

## How Generous Should We Be?

**Matthew 10:7–8:** 7 *And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*  
 8 *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.*  
*Freely you received, freely give.*



Life is forever busy. Whether it's the holiday season, tax season, baseball season, or following this, that and the other influencers on social media, we always have too much to do and not enough time or energy to do it. With all of this being said, how often do we stop and think about being generous? You know, just giving of our time or resources because we see a need. Built on the question of generously giving, it is a matter of how to go about it. How do we know what to give, how much to give and when to stop? Is generosity always appropriate? What if there is no appreciation for a gift? Is that an indication that we should focus our giving elsewhere? So many questions! It looks like the subject of freely giving needs some generous consideration!

As Christians, we need to realize that our model for giving starts at the very top with God. Once we understand the principles that He uses in His giving, we can then look at understanding how to frame our own giving.



We will tell several personal stories about giving. Some went really well, and some went, well, less so.

The theme text we read helps us begin to comprehend the mind of God regarding generosity. When Jesus was sending out his 12 apostles, he gave practical advice that encapsulates his Father's attitude on a high level.

### Let's reread our theme text:

**Matthew 10:8:** *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. **Freely** <1432> you received, **freely** <1432> give.*

**Freely:** Strong Exhaustive Concordance #1432: *dorean*; adverb gratuitously (literally or figuratively)

(gratuitously means free of charge; without apparent reason)

The King James Version translates as "freely" 6 times, "without a cause" 1 time, "in vain" 1 time, "for nought" 1 time

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) freely, as a gift, undeservedly 2) in vain, uselessly

Jesus is telling his apostles they were graciously given the gift of God's spirit to work miracles, and they should graciously use that gift for the benefit of others. Spread the goodness you've been given—*Freely you received, freely give.*

### Let's look at another example of "God's giving" explained by the Apostle Paul:

**Romans 3:23–25:** 23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* 24 *being justified as a gift <1432> by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;* 25 *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith...*

In other words, give with that sense of graciousness pouring out. When we look at this gift of our justification, there is NOTHING we could ever do to earn it! We could spend our lives trying to be worthy, and we would always fall short of worthiness. It is impossible to earn. It is from God through Jesus and is truly a free gift.

Here is the noun form of this word:

**Gift:** Strong Exhaustive Concordance #1431 *dorea*; noun  
(from #1435 meaning a present especially a sacrifice) a gratuity: a gift

The King James Version translates as “gift” 11 times



A gratuity is something extra you pay to a person who performs a service for you—a tip.

Scripturally, it is always translated into English as *gift*. ALL eleven uses of the word *gift* in the New Testament are about gifts that originated from God and were given to us.

**Here is one example:**

**John 4:9–10:** *9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift <1431> of God, and who it is who says to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.*

Jesus is speaking to a Samaritan woman who has no right to God’s favor. Only the Jews were under a covenant relationship with God at this time. Jesus is revealing the magnitude of God’s gift to her, who was not even close to a position of worthiness. Yet, Jesus said, *If you knew the gift of God*—he shows her the opportunity to step up and follow him.

In the rest of that account, she ran to preach the gospel to everyone who would listen. Because of her enthusiasm, Jesus stayed at her village for several days, answering questions from other Samaritans.



**This next scripture is short and sweet but powerfully to the point:**

**2 Corinthians 9:15:** (KJV) *Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift <1431>.*

The appropriate response to a lofty and unmerited gift is praise and thanksgiving! Thanks be to God for His gift that is beyond words!

**Our next example shows Paul’s “responsible response” to the great gift of grace he had received:**

**Ephesians 3:6–7:** *6 ...the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister (in other words, he was given this privilege), according to the gift <1431> of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.*

*Fellow heirs*—heirs receive an inheritance, so this gift of being *fellow heirs* is the privilege of being part of the bride of Christ, helping to bless all the families of the earth in God’s kingdom. This gift is beyond our comprehension.

It was also beyond Paul's comprehension. In **verse 8**, Paul goes on to explain how this *gift of God's grace was given to him even though he is the least of all the Lord's people*. He compares his wretched self to this gift, knowing he was invited to stand on holy ground and had done nothing to deserve that invitation.



