

Date: December 15, 2019

Advent 3: Give More

Text: Proverbs

Title: Generosity

Big Idea: Our main goal with money and possessions should be to bless others.

- **THE PRIMACY OF GENEROSITY**

God intends money and possessions as tools to be used *to love God and love others*. Money provides us with the ability to love in unique ways, as we find in:

Proverbs 3:27-28, 14:21, 14:31, 21:26b

Discuss: Generosity, is the primary biblical principal in regards to our money and possessions. But what is generosity?

- **WHAT KEEPS US FROM BEING GENEROUS?**

We all have excuses for why we're not more generous. There are several reasons for this—a few things that systematically battle against generosity:

1. *We are Greedy*
2. *We are Selfish*
3. *We are Afraid*
4. *We are Entitled*

- **WHERE GENEROSITY BEGINS**

Where does this leave us? How can we overcome our posture toward money?

1. **Our aptitude for *greed* must be corrected with a heart of *contentment***

CONTENTMENT: In Christ, God's Abundance is Yours

Read 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; Ephesians 1:3, 11; and Philippians 4:11-13

2. **The answer to our *selfishness* is a focus on *relationship*.**

RELATIONSHIPS: People Are More Important than Money.

It's in relationship that we learn generosity: we learn not just to be *takers* but to be *givers*. And not just in a financial sense, but with our entire lives: our time, our talents, our treasures. Only when we prioritize relationships can we know about people's needs and lean in to meet them. Only in relationship can the walls of competition break down and we learn to be *for the other*.

3. **Our *fear* must be overcome with *trust*.**

TRUST: Regularly Offer God Chances to Provide in Abundance.

Read Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians 4:19, & Matthew 6:32-33

When we have a mentality of scarcity, we tend to grasp. When we trust in God's abundance, we tend to give. Proverbs confirms that as we give, God provides:

Proverbs 11:24a, 11:25, 19:17, 22:9, 28:27

The same idea applies with stinginess:

Proverbs 21:13

This is the sowing & reaping principle that Paul speaks to in **2 Corinthians 9:6-15**

When we step—with *trust* instead of *fear*—into the risk of generosity, we allow God to show up and meet our needs and bring himself glory!

4. **Our *entitlement* can only be corrected when we walk with *gratitude*.**

GRATITUDE: Be a Happy Conduit

Gratitude says “thank you” more than it says “I deserve”. It recognizes everything as grace, all of life as a gift from the Father—who gives us every good and perfect gift.

Gratitude recognizes God's *ownership*: everything belongs to Him, and we are merely stewards. Why? Because he made it all.

The correct question, therefore, to ask of all of our money and possessions is “God, how do you want me to use your money? Who should I love and bless with your stuff?”

Because this is exactly the attitude Christ took with us: **2 Corinthians 8:9** “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

One of Jesus' hidden beatitudes is found in **Acts 20:35**: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” To give more, then, we must ask God:

1. To replace our *Greed* with *Contentment*
2. To replace our *Selfishness* with *Relationship*
3. To replace our *Fear* with *Trust*
4. and To replace our *Entitlement* with *Gratitude*

These are postures that point our hearts towards God and make our stewardship—our wise handling of money—a delight to the Great Giver.