

Handling Finances - Generosity

2Co 9:7 NIV 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.**

- Generosity is a decision
- It is a decision that comes from the heart
- God's expectation is that we do it cheerfully (GK - hilariously)
- I hope to share some things that will make you excited about giving

Everything is the LORD's

1Ch 29:11-13 NIV Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for **everything in heaven and earth is yours.** Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. 12 **Wealth and honor come from you;** you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. 13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.

- Psa 24:1 NIV Of David. A psalm. The earth is the LORD's, and **everything in it**, the world, and all who live in it;
- Psa 50:9-12 NIV I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, 10 for **every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.** 11 I know every bird in the mountains, and **the insects in the fields are mine.** 12 If I were hungry I would not tell you, **for the world is mine, and all that is in it.**
- Deu 8:17-18 NIV You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the LORD your God, for **it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth,** and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.
- This is a foundational truth - and without embracing it you will always have difficulty with finances

To Be Able to Give is a Privilege

1Ch 29:14-16 "**But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.** 15 We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. 16 LORD our God, **all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.**

Who am I?...that WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE as generously as this - He counted it a privilege and a blessing to participate in the giving

Generosity is stewardship - everything we give - is HIS...

- Do you realize that when you give, you are giving something that is God's?
- God gave money to the people, so they could give to the building of the temple (1 Chron 29)
- People sold property and lands so needs could be met (Acts 2:45)
- Egypt gave money to children of Israel who gave it for the building of the tabernacle (Ex 35)

When we give it shows we can be trusted with wealth

- Since it is God who gives to us so we should use our money as he directs...using our money wisely shows we can be trusted - this is important because a wrong perspective on money is so destructive
 - 1Ti 6:6-10 NIV But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

WHAT THE LORD SAYS ABOUT GIVING IS OFTEN COUNTER-INTUITIVE

She gave more than all the others

- Luk 21:1-4 NIV As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2 He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 3 "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. 4 All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."
 - a. Jesus paid attention to people's giving
 - b. MORE is a relative term to the LORD - seems to be related to a percentage of the whole
 - c. The giving of the wealthy was safe, **the giving of the widow was trust**

These don't make sense to the natural mind

- Pro 11:24-28 NIV One person **gives freely, yet gains** even more; another **withholds unduly, but comes to poverty**.
- 25 A **generous** person will **prosper**; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
- 26 People curse the one who **hoards** grain, but they pray God's blessing on the one who is **willing to sell**.
- 28 Those who **trust in their riches will fall**, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

It is more blessed to give than receive

- Act 20:35 NIV In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: **'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**"

Give and it shall be given unto you

- Luk 6:38 NIV **Give, and it will be given to you**. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Properly placed hope - the source of provision - eternal perspective

- 1Ti 6:17-19 NIV 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. 18 Command them to do good, **to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.** 19 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.**

Command them NOT to be arrogant

- Wealth can make us arrogant
- Wealth can skew what we hope in - (wealth or God?)
- Wealth is uncertain
- God is the one who richly provides everything for our enjoyment
- If we believe this then it can change some ways we think about generosity

Command them to do good

- We can focus on being rich in **good deeds**
- We can focus on **generosity**
- We can focus on **sharing**
- A side benefit is we are laying up **treasure in heaven**
- This is what the bible calls **true life**

Giving is an Issue of the Heart

1Ch 29:17-18 I know, my God, that **you test the heart** and are pleased with **integrity**. All these things I have given **willingly** and with **honest** intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. 18 LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, **keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever**, and **keep their hearts loyal to you**.

Notice the words, test the heart, integrity, willingly, honest intent.

Our money is linked to our heart

- Mat 6:21 NIV 21 For where your **treasure** is, there your **heart** will be also.
- Act 8:17-23 NIV Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money 19 and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 Peter answered: "**May your money perish with you**, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because **your heart is not right before God**. 22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

Our money and our relationship with God

- 1 John 3:17 NIV **If anyone has material possessions** and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, **how can the love of God be in him?**

- Mat 13:22 NIV The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

When John gave specifics about fruit of repentance, every item was financial

- Luk 3:7-14 NIV John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." 10 "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. 11 John answered, "**Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.**" 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" 13 "**Don't collect any more than you are required to,**" he told them. 14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "**Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely--be content with your pay.**"

When Jesus talked about being a good neighbor - He gave a financial illustration

- Luk 10:33-35 ESV But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, **pouring on oil and wine**. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day **he took out two denarii** and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and **whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.**'

At the end of the day, our relationship with Jesus changes how we think about money

- Luk 19:8-9 NIV But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house**, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

What does Jesus teach here about money?

1) He calls us to think about eternity

Mat 6:19-21 NIV "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Treasures on earth are temporary
- Treasures in heaven will last (as we saw above in 1 Tim 6:18-19) - we lay up treasure in heaven by good deeds and generosity

2) He calls us to generosity - The evil eye is speaking about generosity

Mat 6:22-23 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

- [Mat 6:23 KJV **But if thine eye be evil**, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

(The idea of generosity flows in the context as well - all is about finance)

- Deu 15:7-11 KJV If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, **thou shalt not harden thine heart**, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: 8 But thou shalt **open thine hand wide** unto him, and shalt surely lend him **sufficient for his need**, in that which he wanteth. 9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and ***thine eye be evil against thy poor brother***, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and **it be sin unto thee**. 10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. 11 **For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.**

(Perhaps the poor are here to force generosity upon our souls)

3) He warns us about the power money can have in our life

Mat 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and money.**

4) He calls us to trust Him

Mat 6:25-32 "Therefore I tell you, **do not worry** about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you--you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them.**

5) He sets our priorities

Mat 6:33-34 But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The true context of a couple favorite Scriptures

Php 4:10-19 NIV I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.** 14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And **my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.**

- I can do all things through Christ is specifically related to finance (the secret of contentment)
- My God will supply all your needs...is spoken to people who have been generous

Paul's message to those from whom he was accepting an offering

2Co 9:1-15 NIV There is no need for me to write to you about this **service** to the Lord's people. 2 For I know your **eagerness** to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and **your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action**. 3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. 4 For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we--not to say anything about you--would be ashamed of having been so confident. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. 6 **Remember this:** (a) Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 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. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in **all things at all times**, having **all that you need, you will abound in every good work**. 9 As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever." Now **he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness**. 11 **You will be enriched** in every way **so that you can be generous on every occasion**, and through us **your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God**. 12 This service that you perform is **not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God**. 13 Because of the service **by which you have proved yourselves**, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

REMEMBER THIS

1. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly
2. Whoever sows generously will also reap generously
3. Give what you have decided in your heart to give (do it cheerfully)
4. And God is able to bless you abundantly, -- **all things at all times**, having **all that you need, you will abound in every good work**
5. Scatter to the poor - your righteousness will endure
 - a. You will be enriched so that you can **continue to be generous on every occasion**
 - b. Your generosity will not only meet the needs of others but will cause thanksgiving to go to God
6. Generosity is seen as a service by which we prove ourselves
 - a. Spending is for today
 - b. Saving is for tomorrow
 - c. Serving is for God's eternal purpose
7. Generosity is seen as an obedience that accompanies our profession of the gospel
8. People will pray for you because of the surpassing GRACE (the grace of giving)
9. To be generous is described as AN INDESCRIBABLE GIFT
 - a. (see Rom 12:8 -"if it is giving, give generously)