



GENEROSITY : welcome, sacrifice, serve with excellence

What Jesus taught about a culture of generous giving and service.

1. Jesus taught that God himself is a radically generous Father-giver & Father-servant and we should seek to live like Him

Matt. 5:43 “I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Matt. 19:21 Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

GIVING LEAVES YOU WITH MORE BECAUSE IT GIVES YOU ACCESS TO THE UNLIMITED RESOURCES OF HEAVEN

Luke 6: 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

WE DON'T GIVE TO RECEIVE BUT WHEN WE GIVE, WE RECEIVE

2. Jesus taught that faithfulness with material wealth is the prerequisite to being entrusted with that which is truly valuable

Luke 16:10 “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

GOD TRAINS US BY GIVING EARTHLY RICHES AND OBSERVING WHAT WE DO WITH IT

WHY? TRUE POWER MUST ONLY BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO CAN BE TRUSTED WITH IT

3. Jesus taught that issues of fear, faith and focus are all dealt with in a culture of generosity

Luke 12:32 “**Fear not**, little flock, for it is your **Father’s good pleasure** to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your **treasure (ie focus)** is, there will your heart be also.

Fear – that God is in some way reluctant

Faith – that as we give God will give us access to heaven’s resources

Focus – that our heart follows our wallet not the other way round.

GENEROUS GIVING CUTS DEEP INTO THE HEART OF THE IDOL OF SELF AND THE IDOL OF THINGS

4. Jesus taught that the supernatural is part of our gift to the world

Matt. 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; **give** without pay.

Matt. 14:16 But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you **give** them something to eat.”

5. Jesus' teaching on the 'talents' give us a foundation of excellence not perfectionism in our service to God and others

Matt 25:15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each **according to his ability**....²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' ²³ His master said to him, '**Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little**; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

	Perfectionism	Excellence
Definition	being unsatisfied unless something is perfectly done	doing your best with the time, resources and ability that you have
God	Generally has a frown. Is usually disappointed with my performance. I'm earning his favour.	Generally has a smile! His banner over me is love, His affection and affirmation rests on me. I have His favour!
When you succeed	Yes, but it could have been a little better	Thank you Jesus!
When you are praised	Pointing out the bits that weren't as good. Or using your success to internally feel better than others.	Publically – thank you! Privately – 'Lord this belongs to you!'
When others succeed or are praised	Either depths of depression and self loathing or picking holes in what they have done	Celebrate with them
Celebration	Sorry? I'm on to the next thing.	P-A-R-T-Y. It's great to stop and rest before we take the next hill.
When you fail	Seeks to blame – either others or yourself	Was it because you didn't give your best with the time, resources, ability you have? If yes then repent and receive forgiveness, if no then simply move on!
When others fail	Shame, blame or 'just goes to prove if you want a job doing well....'	Coaching, encouragement and grace.

Other people	Feel like they achieve things with you but find that they can't ever quite keep up or do well enough	Feel like you bring the best out in them – and they enjoy the journey.
If you have children	They see you as unpleasable – the cycle continues to the next generation	They see that you want them to be the best that they can be – but even if they mess up you still love them. They bask in your affection, praise and snuggles.

6. Jesus taught that our new nature is to be one where we are supernaturally generous

Matt. 5:42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

There is a caveat – we need wisdom when we give not to give to those who will wantonly waste our gifts

Matt. 7:6 “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES ARE STILL IMPORTANT IN A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

7. Jesus taught that serving others is the same as serving him

Matt 25:40 the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

1 John 4:16 God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Ask yourself the question “What is the most loving thing I can say or do right now?”

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