

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES 301

# GENEROSITY

We're told the secret to happiness is more — more stuff, more spending, and more status.

But what if culture is wrong?

What if happiness isn't linked to our dollars but to our disciplines? What if the contentment, peace, and joy we crave could be cultivated not by getting more but by giving what we already have?

For the next few weeks, we want to talk about the spiritual discipline of generosity. Yes, it's the season of giving, but generosity was never meant to be limited to a holiday or special occasion. For followers of Jesus, it was a way of life. And for Jesus, it was the main mission of His life. He came to give us a gift we could never earn on our own.

Maybe you're reading this and don't feel like you have a lot to give; but generosity begins with our mentality, not our money.

We've talked about prayer, Bible study, worship, and fasting. We've looked at our routines and picked a fight with our flesh. Now, Elevation YTH, it's time for the ultimate heart-check discipline.

Do you own your stuff, or does your stuff own you?

Where are you storing up treasure? (Spoiler alert: That's where your heart is.)

Are you living with open hands or with a scarcity mindset?

Let's process this together!

It's gonna be better than good; it's gonna be life-changing if we allow the Holy Spirit to have His way!

## WEEK ONE

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 12

# HOW TO BE RICH THE RIGHT WAY

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

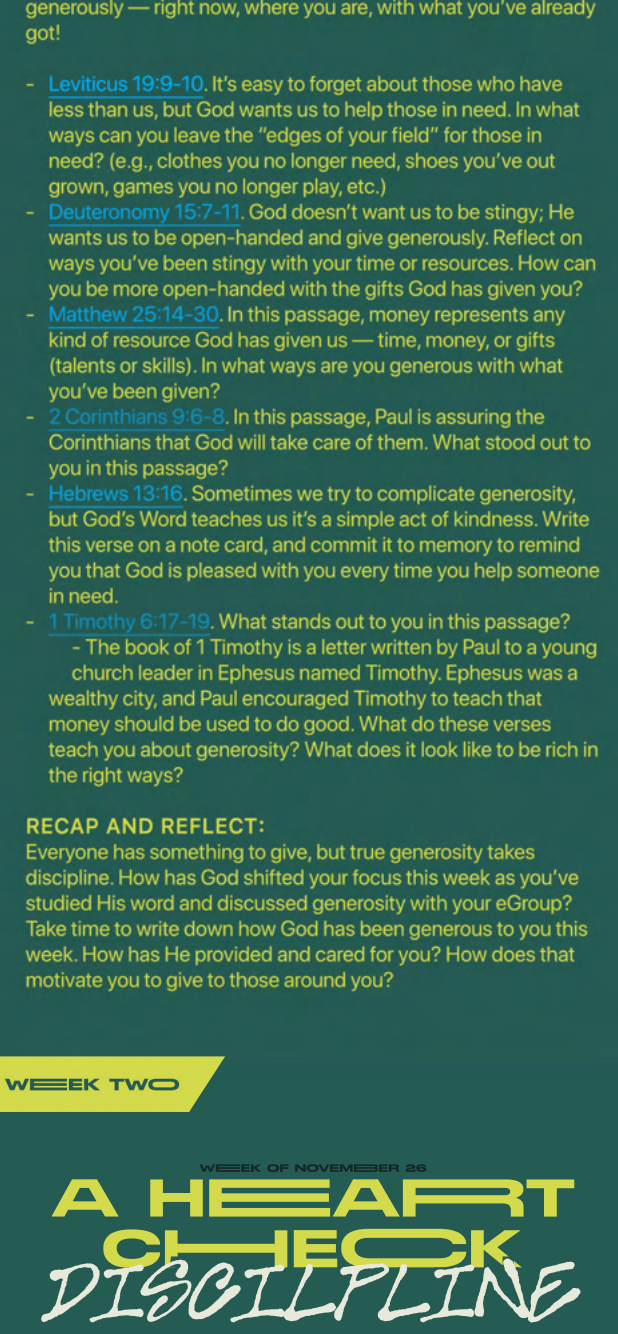
1 Timothy 6:17-19

## \*ACTIVITY

With your group seated in a circle, answer the "Would You Rather" questions together. Stand up or sit down based on your answer.

