Deuteronomy 28 details how God is willing to pile on the blessings when His people will live by His principles at work, home, and church. Blessings are promised to families, business activities, and travel plans. It doesn't matter whether you dwell in the country or city or have enemies plotting your harm, protection and prosperity are secure in God's principles.

Spiritual Gift

Romans 12:8: Gift of Giving

While all are called to be generous, to some God gives the gift of giving. This gift needs to be acknowledge and disciplined. These people are always looking for opportunities to express their gift.