

GENEROSITY

Living
with Open
Hands



GENEROSITY

Christian generosity is an expression of worship through which followers of Jesus Christ recognize God's ownership, respond to his grace, and faithfully steward what he has entrusted to them.

We believe everything we have ultimately belongs to God. Our finances, possessions, time, abilities, opportunities, and relationships are gifts entrusted to us. We are stewards, and generosity is a posture of the heart. We learn to live with open hands because everything we hold has first been placed into our hands by a generous God.

God Is the Ultimate Giver

The foundation of Christian generosity is the generosity of God himself. God's generosity is ultimately demonstrated in Jesus Christ. We were sinners who could not save ourselves. God sent his Son. Jesus lived the perfect life we could never live, died on the cross for our sins, and rose from the dead so those who trust in him can receive forgiveness, reconciliation with God, new life on earth, and the hope of eternal life in Heaven.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.

John 3:16

God's generosity reveals his character. He is not a reluctant giver who gives only when compelled. His generosity flows from his love, grace, mercy, and goodness. The gospel shows us not only what God has given but what kind of God he is. We do not give in order to earn God's love. We give because we have already received God's grace.



GENEROSITY EXPLAINED

Generosity is the willing and joyful sharing of what God has entrusted to us for the good of others and the advancement of God's purposes. Financial giving is an important expression of generosity, but generosity is broader than money. We can be generous with our:

- Finances
- Abilities and gifts
- Attention and encouragement
- Time
- Homes and possessions
- Hospitality and service

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Psalm 24:1

Because everything belongs to God, generosity is not primarily about giving away what is ours. It is about faithfully managing what God has placed in our hands.

Biblical Basis for Generosity

Scripture consistently calls God's people to live generously. Two passages which help us understand biblical generosity are these:

- "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35
- "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

Biblical generosity is not motivated by guilt, pressure, or the desire to impress others. It flows from a heart which has been changed by God's grace.

Generosity and Stewardship

The Bible teaches us to think of ourselves as stewards. A steward manages something belonging to someone else. God has entrusted resources to us, and we are responsible for how we use them.

Stewardship asks how faithfully we manage what God has entrusted to us. Generosity asks how willingly we use what God has entrusted to us for the good of others and the purposes of God.

Generosity and the Heart

- “You cannot serve God and money.” Matthew 6:24
- “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21

Jesus connected our treasure with our hearts. Money can become a source of security. Possessions can become a source of identity. Accumulation can become a substitute for trusting God. The issue is not simply how much we possess. The issue is whether our possessions possess us. Generosity helps us remember money is a tool to be stewarded, not a master to be served.

“You can’t take it with you—but you can send it on ahead.”

– Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*

Temporary Treasure and Eternal Treasure

Everything we accumulate on earth is temporary. Our possessions eventually disappear. Our houses will belong to someone else. Our bank accounts will eventually be closed. Our careers will eventually end.

But God’s kingdom is eternal. Jesus calls us to consider how we can use temporary resources in light of eternal purposes. When we give to gospel ministry, care for people in need, support missions, practice hospitality, or bless others in Christ’s name, we use temporary resources for purposes which can have eternal significance.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

Matthew 6:19-20

Generosity Creates Freedom and Joy

One of the gifts of generosity is freedom. The more tightly we hold onto our possessions, the more easily our possessions can begin to hold onto us. The desire to accumulate can be replaced by the joy of contributing. Instead of finding security in what we possess, we learn to trust the God who provides. Generosity brings joy as we use what God has given us to bless others. There is something deeply satisfying about using what God has given us to make a difference in someone else’s life. Generosity helps free us from the grip of possessions and allows us to experience the joy of blessing others.

Generosity Is Not Buying God's Blessing

Biblical generosity should never be confused with trying to purchase God's favor. We cannot manipulate God into giving us what we want, nor can we earn extra grace through giving. Our giving does not make God indebted to us.

Instead, generosity is a response to what God has already done. We give because we want to participate in the work God is doing. Christian generosity is therefore not a transaction in which we give something to God so he will give something back. It is a response of gratitude to the God who has already given himself to us.

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Giving is to Be Willing and Cheerful

Biblical generosity is not coerced. It is not produced by shame, pressure, or competition. God cares not only about what we give but about the heart with which we give. Christian generosity will also look different from person to person. God has entrusted different resources, opportunities, responsibilities, and circumstances to each person. Faithfulness is not measured by comparing our giving with someone else's.