Undeserved  
Invitation

When we look at the word *gift* and at what we are given, it is overwhelming in its goodness and magnitude. This is the point of our introduction to generosity. We see God's generosity pouring out of Him to the undeserving human race.

**Our final example shows us OUR "responsible response" (just like the Apostle Paul's) to the remarkable gift WE are given:**

**Ephesians 4:4-7:** *4 There is one body and one spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift <1431>.*

Are we living up to the unbelievable merit and favor that we have individually been given?

What are we supposed to do? Grow up! Become mature in Christ by mirroring Jesus.

**Ephesians 4:14-15:** *14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ,*

We are blessed beyond our capacity! Our response should be to grow as a result of these gifts because we have the example of generosity from God Himself.

Rick's  
Memory

Let's pause here just for a moment and talk about teaching generosity to our kids. We would often talk to our kids at Christmas about the fact that they always received presents, but what could they give to somebody who didn't have anything? It became a wonderful way for them to learn the excitement of giving!

Jonathan's  
Memory

I have a memory I'd like to share. When our son was a teenager, he was saving up for a car. He had gone to a young people's Bible seminar, and he came home with a surprising request. He asked if he could empty his savings account to send to someone who shared that they and their family were going through a difficult time financially. A lot of responsibility fell on this young person, and our son wanted to help. How could we say no? We were so thankful for his heart condition and his desire to help others.

This was a beautiful, selfless example of giving from a teenager who had been saving up for a treasured item.



What high and lofty standards! What an example of exuberant giving is laid out for us as we trace and appreciate God's character.

**With God's powerful example of gracious giving as our model, how do we know what the guidelines are for helping others financially?**

The first point here is not to jump to a conclusion that says we are SO blessed by God that we should, without measure, give all to everyone all the time. We need to remember that God's grace is always freely given within the context and principles of His just and merciful plan. Every unmerited gift from Him is for the purpose of ultimately blessing the recipients and having them bless others.

In this segment, we will look at money and the principles of how to give responsibly.

**Regarding our opportunities to financially support others:**

**Galatians 6:10:** *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

There are many people who are ready to take our money, and there are many worthy charities that do a lot of good. Here, though, we're thinking about more direct assistance, where we can have a larger effect on the individuals around us—more person-to-person.

**Another reminder of God's approach to us as we look at generously supporting others:**

**1 Corinthians 2:12:** (KJV) *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are **freely given** <5483> to us of God.*

*Freely given* here is another “big” word that describes God’s giving and the pattern for our giving. It is a slightly different word than the others we’ve talked about, but it shows the same benevolence of God.

**Forgive/Give:** Strong Exhaustive Concordance #5483 *charizomai*; to grant as a favor, i.e. gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue

The King James Version translates as “forgive” 11 times, “give” 6 times, “freely give” 2 times, “deliver” 2 times, “grant” 1 time, “frankly forgive” 1 time

Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon: 1a) to show one’s self gracious, kind, benevolent 1b) to grant forgiveness, to pardon 1c) to give graciously, give freely, bestow 1c1) to forgive 1c2) graciously to restore one to another 1c3) to preserve for one a person in peril

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We talked about a great example of generous giving in Episode 1355: “Why Didn’t Paul Preach in Asia?” The Apostle Paul was sent a vision telling him to preach in the Roman province of Macedonia.

Many in Macedonia embraced the gospel even though they were steeped in idolatry and faced many serious challenges, including extreme poverty.



Today, parts of ancient Macedonia are in Greece, North Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria.

**Years later, Paul reported to the other churches in the vicinity of their strong spirituality and responses of giving in spite of their serious problems:**

**2 Corinthians 8:1–2:** *1 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.*

Paul is writing to the Corinthians, who weren’t nearly as impoverished as the Macedonians. He testifies that the Macedonians gave beyond their ability to contribute because they wanted to help these brethren whom they had never met.

They didn’t have much, but they wanted to help others because they were given the free gift from God. They had been given a hope in Christ that superseded all of their trouble and poverty. Their problems didn’t seem so difficult because of what they had been freely given by God through Christ, as preached by the Apostle Paul.

**2 Corinthians 8:3-5:** *3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.*

From this, we can see giving can become contagious! Our giving, especially to others of our Christian faith, should come from the depths of a wisely-driven, open and blessed heart. This applies even when we have very little to give.

