



# First In Generosity

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## GROUP ICE BREAKER

Who has shown you the most generosity in any way? What impact did it/has it had on you?

## REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will live for an audience of one.
- I will practice the discipline of secrecy.
- I will do something good and not let anyone know about it.
- I will join a small group where I can be known and accepted.

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

Secrecy is when we do something good for someone without anyone knowing about it. Jesus applied secrecy to the area of giving. The idea is as you give and partner with God, you're going to enter into the reality of kingdom living.

The Bible is packed full of rewards for being first in generosity. One is *blessing*. We think getting things is the path to the good life, but in the long run, givers are happier, more joyful people than takers. A second reward is *relational wealth*. People who are generous with their time and money end up entering into new relationships, connecting with and caring about more people. Third is *freedom*. Generosity liberates you from bondage to possessions and pleasures and allows you to give with the same freedom that you receive.

Another is *joy*. When you're generous with your money or time, it triggers the release of chemicals in your brain creating what's sometimes called a "helper's high." You literally cannot give without getting. Fifth is *God's repayment*. Why would you not give what you can't keep to gain what you can't lose? Generosity is lending to the Lord and he will repay. Next, *your children will be a blessing*. Selfish parents tend to raise selfish children. Generous parents tend to raise generous children.

Another is *multiplied impact*. No matter what your income, do not believe your gift doesn't matter. When you give, God sees your heart. Lastly, *a new financial partner*. When you start giving you align yourself with God's ultimate plan and dream for the human race.

Trusting God with your finances, leading a generous life, discovering it's more blessed to give than to receive is the biggest no-brainer in the history of mankind.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Begin by reading Matthew 6:2-4
2. Describe a habit you have or something that's second nature to you, you do it without even thinking.
3. What motivates you to act generously? What tends to keep you from being generous?
4. Read Matthew 5:14-16 and 6:3-4. It would seem as if Jesus is contradicting himself. What might be the reason for these differing instructions about letting others see our good deeds?
5. How does the knowledge that doing something for God earns a reward from God not make the motivation behind the act suspect in any way?
6. Of the rewards for generosity listed below, which have you experienced and what did you learn from the experience?
  - Blessing: givers are happier
  - Relational wealth: connecting and caring for others
  - Freedom: liberates from bondage to possessions
  - Joy: the "helper's high"
  - God's repayment: lending to the Lord and he will repay
  - Children are a blessing: generosity raises generous children
  - Multiplied impact: no matter the gift, God sees your heart
  - New financial partner: your aligned with God
7. What is one area of your life you can challenge yourself to be more generous in the next week and what will you do to act on it?

## NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will practice giving generously in secret.
- I will take steps toward being more generous.
- I will use technology to translate good intentions into action.

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 6:2-4
- 2 Corinthians 9:7
- 2 Corinthians 9:14
- Psalm 22:20-21
- 1 Chronicles 29:9
- Proverbs 19:17
- Psalm 37:26
- Mark 12:41-43
- Luke 6:38
- Malachi 3:10

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

- [A Deeper Look At the Sermon on the Mount: Living Out the Way of Jesus](#), John Stott

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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