

LOVING GENEROSITY

Part 2

Last week we looked at becoming generous people. The challenge of course for us is that we would be people who reflect the generous nature of God; generous with our possessions, generous with our money, our time, our talents and gifts and our lives. We want the community around us to know that we are an incredibly generous people and that this would point towards our generous God.

Every year as a church we support the vision God has given us by passing a new budget that allows us to reach out to our local community and run all the ministry programs of the church. How we support that as a church, is by faithfully and regularly giving. When we do this, we are investing into the new thing God wants us to be about.

At the present time only about 43% of people who regularly come to Riverlife give to support the ministry of the church and all that is required to make that happen.

Trust in God's Re-supplying Power - 1 Kings 17:7-16

Every time we are moved towards generosity, every time we are challenged to give something of ourselves or of what we have, we will also be in a place where we will question can we afford to do it.

This is a barrier to generosity. Generous people have overcome the natural drive in them that says "I'll save it for me" or, "I can't afford to give it away". Generous people understand the principle of God's Re-supplying Power.

How you grapple with the re-supply promise of God will determine to a large extent how generous you will be in the future. Generous people understand that God is our provider and God wants us to trust Him for provision.

Give to God First

The principle is to give to God first. As God's representative and as a demonstration of faith, the widow had to feed Elijah first. This is no different for us. There is a trust element in giving to God where we give to Him first (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Why does God tell us to give to Him first? It is so that we might learn to worship Him, it's teaching us to always put God first in our life. God doesn't need our money. He wants what it represents – our trust in Him.

When I give the first part of my income back to God before anything else as a gift to Him, it says three things:

- + I'm grateful for all you've given me in the past.
- + You're number one in my life right now.
- + And I'm going to trust you in the future.

The first belongs to God and God is always first!

Give In Faith

Because the widow surrendered it, because she gave it up, she ended up eating for many more years – this was not her last supper. She learnt to overcome the fear and doubt and walk in trusting God who when we first give to Him will re-supply what is required, and this became her daily walk of faith in God for three years (1 Kings 18:1).

No stockpiling! We can sometimes put more trust in our own ability to save and accumulate than we do in God to re-supply.

The distinguishing feature of a generous person is they give in faith that God's supply will continue!

Little Things Big Faith

The widow didn't have much but she surrendered it all. Small gifts matter to God. It's not the size of the gift as opposed to the size of the faith required to give the gift (Luke 21:1-4).

This woman only had something small BUT she gave it up and she got to be a part of this miracle. She gave it up and she got to connect her story into the unending glorious, majestic story of God. Now she has a testimony to God's glory.

Everybody here has some resources, some money, and you may only feel like they are small in comparison to what others have BUT God says every little bit matters. It's a generous person who learns how to be able to give up what they have, regardless of its size, and allow the miracle working God to take it and use it for His glory.

We have the same opportunity today of being a people who recognise that what we have is from God's provision, and by faith trust Him and commit to generously give on a regular basis to His community so there is more than enough!

Our Opportunity

If everyone surrendered their finances to God and gave systematically and generously, there would be no lack to fulfill the vision God has given us.

If you would like to prayerfully consider setting up your giving to the church please use the following information.

Account name - Riverlife Baptist Church

BSB No. 704-913

Account No. 400 039 640

Reference - tithe or gift

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss what it looks like to be generous. Share examples of recent generosity that have been shown to you.
2. Do you agree with the statement, 'God is always first and the first is always God's'? Why or why not?
3. Do you give God the first of your income by at least tithing to the church? Discuss.
4. Are there things that challenge you from trusting God with your finances? Does your giving come with an element of faith?
5. How can you increase in being generous towards others and thereby reflect the nature of a generous God?
6. Do you think being generous is different from being obedient to God when you give?