**The context of the following story is about financially giving to one who was in desperate need and attempting to teach responsibility in the process of giving:**

## Rick's Example

This experience is about the natural brother of our brother in Christ with whom we fellowshiped. He had a brother we did not fellowship with, and we had conversations where he was very disagreeable with some of our doctrines. But we were acquainted. I didn't know him well, but we were acquainted.

After some time, this man called me out of the blue and said, "Rick, I'm in trouble. Can you help me?" I said, okay, tell me what's up.

He told me he had fallen into hard times and lived at a boarding house, where he had to pay weekly rent. He was behind on his payments by five or six weeks, and they were about to evict him. He was working, but he couldn't pay all the back rent.

He said, "I'm going to be homeless. Can you help me?" I agreed. I sat with him, and we talked about it. He kept saying, "I'm going to pay you back. I'm working. I can do this."

I went to the boarding house myself, sat down with the manager and explained what I was doing. I paid what he owed and caught him up, so he was current. He and I put together a payment schedule because he got paid weekly. I asked him how much he thought he could afford every week. He said, "\$40." I said, "Okay, let's work with \$20 a week. You said you could afford \$40, but let's try \$20." It was going to take a really long time, which didn't matter. He was very enthusiastic and thankful.

The first week passed, and I called him. He didn't have the money. I say, "Okay, just keep in mind, we need to get started on paying me back."

Another week passes. I make a call and he says, "I can't, I can't." This pattern continues, and I finally tell the individual, "Pay me when you can pay me. Get your life in order. I don't want you to be homeless."

Essentially, I did not hear from him again. I saw him once, maybe about a year and a half later, and he assured me again he would pay me back, but he never paid me a nickel. This is an experience from many years ago. He did not end up homeless, and he did get himself back on his feet, but that was the end of my involvement with him.



Two questions for Rick:

1. Where does your wife Tricia fit into this since you are using “family” money?

I never get involved in something like this without talking to Trish first. These are always family decisions, and we always go in knowing the potential outcome. It was a mutual decision.

2. Knowing what you know now—that you were taken advantage of—would you do it again?

In a heartbeat. It was an opportunity to keep the man from being homeless. And whether he paid back or not, I had the opportunity to give to somebody in great need.

This is the first lesson in giving: sometimes it doesn’t work the way we expect, but that’s okay because God’s giving to us doesn’t always end up perfect in this age either, does it? Unfortunately, we take advantage of God, too!

**For those of us who are of more substantial means than the Macedonians, there are other details to consider:**

**2 Corinthians 9:6–8:** *6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.*

We are supposed to give because we sincerely want to, not because we feel we must. *God is able to make all grace abound to you—perhaps the giving back—the reap bountifully—doesn’t come from the specific person you gave to, but comes from God in a different way.*

*God loves a cheerful giver*—those who don’t have that condition of heart that the Lord loves—one that responds with gratitude—are likely to grow in the spirit of selfishness, coldness and indifference instead of growing in grace. That is a dangerous place for a Christian to be.



Giving is for the sake of building someone up. This is what our purpose should be, regardless of how it works out.

Having confidence in God’s ability to help us as we help others allows us to be wisely generous.

**This kind of generosity can build a strong mutual appreciation within the body of Christ:**

**2 Corinthians 9:13–15:** *13 Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, 14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*

In this giving circumstance, there was great appreciation. The apostle shares that appreciation and tells them it made an impact.

**Financially giving to one who faced a very unexpected experience and trusting the integrity of the recipient:**

**Rick's Example**

Some of these stories are about 20 years old, and the most recent happened this year, so there is a long period of time for my understanding to grow.

This next example involved someone in our Christian fellowship who pulled me aside one day and said, “I have a situation that came up completely by surprise. I’m really stuck. Can you help me out?” “Absolutely. What do you need?”

They needed money. As I gave it to them, I said, “If you can pay me back, great, but if you can’t, don’t even give it a second thought. Just keep in mind that if you can pay me back in whatever amount, that money will then be available for me to give to somebody else in need.”

We took care of their need and saw them periodically here and there. A year or more went by. One day, they walked up to me and handed me an envelope saying, “It’s all there.” It was a beautiful experience because I did not have to remind them about the money. They had such wonderful, spiritual integrity and took care of it. It gave us an opportunity to give to someone else.