- Would you rather always lose or never play?
- Would you rather have a missing finger or an extra toe?
- Would you rather have to say everything on your mind or never speak again?
- Would you rather be three feet taller or three feet shorter?
- Would you rather be a dog named Viper or a cat named Fluffy?
- Would you rather be a giant hamster or a tiny rhino?
- Would you rather be born with an elephant trunk or a giraffe neck?
- Would you rather be athletic or smart?
- Would you rather give away everything you own or just your most prized possession?

Let's build on that last question. Over the next two weeks, we'll discuss the spiritual discipline of generosity. We'll discover that everyone has something to give, and the more we give away, the richer our lives will be!



## \*GROUP DISCUSSION

THINK IT THROUGH (AND TALK IT OUT):

- Generosity is the act of giving good things to others. When you hear the word generosity, what words, actions, or people come to your mind? (e.g., money, kindness, the name of someone who was kind to you, etc.)
  - Let's state the obvious: Nobody demonstrated generosity like Jesus! Read [Matthew 6:1-4](#). When Jesus says not to let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, He's teaching us to check our motives (or reasons) for giving. Think of a time you gave something to someone — what did you give and why? Why do we sometimes want others to see us being generous?
  - It's easier to do what's right when it gains us status or praise. But generosity isn't about the number of likes we get or who we can impress; it's about putting others' needs above our own. Read [Luke 10:25-29](#). Why did the Samaritan help the hurting man?
  - The priest and Levite treated the wounded man as a problem to avoid rather than a person to love. Is there a time you saw someone in need but didn't help them? What thoughts (excuses) did you have that kept you from helping? (e.g., fear, lack of understanding, time, etc.)
  - Jesus cares more about the condition of our hearts than the gifts we give. The Good Samaritan saw the hurt man and took pity on him. When you see someone in need, what are some emotions you feel, and how can those emotions move you to action?
  - Everyone has something to give! What are some ways you can show generosity this week? Don't forget, God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7), so don't just give; give with a good attitude!
- [Leviticus 19:9-10](#). It's easy to forget about those who have less than us, but God wants us to help those in need. In what ways can you leave the "edges of your field" for those in need? (e.g., clothes you no longer need, shoes you've outgrown, games you no longer play, etc.)
- [Deuteronomy 15:7-11](#). God doesn't want us to be stingy; He wants us to be open-handed and give generously. Reflect on ways you've been stingy with your time or resources. How can you be more open-handed with the gifts God has given you?
- [Matthew 25:14-30](#). In this passage, money represents any kind of resource God has given us — time, money, or gifts (talents or skills). In what ways are you generous with what you've been given?
- [2 Corinthians 9:6-8](#). In this passage, Paul is assuring the Corinthians that God will take care of them. What stood out to you in this passage?
- [Hebrews 13:16](#). Sometimes we try to complicate generosity, but God's Word teaches us it's a simple act of kindness. Write this verse on a note card, and commit it to memory to remind you that God is pleased with you every time you help someone in need.
- [1 Timothy 6:17-19](#). What stands out to you in this passage?
- The book of 1 Timothy is a letter written by Paul to a young church leader in Ephesus named Timothy. Ephesus was a wealthy city, and Paul encouraged Timothy to teach that money should be used to do good. What do these verses teach you about generosity? What does it look like to be rich in the right ways?

Everyone has something to give, but true generosity takes discipline. How has God shifted your focus this week as you've studied His word and discussed generosity with your eGroup? Take time to write down how God has been generous to you this week. How has He provided and cared for you? How does that motivate you to give to those around you?

