

Week 7: We believe generosity is a privilege: We get to give!

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Most of us would probably agree with Jesus (after all, who's going to argue with Jesus?), but most have a hard time actually living that out. Sure, everyone gives something somewhere, but is that what generosity looks like? Just a few random acts of giving throughout the year driven by guilt? Being generous isn't about being talked into or guilted into giving. Truly generous people understand that it's a privilege to give. It isn't something we have to do. It's something we get to do!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you consider yourself generous? Why or why not??
- 2) What are some reasons we hesitate to give to those in need even though we have more than we need? Why do you think so few people are truly generous?
- 3) When you think about being generous, what negative emotions does it stir? Why do you think you feel that way? What would it take for you to overcome those emotions?
- 4) What were you taught/modeled about giving as you were growing up? What (if any) Bible passages were used to support that teaching?
- 5) Read Acts 20:35. Is it difficult for you to believe that being blessed is ordered around giving rather than receiving? Why or why not?
- 6) Read Luke 12:16–21. How do you tell the difference between planning financially for the future in a healthy way and hoarding money for your security and consumption? Is there such a thing as being too generous?
- 7) Read 1 Corinthians 16:1–3. What is freeing about deciding for yourself what and where it is best to be generous? What is challenging about that kind of freedom?
- 8) What are some obstacles for you when it comes to giving more, saving more, and spending less? What can you do to overcome those obstacles?

- 9) Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. What can we learn (there's lots) about generosity from the Macedonian churches?
- 10) In 2 Cor. 8:4 (NIV), the Macedonian churches saw generosity as a privilege. Why do you think that was?
- 11) What do you think it means to "excel in the grace of giving" (2 Cor. 8:7)?
- 12) According to Paul, what makes a gift "acceptable" in the eyes of God (v.12)?
- 13) Paul's desire was for equality (v.13). What do you think he meant, and how does that fit with your current view of economics and giving?
- 14) How does the Gospel motivate us to be generous?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

What is one thing you can do this week to begin to trust God with your finances and to live as though everything you have belongs to him? How can this group support you?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Memorize Acts 20:35 - "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"