1. Is there anything you would have done differently on this one? It seems to have worked out as planned.

No, the individual had the spirituality to take care of it on their own. If they hadn’t, it still would have been okay. It would have told me they really needed more than they even thought, and I was good with that.

2. When you give, you understand you might not get it back.

Absolutely, positively, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

As we have been discussing, sometimes our giving will be to help those who are in need. Other times, we are giving to those who are not necessarily needy but who are working hard in the ministry of the gospel. The Apostle Paul was a recipient of this kind of wise giving.



**Paul tells the Philippians that after he left Macedonia, they were the only church that helped him along the journey:**

**Philippians 4:15–20:** *15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. 17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.*

*Increases to your account—you actually receive by being the giver.*

(Source: Bible Commentary by David Guzik) *To your account—you receive by being the giver. 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.*

*18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Paul recalls the Old Testament sacrifices and how our heart devotion is so satisfying to God that He symbolically tastes it as something sweet.

Notice what the Apostle Paul is NOT saying here. He isn't saying, *You owe to me, as the servant of God, more than you will ever be able to pay in the present life, so the least you can do is take care of my daily needs!* The gospel is given along the lines of love and compassion, not by demand.

This is a powerful thought in terms of our giving and of our receiving. If we are in the work of the gospel, we might receive help for the purpose of furthering the gospel and nothing else. Receiving such wise giving should be done with abundant thanks on our part to the giver and abundant praise to God.

That is how giving is supposed to be accepted. If we are the recipient, let us make sure we are working on our responsibility to graciously acknowledge the gift!



If we do not have a lot, but we give, we may not be able to solve someone's problem, but the principle of giving from whatever circumstance we are in is so life-changing.

Thus far, we are seeing important and motivating lessons. Giving can be a great and rewarding privilege when it is based on godly wisdom.

**Giving others financial help needs to be done carefully. What about giving that is more focused on someone's circumstances of lack of ability?**

The difference here has much to do with the overall conditions of people's physical lives rather than their immediate circumstances. When looking at someone's life, it may become apparent that, due to illness, trauma or simply not knowing how to manage themselves, they have significant needs that cannot be quickly or easily solved.

Before we get too far into that, not everyone has that natural inclination towards generosity. In fact, being selfish is much more common. Some self-examination is going to be important here, if only for the fact that being generous pleases God. Still, there are many additional benefits for the generous heart.

If we do not have that natural inclination, it is important to work on giving anyway. Initially, we will be doing it "mechanically" until we can learn to do it from the heart. We all have to work on spiritual growth. We have to grow, sometimes mechanically doing what we should until it comes from within. When it begins to come from within, it is such a blessing! (See **Proverbs 16:3**.)

**A reminder of Jesus, who as a man is our model for giving in a wise, godly and sacrificial way:**

**Hebrews 12:2-3:** *2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Jesus never stopped giving. The word *consider* here means to contemplate or to ponder. Jesus used the gifts of God to bless others both in the moment and for all eternity. Consider that!

We need to grow into a life that is clearly based upon using God's gifts to truly bless others. That is what Jesus did in the moment—and for eternity. We want to work on our giving in the moment.

**Now it comes down to opening our eyes and noticing the individual lives of our brotherhood to see where there might be a lack or a need:**

**James 2:14-17:** *14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and be filled, and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*



How am I living and applying my faith to others?

Notice this says *daily food*—an ongoing circumstance rather than a one-time need. What are we supposed to do when we run into a situation amongst those within our fellowship with a continual need for this kind of support?

**Providing physical support for one whose life had taken a difficult turn and learning that everyone does not learn and apply personal responsibility in the same way:**

### Rick's Example

This is a circumstance of someone in the brotherhood with a housing issue. They were in dire straits and needed a place to stay and food to eat as they were getting back on their feet. We put them up with some in the brotherhood, with the understanding this was just until they could get on their feet and move on their way. This was the way it was presented, and they were grateful.

As time went by, it became apparent they saw their position as a final destination.

