

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Radical Generosity
Pastor Stephen Hayes
September 3, 2017

Main Idea – Christian people who are led by faith are always ready and willing to serve others in need. This readiness and willingness is a gift of grace from God.

Motivated by our faith

- Faith doesn't ignore a problem, but it does deny the problem's place of influence in our lives.
- People who have faith are always ready and willing to serve.
- It is our faith that gives us the motivation to do what is right, and to help others in need.
- (It is our hope that as we help South Texas rebuild from Hurricane Harvey, people will have both their homes and their souls rebuilt.)
- We "preach" Jesus when we help others; not necessarily with our words only, but by our actions.
- "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." (C.S. Lewis from his paper "Is Theology Poetry?")

There is a grace for giving

- Radical Christians love more, and give more away, than do other types of radicals.
- This ability is a gift from God. It is by His grace we are able to do this.
- Oftentimes this grace is so strong that, when Christians themselves are in difficult situations, they want to give even more to others.
- **2 Corinthians 8: 1-7 – "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely giving, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. But as you abound in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us – see that you abound in this grace**

also.”

God loves a cheerful giver

- Because we have been given by grace the desire to help others, we respond cheerfully to this opportunity.
- One should only give if one can cheerfully do so.
- If one cannot cheerfully give, then one should likely not give at that time; but should seek God and wait for Him to give the grace to cheerfully do it.
- **2 Corinthians 9: 1-8 – “Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; for I know your willingness about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that as I said, you may be ready; lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”**

CHURCH

Step out in grace

- When presented with an opportunity to give, one should ask, “What has God graced me to give here? Is He encouraging me to give a certain thing?”
- In order to answer those types of internal questions, some Christians have found it helpful to take an inventory of their own lives - to identify places where they are committing resources that could better be reallocated to help others. Then, when opportunities arise to help others, they are instantly able to respond in grace.

Reflective Questions for Radical Generosity

1. **There are many people who give, and help others, in times of crisis. What is unique about a Christian who is generous by grace?**

- 2. Do you know someone who was (like the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8) in a very difficult situation, yet was generous to others? Was this person an example of someone who gave by grace?**
- 3. Why, do you suppose, God loves a cheerful giver? Why is cheerfulness an important part of the whole process?**
- 4. What are practical ways you might be able to rearrange your resources so you can be more prepared to help others when those opportunities arise?**

