

Theme: As those who are cared for and blessed by God, we should develop a heart that is generous towards others in thought and action, willing to help in whatever way we can.

I. Intro - Ebenezer Scrooge

- A. Scrooge is the stereotype of someone who is stingy
- B. He is a sad, mean, shrunken soul when we meet him
- C. Past experiences and choices made him stingy rather than generous - and a dream changes him
- D. What is generosity? Why is it important? How do we grow generous?

II. The Importance of Generosity

- A. The results of generosity and stinginess
 - 1. Two approaches contrasted: generosity & stinginess
One man **gives freely**, yet gains even more; another **withholds unduly**, but comes to poverty. ²⁵ A **generous** man will prosper; he who **refreshes others** will himself be refreshed. ²⁶ People curse the man who **hoards grain**, but blessing crowns him who is **willing to sell**. Proverbs 11:24–26
 - a. Gives freely, generous, refreshes others, willing to sell - all point a generous person who looks to help and serve others
 - b. Withholds unduly, hoards grain - both point to a stingy person who only looks to care for themselves

- 2. These two approaches lead to two different results
One man gives freely, yet **gains even more**; another withholds unduly, but comes to **poverty**. ²⁵ A **generous man will prosper**; he who refreshes others **will himself be refreshed**. ²⁶ People **curse** the man who hoards grain, but **blessing** crowns him who is willing to sell. Proverbs 11:24–26
 - a. The generous gain more, prosper, are refreshed, and blessed - that is an abundant life!
 - b. The stingy receive poverty and cursing - that is a sparse life indeed!
 - c. The difference is in whether they are growing generous or shrinking into stinginess.

- B. This is a very common teaching in Scripture
Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Psa 112:5

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:38
 - 1. Generosity leads to a good result
 - 2. The measure we use will be returned to us - so be generous, not stingy!
 - 3. It is critical for us to understand and remind ourselves of this principle, for our world often tells us to be stingy - look out for number 1, I got mine now you get yours, etc. But this leads to a result of poverty of spirit and chokes the richness out of life.
 - 4. See many other verses in the welcome book and meditate on them until your mind is renewed and your spirit begins to grow generous!

III. LifeHack: Growing Generous

A. Grow generous with money and possessions

One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. Proverbs 11:24

A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor. Proverbs 22:9

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. ¹ John 3:17–18

1. All these texts speak about sharing money and possessions with others, especially those in need
2. In these texts, generosity is specifically being willing to share material possessions with others.
3. This shows that generosity is the opposite of greed and coveting.
4. Rather than being consumed with a desire for what others possess, a generous person is content and willing to share with others.
5. The love of God experienced by us must make us generous toward others.

B. Grow generous with time and talents by serving others

If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. ⁵ If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it. Exodus 23:4–5

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹ Tim 6:18

1. These verses show that generosity is more than sharing our money and possessions with others; it includes giving of our time to serve others - even our enemies!
2. A generous person is someone who is willing to serve others with their time and talents.
3. A generous spirit willing to serve others must be cultivated for our culture encourages consumerism rather than service.
4. A desire to serve, whether in the church, family, or with others is an essential part of a rich, blessed life.

C. Grow generous in our attitude and spirit

A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25

He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished. Proverbs 17:5

1. Generosity begins internally; it arises from a spirit that desires to refresh others in word and deed.
2. A stingy spirit is mocking towards others, looking for reasons to criticize them and gloating over their difficulties rather than praying and looking for ways to help.
3. There are many today who are mocking and cruel to those with whom they disagree. This is not the spirit of Christ, and it leads to a narrow, hard existence rather than the flourishing God desires for us.
4. A generous spirit hopes, thinks, believes, and trusts the best about others while a critical, stingy spirit assumes, thinks, and speaks the worst about them. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ¹ Corinthians 13:7

D. Grow generous in society and work practices

People curse the man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell. Proverbs 11:26

When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Deuteronomy 24:19

1. The Proverb also deals with a generous spirit in business dealings. Generosity does not stop at the door of business.
2. God commanded his people to not attempt to extract the last drop in their business dealings, but to purposefully conduct their business in such a way that the poor aliens, orphans and widows could be cared for.
3. A generous spirit does not view business through a dog eat dog lens, but rather as a vocation giving us ways to serve others.
4. Any view of economics that is willing to cheat or crush the poor or that stacks the deck in favor of the rich will produce a hard, stingy society rather than a generous, flourishing community.

E. Grow generous in forgiveness

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

1. A generous spirit is not judgmental or condemning, but quick to forgive others, just as it has been forgiven.
2. This generosity is based directly on the Gospel. We are called to be generous with forgiveness in the same measure with which God has been generous in forgiving us.
3. A stingy spirit maximizes the sin of others and refuses to forgive while minimizing its own sin and assuming forgiveness for itself. This is not the way of the Gospel.

F. Grow generous in prayer

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6:27–28

1. A generous person loves others and is willing to pray for enemies who mistreat them.
2. A stingy person acts as a mirror, mistreating and hating those who mistreat them. A generous person acts like a glass allowing even enemies to see the Gospel and God's kind, generous grace through them.
3. One of the greatest ways to develop a generous spirit towards others is to regularly pray for them, speaking God's Word over them and asking God to work in their lives and bless them.

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Am I growing generous or shrinking into stinginess?
1. Am I generous with my money and possessions?
 2. Am I generous with my time and talents to serve others?
 3. Am I generous in my spirit and attitude towards others?
 4. Am I generous in my social habits and business practices?
 5. Am I generous in forgiving others?
 6. Am I generous in my prayers for others?

B. Growing Generous by the Gospel

1. The key to us becoming generous is found in the Gospel, not our own efforts.
2. When we consider God's Law, we all fall short of being generous as we should. ALL OF US.
3. The Gospel reminds us of God's generosity towards us, in spite of all our sin and unworthiness.
4. The Gospel reminds us that God is our inexhaustible source, so we are free to be generous with others, knowing God Himself will care for us.
5. The Gospel also provides power from the Spirit to change us from the inside - the way we think, desire, and ultimately act.

6. At the Table, we are reminded of the Gospel, feed upon the generous grace of God, and are empowered by the Spirit so that we might be generous to others out of gratitude.
7. Come to the Table of Generous Grace

Growing Generous

Proverbs 11:24-26

May 12, 2019

Communion

Psalm 67:1-3

Teaching keywords: Wisdom and Knowledge; character; money and finances; mercy and mercy ministry; good works; service

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, ² so that His ways may be known on earth, His salvation among all nations, so that ³ all the peoples of earth will praise God. Psalm 67:1-3

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