My viewpoint, which had been expressed plainly (though not necessarily in these words), was that it was like a landing on a long staircase. You climb all these stairs, huffing and puffing, until you get to a landing. You pause to get yourself back together again. Once rested, you continue to climb the next part of the stairs. But it became obvious this person was not looking for another set of stairs; they were very happy on the landing!

So, we began discussing the issue. Months and months went by and we are still having conversations about how things need to change, but nothing was happening. It got to a point where I had to tell them, “You have six months to move things forward. Whether you put yourself in a position to be ready or not, things will change, because this has gone on for a very long time.”

Six months were up, and nothing had changed. My job then was to say, “It’s time for you to leave. You’re going to have to figure it out.” They were warned repeatedly until the time came to tell them to leave.

That was a tough one. It was an eviction. There was no signed contract, but they just couldn’t live in that space any longer. I agreed to pay for some of the transitional costs, so that they could move on.

**Cheerful and generous giving doesn’t mean enabling someone who is capable of doing things for themselves. The tricky part is knowing when to cut off the support.**





- Would you do it again, even though it did not work out well?

Absolutely, because the nature of giving is not how it works out. It's HOW we give. The next story will pick up on this theme.

**We strive to be examples like Paul to whenever possible live in such a way as to be a support and then to teach others to do the same:**

**1 Thessalonians 4:9–12:** *9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, 11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, 12 so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.*

This teaches us to teach others responsibility. Paul tells the Thessalonians, *We urge you, brethren...to attend to your own business...and not be in any need.*

**Providing physical support for one whose life had taken a difficult turn and walking them through the steps towards being independent:**

## Rick's Example

This story is similar in that a person needed a place to live. I volunteered to help them find a temporary place and get set up with the goal of them moving on.

They got settled and were very happy, relieved and thankful. As a little bit of time went by, it seemed like they were thinking they had it pretty good—using the staircases and landings example again. Having learned from the previous experience, I did not let it go nearly as long but started having conversations reminding them how this was only a temporary solution, and we're here to help you move on.

After a while, it became obvious that they just didn't know how to move forward. They didn't know what steps to take. We began to work side-by-side with them, looking for possible opportunities. "Let's call them. Let's follow up here. I'll get the application for you."

With all this help, they eventually were able to move on. They got their own place and a good start. Some of the local brethren helped by paying their security deposit in the new place.

This happened years ago, and that individual has been completely, 100 percent independent ever since without asking for anything. In this case, they simply didn't know how to move forward and needed help to be shown. Sometimes, when we take the time to show somebody step-by-step, by God's grace, we can change their lives.



We are to be wise, cheerful givers, but also responsible receivers.

**Ephesians 4:28:** *He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.*

The New Living Translation plainly says, *If you're a thief, quit stealing.* As responsible receivers, we don't want to be tempted to take advantage of someone's generosity in terms of money, time or emotional investment in us. We might be in danger of feeling entitled. If life has kicked us down so much, we might think we deserve this free break, but that is not the godly way to think.

Further, the principle here is that we should put ourselves in a position as followers of Christ to help others to the best of our ability. **Ultimately, if faithful, we will be ministers of reconciliation to the entire resurrected world of mankind (2 Corinthians 5:18).** Start your training now!

The ideal for every Christian is transformation and, wherever possible, contributing to the welfare of others as a result of that transformation.

**2 Corinthians 5:11-21:** *11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade people, but we are well known to God; and I hope that we are also well known in your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we have lost our minds, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and he died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose on their behalf. 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one by the flesh; even though we have known Christ by the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and he has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*



The challenge is to follow through. We need to continue to be present in their lives. As a friend of ours always says, “Don’t just be there to put out the fire; be there for the cleanup and the rebuild”—follow through!

Such different ways of helping those in need and so many things to watch out for! Let us be wise and generous as we give.

**We have seen God’s pattern and Jesus’ example and looked at financial and physical opportunities for generosity. What comes next?**

Too often, we see giving through the lens of money and physical things. This lens overlooks the massive opportunity of generously giving one’s time. Here again, we need God’s wisdom, as His gifts are ALWAYS given for the highest benefit to the receiver. Our time, though precious, is meant to be given freely as we honor God’s instructions of generosity.