Generosity Is More Than Money

Financial giving is an important expression of generosity, but it is not the whole picture. A generous life may include:

- Providing a meal for a family
- Welcoming someone into your home
- Mentoring a young person
- Serving in the church
- Encouraging someone who is struggling
- Giving your time when you are busy
- Using your skills to help others
- Sharing with someone in need

Generosity is a lifestyle, not merely a financial practice.

For Further Reading

Randy Alcorn's *The Treasure Principle* provides a helpful extended exploration of biblical stewardship, generosity, and living with an eternal perspective. We encourage reading the book for a fuller discussion of these themes.

Generosity and the Local Church

The New Testament teaches believers to participate together in meeting needs and advancing the gospel. The church is a spiritual family. We share life together, serve one another, care for one another, and work together to make disciples. Financial generosity helps provide the resources necessary for the ministry of the local church, including:

- Gospel ministry
- Support for partners around the world
- Children and student ministries
- Biblical teaching
- Care for people in need
- Community outreach

Giving to the church is one way believers participate in the ministry God has given his church.

Generosity and Our Children

One of the most important places we can model generosity is in our homes. Our children are watching how we think about money and possessions. They notice whether we are grateful or constantly dissatisfied and whether we regularly look for opportunities to bless others. Children learn generosity not primarily through lectures but through observation. We want our children to learn that possessions are gifts to steward, not things which determine our identity.

Most importantly, we want them to understand that generosity begins with God. We teach our children to give by helping them see the God who has given to them.



How Should We Approach Generosity?

Generosity should be approached with gratitude, faith, wisdom, joy, and open hands.

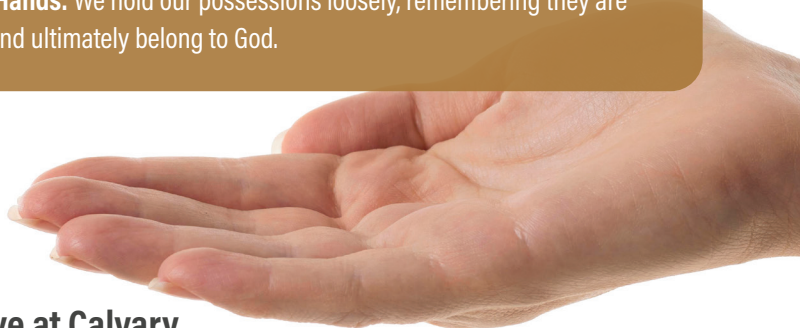
With Gratitude: We recognize everything we have ultimately comes from God.

With Faith: We trust God rather than placing our ultimate security in our resources.

With Wisdom: We work, plan, save, provide for our families, and manage our resources responsibly.

With Joy: We give willingly, recognizing the privilege of participating in God's purposes.

With Open Hands: We hold our possessions loosely, remembering they are temporary and ultimately belong to God.



Ways to Give at Calvary

We invite you to experience the joy of generosity as you steward the resources God has entrusted to you. If you would like to support the ministry and mission of Calvary, several giving options are available:

- **Online:** Make a one-time gift or set up recurring giving directly through our website.
- **First Fruits:** No fee ACH recurring giving.
- **In Person:** Place your gift in the giving boxes during Sunday services or drop it off at the church office during the week.
- **Stocks & IRAs:** Donate appreciated stock or make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA.
- **Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs):** Recommend a grant to Calvary through your existing fund.
- **Legacy Giving:** Name Calvary as a beneficiary in your estate planning or life insurance policy to support future generations.

**MORE
INFORMATION**



SUMMARY

- Generosity is a biblical expression of worship, stewardship, love, and trust.
- Everything we have ultimately belongs to God.
- We are stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us.
- God demonstrated ultimate generosity by giving his Son, Jesus Christ.
- We do not give to earn salvation or God's love; we give because we have received God's grace.
- Generosity reveals and shapes the condition of our hearts.
- Money and possessions are temporary, but God's purposes are eternal.
- We can use temporary resources to pursue eternal purposes.
- Biblical giving is to be willing, intentional, and cheerful.
- The local church is strengthened when believers generously use their resources for gospel ministry and the care of others.

Our Hope

Our hope is not in what we possess. Our hope is in Christ. Everything we have is temporary, but God's kingdom is eternal. Ultimately, generosity is not about losing what we have. It is about recognizing what we have been given. Because God has been so generous toward us, we can learn to live with open hands. Our prayer is the generosity of God would so transform our hearts that generosity would become not merely something we practice but something we are.

