

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Grace to Give

Pastor Stephen Hayes

Sunday May 13, 2018

Main Idea – It's good to be a generous person. Bible wisdom teaches that people who are generous are more happy, compassionate, blessed, and rewarded by God.

It's good to be generous

- The Book of Proverbs teaches much about giving; that giving is a wise thing to do.
- Generosity is a lifestyle; it is a way of living life. **Proverbs 11:24 – The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. (Message)**
- We want to practice the wisdom of a generous lifestyle. **Proverbs 4:7 – Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. (NKJV)**
- Those who have experienced life know the blessings that come from being generous.
- God gave generously to us first, so we – in turn – want to be generous to others.
- In Scripture
 - the word “believe” is used 272 times
 - the word “love” is used 371 times
 - the word “prayer” is used 714 times, and
 - the word “give” is used 2,161 times.

This likely tells us something about the relative importance of those activities.

- Medical science has discovered the positive physical and emotional benefits from being generous. God has designed us to benefit from giving to others.

Generous people are happy

- God will take care of you when you give to others.
- **Proverbs 11:25 – The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself. (NKJV)**
- **Proverbs 21: 25-26 – The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare. (NKJV)**
- Sometimes we stand in the way of our own blessings. God wants to bless us and bless others through us. If we do not have a mindset of generosity, God is not able to move blessings through us.

Generous people are compassionate

- Jesus is our best example of someone who first had compassion on others, and then helped them.
- When we have a generous mindset, we will notice things we would not have otherwise. **Proverbs 29:7 – The righteous considers the cause of the poor, but the wicked does not understand such knowledge. (NKJV)**
- If we are observant, we will see opportunities to be generous. Then, in our own times of need, we will be provided for. **Proverbs 21:13 – Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need. (NLT)**
- “Burning out shortens your life, but checking out lessens it.”
- “Doubt is putting your circumstances between you and God. Faith is putting God between you and your circumstances.”

Generous people are blessed

- God gives to those who give.
- By giving, we want to show God we are trustworthy stewards of what He has given us.
- **Proverbs 22:9 – He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. (NKJV)**
- **Proverbs 28:27 – He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses. (NKJV)**
- **Proverbs 3: 9-10 – Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine. (NKJV)**
- **Matthew 14: 13-21 and John 6: 1-14** describe how Jesus fed 5,000 people from the generosity of a boy who donated five loaves of bread and two fish.
- When we give God what we have, He will multiply it and do the rest.

Generous people are rewarded

- When we give, God will pay us back more than what we originally had.
- **Proverbs 19:17 – He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given. (NKJV)**
- **Revelation 22:12 – “Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” (NLT)**

Pray for the grace to be generous

- The Bible teaches it is wise to be generous.
- The desire to be generous is a blessing we receive from God by grace.
- Our motivation to give is that God has already been very generous to us.
- Pray for God's continued blessing of generosity.

Reflective Questions for Grace to Give

1. Wisdom is the awareness that comes from life's experiences. People who have wisdom know blessings come from giving away things. (This seems counterintuitive to the natural mindset.) How can it be that giving away things actually makes a person richer?
2. Pastor Stephen said generous people are more happy, compassionate, blessed, and rewarded. Which of those have you most recently experienced from an act of generosity?
3. Covenant Church works to be a church that practices generosity: both as individual members and as a collective body. What is accomplished when we give to others as individuals? What is accomplished when we give to others as a congregational group?

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