**The result of Jesus fully giving of himself can be seen in yet another gift from God:** **Philippians 2:7–9:** *7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed <5483> on him the name which is above every name,*

*Bestowed* is that “big gift” word we introduced earlier. As a result of Jesus’ incredible sacrifice, God gifted him by exalting his name above all others.

God’s gifts continually pour out from Him. Ours should do the same, using wisdom, clarity and spirituality.

**Let's begin by focusing on the emotional and spiritual support of others:**

**Galatians 6:1–2:** *1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.*

*Bear one another's burdens—am I my brother's keeper? Yes!*

As we've seen, generosity goes beyond giving someone money. These texts teach us to help others carry the weight of their load. How do we do that? We need to understand their life.

**Let's not confuse powerful and intentional spiritual giving with hearing about someone's life in a potentially unfruitful way:**

**2 Thessalonians 3:11–13:** *11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.*

It goes without saying that helping someone doesn't include gossiping about what you've learned. (And for those of our listeners who don't know Rick personally, he is a vault. He never gives any personal information about anyone that he counsels.) *Do not grow weary of doing good. Or, as Julie's mom always says, "Err on the side of generosity."*

**Giving time to hear someone's personal experience and seeing it begin to go down an unproductive path:**


 Rick's  
 Example

I received a call late at night; this person may have been in a different time zone. They had an issue and wanted to talk about it. I listened for about two hours in order to understand what was happening. I began to see there was a lot that needed to be dealt with. The person on the phone kept referring to another person within our Christian fellowship, so I got permission to speak with that person about this issue. Over time, the two of us worked together to help the one in need.

The person struggling tended to be overwhelmed with the anxiety and difficulty of the moment and would get back into the spiral of the story again and again. So, we set up a pattern and said, "Okay, here's how our conversations are going to go. We're going to talk once a week. At the end of this conversation, we're going to have one or two questions we're going to ask at the beginning of the next call. Your homework is to think about it based on what we discussed, and let's pick up where we left off," because the point was to work through the immediate problem and make progress.

We did this a few times, but the person would get stuck in the spiral and go downhill yet again. I finally said, "I am going to have to cut a conversation short one of these days if this continues, because we have to make progress." They agreed.

But they kept getting stuck in the same pattern.

- Rick: “Did you work on the questions?”
- “No, no... You don’t understand.”
- Rick: “This is our agreement.”
- “But wait, you don’t understand!”
- Rick: “Yes, I do. I’m hanging up now.” And I hung up the phone.

We had a short conversation or two after that. But several months later, I heard from the other person who was in touch with this individual, who relayed the message, “Tell Brother Rick what he did was really helpful.” It had shocked them into moving forward.

This all comes down to giving with wisdom and following through, even though sometimes the follow-through isn’t the most comfortable thing we’ll ever do.



- Would you have done anything differently?

No, I would hang up again. There are sometimes things we don't want to do to accomplish the necessary things, but we have to do them.

**Having a high level of spiritual wisdom and integrity is critical when giving our time to others:**

**Ephesians 4:23-27:** *23 ...be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. 26 BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

- *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*
- *Put on the new self.*
- *Laying aside falsehood.*
- *We are members of one another.*

These are all principles for appropriate, generous giving to one another. We need to set our lives in a giving mindset, and sometimes it's giving of our time and attention, which is precious. When did Jesus ever not give of himself when someone was in need? He ALWAYS gave. He is our example.

The Apostle Paul’s own experience of giving his time for the sake of those coming to Christ was remarkable—the difference: Jesus was perfect, and Paul was not. Paul came from a foul background in the way he handled other people in the past, but he grew into this man we read about here.

**Here is just one example of what generously giving his time looked like:**

**1 Corinthians 9:19,21-23:** *19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.*



In **Verses 21-22**, Paul explains that he was able to talk to different groups of people by meeting them where they were. He was Jewish, which enabled him to speak from the Jewish perspective. Paul was a Roman citizen, so he could easily speak to non-Jews. He was educated in his past life as Saul the Pharisee but humbled once he became Paul, a servant of Christ. This gave him the life experience to speak with those on any socio-economic level. This is why he was so effective at bringing people to the gospel—he was a great communicator.

*22 ...I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. 23 I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.*

Paul put effort into meeting people where they were. How and why did he do that?