## WEEK TWO

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 26

# A HEART CHECK DISCIPLINE

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Luke 12:34

## \*ACTIVITY

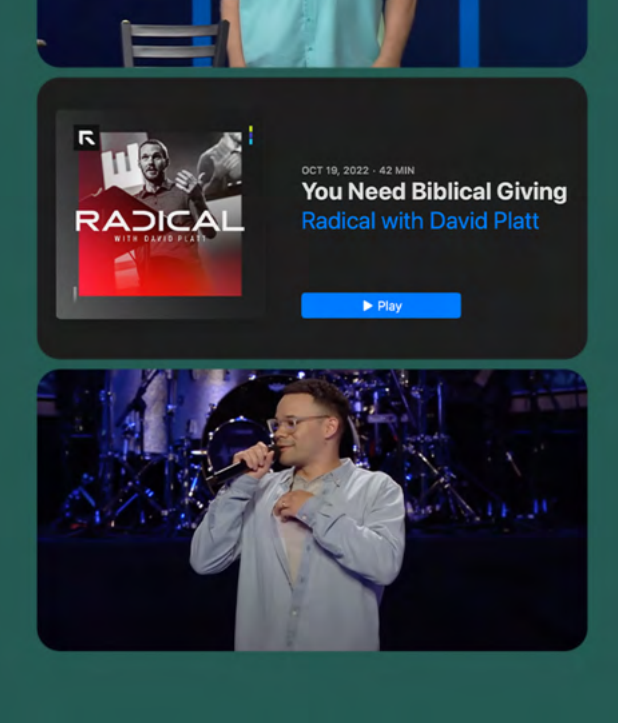
Before jumping into discussing God's Word, have fun doing the following activity with your eGroup!

Play a game of "Where Do You Stand?" Divide your group into teams of equal numbers. (If you have fewer than eight players, you can play as one team.) For each round, teams will race to line up according to the criteria given. Set a time limit for each round, and play as many rounds as time allows. To make it more challenging, do it without talking to each other.

Criteria suggestions:

- Shortest to tallest
- Smallest shoe size to biggest shoe size
- Shortest to longest hair

Today, we'll wrap up our discussion on the spiritual discipline of generosity. We'll talk about how trusting God with our money can loosen our grip on our stuff so we can live a better story! And there's a reason we just played a game about putting stuff in the right order, because if we get our money out of order with other priorities, we won't have the kind of generous life God wants for us.



## \*GROUP DISCUSSION

THINK IT THROUGH (AND TALK IT OUT):

- Why do you think so many people obsess over money? Read [Matthew 6:19-21](#). Our hearts will naturally pursue what we value most. And whether you're rich or poor, anyone can have an unhealthy love and longing for material possessions (i.e., more stuff). In what area of your life have you felt an unhealthy longing for more things?
- God tells us to be content with what we have because He will never leave us. Read [Hebrews 13:5](#). How can being content with what we have, help us loosen our grip on stuff so we can become more generous?
- Culture tells us we need more — more money, more possessions, more stuff — but it gets exhausting always chasing more. Jesus warned against becoming a slave to money (or stuff) in [Matthew 6:24](#). In what ways do you see people being a slave to money? Why is this dangerous?
- How is generosity different from tithing? (Remember, tithing is giving the first 10% of what we make back to God.)
- Read [Luke 12:13-21, 34](#). Wealth and possessions are not necessarily bad. But when we desire them more than we desire the presence of God, we put our trust in what we have instead of God. What are you trusting in today?
- Eleven of the parables (stories) Jesus told in the New Testament reference money in some shape or form. It's as if Jesus knew our hearts would be tied to it. How can you place more of your trust in God this week and give away more of what He's entrusted to you?

You know the drill! Pick a verse each day, and open your Bible to get a word from God and spend some time with Jesus! Take notes, highlight what stands out to you, and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you!

- [Proverbs 3:9-12](#). Highlight what stood out to you in these verses. Ask God to reveal to you how you can give Him your "first fruits."
- [Malachi 3:10](#). God tells us to test Him and we will see His provision. Think through ways you haven't fully trusted God this week. Pray and ask God to help you put your whole trust in Him.
- [Luke 18:18-30](#). What kept the rich young ruler from following Jesus? What does this teach you?
- [John 6:5-13](#). One small lunch made a huge impact! What small act of kindness can you do today that has the potential to change someone's day?
- [Proverbs 11:24-25](#). How does this passage inspire you to live generously today?

What a gift to know we can't outgive God; there is no one more generous than Him!

What did the Holy Spirit reveal to you this week as you studied God's Word and met with your eGroup? How did your perspective on money change, and how did your trust in God deepen?

## EXTRAS FOR egroup Leaders

If you want to grow in generosity or get a better handle on your finances, check out these resources! It's never too early (or too late) to begin trusting God with what's in your hands.

