

WEEK 2 – REGULAR AND FREEWILL GIVING

MONDAY – Our generous God



James 1: 17 *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

The book of James in Chapter 1 reminds us that God is a generous God. All His gifts are good and perfect and He does not withhold anything from us, even His one and only Son, Jesus.

God is the author of generosity. Every good gift comes from God. God gives us all the things we need. The planet we live on makes that plain. Everything works perfectly for us to have air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat. Spring time and harvest follow exactly as they should. (*enduringword.com*)

God generously gives all these things. He wants us to learn from Him and practice generosity as He does.

The story of Zacchaeus, in Luke 19, is the story of a giver whose life was transformed. This is a story of a tax

collector moved by Jesus' call to come back to God's ways.

This is the story of someone who changes from "collector of money" to "giver of money". This, in a way, is a picture of redemption — as Zacchaeus rose above his habit of taking to a life of generous giving. (*biblestudytools.com*)

2 Corinthians 9: 7 *"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver."*



Paul challenges us to practice cheerful giving. Do we give out of a sense of loss and poverty or are we able to give generously with a sense of bounty as we trust God to use the seeds of love we sow?



PRAYER: Generous God, You have given Your all to reach Your people. I want to give as You have given. Teach me to be a joyful giver that others may thrive. AMEN

TUESDAY – Our generosity



1 John 3: 17 The Message *This is how we've come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed His life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves. If you see some brother or sister in need and have the means to do something about it but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God's love? It disappears. And you made it disappear.*

1 John offers us some very practical ways of showing our love towards God and those who share this earth with us. 2 Corinthians 9: 7 The Message reminds us “A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop.”

Right here on our doorstep is a community in need of support, in prayer, in action and in giving. Let us sow lavishly.

Supporting the giving towards the local church means that we can have a real impact on the lives of so many who need to experience the gospel. Remember the advice of James in chapter 2 “*For instance, you come upon an old friend*

dressed in rags and half-starved and say, “Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!” and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup—where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?” (The Message) Organised giving is the most effective way of sharing the wealth that God has blessed us with.



Let our giving be a joyful sacrifice to God, so that others may share in His bountiful love and may we consider living more simply so that others may simply live.



Generous God, You have blessed us with so much and with that comes a responsibility. Open my eyes to the plight of those who struggle daily that I may learn to be a generous and faithful giver. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Regular giving



1 Corinthians 16: 1-2 *Regarding the relief offering for poor Christians that is being collected, you get the same instructions I gave the churches in Galatia. Every Sunday each of you make an offering and put it in safekeeping. Be as generous as you can.*

Paul was clear, giving to support the work of the early church was not an option. He states clearly: Let each one of you: Who was supposed to give? EACH ONE. Paul wanted all to give. Every Christian should be a giver, because God is a giver (John 3: 16).

Lay something aside, storing up:

This has the idea of coming to church with your gift already prepared. In other words, you should seek God about your gift at home, and prepare it at home. This makes one seek the Lord more in their giving and helps them resist any manipulation to give. (enduringword.com)

Saving for the future is wise, putting something away for emergencies is good. But the Bible teaches us that it is futile to amass money in the belief that wealth can secure a good life.

Be as generous as you can. Take time to search your heart. Look around you – do you have a roof over your head? Be thankful. Do you eat every day? Give thanks. Do you have warm clothes for the winter? Be grateful! Do you see others who do not have these essentials? Giving is not something we only do when stirred by our emotions, giving is a commitment to God's work and is to be sustained for the long haul.



Gracious God, You who have supplied my needs, You who have given me the strength and opportunity to earn a living, You who care for all lives, help me to work wisely as I commit my giving so that Your church here on earth may minister effectively. AMEN

THURSDAY – Freewill giving



2 Corinthians 9: 1- 2 The willingness of the Corinthian Christians to give. *“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.”*

Paul was very concerned that giving be a matter of generosity and not a matter of grudging obligation. God Himself never gives out of an attitude of grudging obligation, and neither should we. To be *generous*, in the Biblical idea of the word, has more to do with our *attitude* in giving than with the *amount* that we give, so God wants a willing attitude from givers.

“When God gives grace, He does not reluctantly open a little finger and maintain a clenched fist full of gifts. I would tell you today that God’s hands are nail-pierced hands and they are wide open. This fountain of grace is always pouring itself out with no limitation on heaven’s side at all.” (Redpath)

Mark (12: 41-42) *Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.*

He saw how the people put money into the treasury: Jesus looks at us when we give and He notices how we give. As Jesus looks, He is more interested in *how* we give than in *how much* we give. In seeing *how* the people gave, Jesus wasn’t studying technique. He looks more at motive and heart.(enduringword.com)



Great and gracious God, let this be my prayer as I consider my giving to You

*“He Said, Freely, Freely You Have Received
Freely, Freely Give;
Go In My Name And, Because You Believe,
Others Will Know That I Live.” AMEN*

FRIDAY – Giving and growing



Philippians 2: 15-18 *Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.*

Not that I seek the gift, *but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account*. Paul wasn't so much interested in the gift on his own behalf, but in *the fruit that abounds to your account*. Their giving increased the fruit in their **account** before God. "It is not the actual gift put into Paul's hands which has brought him joy, but the giving and the meaning of that giving. It is the truest index to the abiding reality of his work." (Kennedy)

This reflects one of the most important principles regarding giving in the Scriptures: that we are

never the poorer for having given. God will never be our debtor, and we can never out-give God. (enduringword.com)

Giving of our means stretches us. It stretches our faith in God as our provider. It stretches our minds as we consider our budgets and how we can live more meaningfully. It stretches our hearts as we consider other's needs. It reminds us that everything we have is a gift from our gracious Father. During May consider how you may be a more intentional giver.



We give Thee but thine own
What e're the gift may be
All, that we have is Thine alone
A trust O Lord from Thee
To comfort and to bless
To find a balm for woe
To tend the lone and fatherless
This is our work below AMEN