Because it was his time and his attention they needed for the sake of drawing them to Christ. He never hesitated to give his time and attention to those who were in need. Just like Jesus, when the people came to be healed, there must have been lines of people for hours. But those scriptures always end, *and he healed them all*. Vitality went out of him at every healing, but *he healed them all*.

What did the Apostle Paul do? *He became all things to all men*. These are our examples of what true, heartfelt, Christian generosity looks like.



Am I giving so that I can help someone up? It's not about bailing someone out. It's about building someone up. That's what our giving is meant to do. That is what God's giving does. That's what the giving of our Lord Jesus showed us. That's what the Apostle Paul showed us. And that's what the rest of the scriptures show us. It's not about bailing out; it's about building up.

Let us give so that we can help build one another up in this most holy faith. Be generous in a godly and wise way!

**So, how generous should we be?  
For Rick, Jonathan, Julie and Christian Questions...  
...Think about it!**

*All scriptures cited are from the NASB1995 translation unless otherwise noted.*



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### **Bonus Material and Study Questions**

#### **Recommended additional study:**

**Ep.1355: Why Didn't Paul Preach in Asia?**

*Uncovering the reasons behind God's redirecting Paul away from Asia*

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1335-preach-in-asia/>

**Ep.1358: What's the Difference Between Burnt Offerings and Sin Offerings?**

*Grasping the Christian significance of many Old Testament sacrifices*

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1358-sin-offering/>



Parents and Bible class teachers, continue your studies on this topic with these short, animated videos for kids at [ChristianQuestions.com/YouTube](https://christianquestions.com/YouTube):

- **What is generosity?**  
<https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/what-is-generosity/>
- **How can we be of service to others?**  
<https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/how-can-we-be-of-service-to-others/>
- **How can we be more giving?**  
<https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/how-can-we-be-more-giving/>

**Word study on the specific words used for “generous giving” in the New Testament:**

*Many of our topics are compiled with a “Word Study” using several concordances and other “Bible helps.” We see how a particular word is used in both the Old and New Testaments. Understanding how the words are used not only tells us what they mean but also gives us the nuances of the original Hebrew or Greek when comparing how the writers of the Bible use them in different contexts. We can also learn more by seeing the origins of a particular word, providing a depth of understanding that just reading scriptures in English cannot provide.*

**Freely:** Strong Exhaustive Concordance #1432: *dorean*; adverb gratuitously (literally or figuratively)

(gratuitously means free of charge; without apparent reason)

The King James Version translates as “freely” 6 times, “without a cause” 1 time, “in vain” 1 time, “for nought” 1 time

Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon: 1) freely, as a gift, undeservedly 2) in vain, uselessly

**All uses in the King James Version:**

**Matthew 10:8:** *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely <1432> ye have received, freely <1432> give.*

**John 15:25:** *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause <1432>.*

**Romans 3:24:** *Being justified freely <1432> by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

**2 Corinthians 11:7:** *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely <1432>?*

**Galatians 2:21:** *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain <1432>.*

**2 Thessalonians 3:8:** *Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought <1432>; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:*

**Revelation 21:6:** *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely <1432>.*

**Revelation 22:17:** *And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely <1432>.*

**Gift:** Strong Exhaustive Concordance #1431 *dorea*; noun (from #1435 meaning a present especially a sacrifice) a gratuity: a gift

The King James Version translates as “gift” 11 times

### All uses in the King James Version:

**John 4:10:** *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift <1431> of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

**Acts 2:38:** *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift <1431> of the holy spirit.*

**Acts 8:20:** *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift <1431> of God may be purchased with money.*

**Acts 10:45:** *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift <1431> of the holy spirit.*

**Acts 11:17:** *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift <1431> as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?*

**Romans 5:15:** *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift <1431> by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*

**Romans 5:17:** *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift <1431> of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.*

**2 Corinthians 9:15:** *Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift <1431>.*

**Ephesians 3:7:** *Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift <1431> of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*

**Ephesians 4:7:** *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift <1431> of Christ.*

**Hebrews 6:4:** *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift <1431>, and were made partakers of the holy spirit,*

**Forgive/Give:** Strong Exhaustive Concordance #5483 *charizomai*;  
to grant as a favor, i.e. gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue

The King James Version translates as “forgive” 11 times, “give” 6 times, “freely give” 2 times, “deliver” 2 times, “grant” 1 time, “frankly forgive” 1 time

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1a) to show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent  
1b) to grant forgiveness, to pardon 1c) to give graciously, give freely, bestow 1c1) to forgive  
1c2) graciously to restore one to another 1c3) to preserve for one a person in peril

### All uses in the King James Version:

**Luke 7:21:** *And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave <5483> sight.*

**Luke 7:42:** *And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave <5483> them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?*

**Luke 7:43:** *Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave <5483> most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.*

**Acts 3:14:** *But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted <5483> unto you;*

**Acts 25:11:** *For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver <5483> me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.*

**Acts 25:16:** *To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver <5483> any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.*

**Acts 27:24:** *Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given <5483> thee all them that sail with thee.*

**Romans 8:32:** *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give <5483> us all things?*

**1 Corinthians 2:12:** *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given <5483> to us of God.*

**2 Corinthians 2:7:** *So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive <5483> him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.*

**2 Corinthians 2:10:** *To whom ye forgive <5483> any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgive <5483> any thing, to whom I forgive <5483> it, for your sakes forgive I it in the person of Christ;*

**2 Corinthians 12:13:** *For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive <5483> me this wrong.*

**Galatians 3:18:** *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave <5483> it to Abraham by promise.*

**Ephesians 4:32:** *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving <5483> one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven <5483> you.*

**Philippians 1:29:** *For unto you it is given <5483> in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;*

**Philippians 2:9:** *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given <5483> him a name which is above every name:*

**Colossians 2:13:** *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven <5483> you all trespasses;*

**Colossians 3:13:** *Forbearing one another, and forgiving <5483> one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave <5483> you, so also do ye.*

**Philemon 1:22:** *But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given <5483> unto you.*

# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep.1361: How Generous Should We Be?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1361-generous/>

See:  CQ.Rewind  
SHOW NOTES

1. What were the apostles told to do as Jesus sent them out to spread the word of God?  
What was their attitude supposed to be about their mission? (Matthew 10:8)
  - a. What gifts have we received from God and Jesus? Elaborate on those you treasure.
  - b. Romans 3:23-25: What have we been given through grace, not through our own merit?
  - c. John 4:9-10: What did the Samaritan woman receive, not through her own merit?
  - d. 2 Corinthians 9:15: What is our appropriate response to these gifts?
  - e. Ephesians 3:6-8: What was the gift given to the Apostle Paul? What was his reaction?
  - f. Ephesians 4:4-7, 14-15: What are we supposed to do to live up to the unbelievable merit and favor we have been given? How are you working on this in your life?
2. **Financially supporting others:** (Rewind page 4)
  - a. Galatians 6:10: To whom are we supposed to give our help?
  - b. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5: How did the Macedonians show the attitude we should have towards others?
  - c. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: In what way should we view giving? What is its purpose?
  - d. Philippians 4:15-20: How can we “receive” by being a giver?
3. **Physically supporting others:** (Rewind page 10)
  - a. Hebrews 12:2-3: Consider (ponder) Jesus’ sacrifice. What is the gift this consideration grants you?
  - b. James 2:14-17: What is James telling us here? How can we better live our faith by helping others?
  - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12: Paul is urging the brethren to do what? What are they also to teach others?
  - d. Ephesians 4:28: What does this admonish? Have you fought an attitude of entitlement due to difficult circumstances in your life? Did you overcome this? Why is it necessary to fight this attitude?
4. **Emotional and spiritual support of others:** (Rewind page 14)
  - a. Galatians 6:1-2: How do we support someone?
  - b. 2 Thessalonians 3:11-13: We must be careful not to do what? If we do good without recognition from those on the receiving end, we might end up how?
  - c. Why do our “consider” verses (Hebrews 12:2-3) help?
  - d. Ephesians 4:23-27: How do these verses energize you? How do they give us courage to help others?
5. **Support of others with our time:** (Rewind page 16)
  - a. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23: How did the Apostle Paul support the brethren with his time and effort? How did Jesus act as our example in giving of his time?
  - b. Share your feelings of giving situations that have gone well, and not so much. Have you been a good receiver? How can you be more generous?