

Generous people have more friends than stingy people.

Generous people are much happier!

**Becoming Generous
(Overcoming Our Stingy Streak)
November 8, 2020
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Today is **Heart of Purpose Sunday** at Lighthouse Baptist Church.

That means that I get to preach about my second favorite Bible subject today!

This is the day that we, as a Church, will obey the New Testament command of our Lord as laid out for us in II Corinthians...that every one of us will purpose in his/her heart what we are going to give to the Lord this coming year.

Once each year we stop in November or December and take inventory as to where we are in trusting the Lord's promises and we make a decision...a personal choice, as to what percentage of the income that God provides to us that we will give back to honor Him...on top of the tithe, the first ten percent that already belongs to God.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.
8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

When we got saved, our lives were changed forever. Inwardly, the Holy Spirit of God came to live within us, bringing new peace and new purpose.

Outwardly, we were faced with all the New Testament commands of Christ. Although these commands are not grievous or burdensome, obeying some of them creates a far different environment than we are used to.

Even something as simple as coming to Church every Sunday requires a very different pattern than before.

One of the early-on changes that we all must face is becoming a generous and cheerful giver.

For some, this is very easy, depending on how you were raised and what you are already used to.

For others, it's like asking you to become a nun or a monk or something. I don't want to just come out and say it but, the truth is that some of us have a real stingy streak that we need to overcome.

No, you're on a broke income that needs to be fixed!

Even if God did not raise your level of income, how much further can God make 90% go than you can make 100% go?

Trust the Lord, He will keep His Word:

Jesus died and was buried and rose again to save you?

Did you trust Him to save you?

Did He not save you as He promised?

Then why not trust Him with your finances as well; those same finances you would not have at all if God did not provide them for you!

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

As I close, let me remind you of some of the other benefits of becoming generous.

Generous people have better marriages than stingy people.

4. In this case, doing it well means **being faithful**.

5. Your goal is not a dollar amount; the Bible teaches us to give by percentage; “**as God has prospered**”.

6. The Lord makes this so easy...you don't need to do anything until first the Lord puts the money in your hand.

Conclusion:

Someone once said: Every great success is an accumulation of failures learned from.

You are going to be tested. You may have already been tested and have failed.

Maybe like last time you decided to give it a try and God did not bless because He already knew you were not seriously committed.

That would be why God is giving you a new opportunity to start fresh today with a new plan and a better understanding.

Wouldn't you really like to become truly generous?

Some say, “But Pastor, you don't understand; I'm on a fixed income”.

You would probably get mad at me if I just came out and said you were stingy; so, let's just say that you might be somewhat “generosity challenged”.

Actually, if you look up the Greek word in verse 6 about sowing “sparingly”; the synonym for this in the definition is “stingily”.

φειδομένως

pheidomenōs

fi-dom-en'-oce

Adverb from participle of [G5339](#); *abstemiously*, that is, **stingily**: - sparingly.

I am here to tell you and I am living proof as well, that even if you are ‘generosity challenged’, you can overcome your stingy streak.

I am reasonably sure that all of us would like to be generous givers, if for no other reason than being a generous giver requires that you have an abundance to give from.

So, how about it? Would you like to become a generous giver?

I think I can help you with this. I will be sharing some of the things I have learned from God's Word over the years that have immensely helped me.

First of all:

I. Recognize that every good thing you now have came from God.

A. Understand the true source of wealth.

1. In teaching the Corinthian Church to be generous givers, Paul asked them this:

2. **1 Corinthians 4:7** For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

3. Where did you get that talent you have?

4. Who gave you that sharp mind that you do not use nearly often enough?

B. We did not create ourselves.

1. **Psalm 100:3** Know ye that the LORD he is God: *it is he that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

2. **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

3. For some, we achieve just a little bit of success and we can get to thinking that we did it; 'the power comes from me'.

a. If you got a deposit of \$10,000 on a job;

b. And your projected net profit was 30%;

c. And your tithe plus your chosen offering were 20%; then the math is simple.

d. The profit is projected to be \$3,000; 20% of \$3,000 is \$600 and you write the check and bring it on Sunday.

e. Not only does this give the Lord His first, it involves Him in the business of making sure the profit actually happens.

6. Lisa and I have been practicing this plan for decades and since we began giving this way, I've never yet to this day lost money on a job.

7. Go try and find another contractor anywhere that can say that!

Once you have established your plan:

IV. Run with it!

1. Set a start date and begin.

2. Put your plan in motion.

3. Do it well!

3. You look at the gross pay, and multiply that gross pay by .15; 10% tithe and 5% offering.

4. You write the check and BRING it on Sunday.

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him...

5. **1 Chronicles 16:29** Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: **bring an offering**, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

D. Sometimes it is more complicated.

1. Because of direct deposit and auto-pay or other considerations some may need to give online; and you can do that.

2. It is better if you give directly to the Church and BRING it with you for obvious reasons.

3. Those in business rarely know how much they actually make from week to week.

4. You may need a different plan.

5. In our construction business we know the percentage of profit we have built in to our bids; as I'm sure you know the projected margin in yours.

4. Like the Israelites in:

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth...

5. Facts are simple, everything good we have came from God and WE OWE honor to the One who gave us everything.

6. Giving back a portion of what we have been given is how we do it.

7. We won't get into it today, but in fact, everything we have still belongs to God; we are just stewards, managers, over what God has placed in our care.

II. Resolve to change.

A. Be specific.

1. First of all, giving is not an elective that you can do or not do for some extra credit; faithful tithing and giving is a New Testament **command**.

2. Some New Testament commands were also Old Testament commands as well; like the very first one.

3. **Matthew 22:37-40**

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

4. The Lord is dead serious about our obedience.

5. The commands to love and to give are indivisibly connected.

- a. The first commandment is to love.
- b. Giving is the proof of our love.

2 Corinthians 8:24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

c. Failing is sin.

1 Corinthians 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*. Those words mean “cursed to receive the judgment of Christ at His coming”.

6. To honor God with our finances entails tithing, a regular offering above the tithe, and

of the tree, *is* the LORD'S: *it is* holy unto the LORD.

5. When did the tithe ever stop belonging to or being holy to the Lord?

6. Even if you genuinely believed that tithing is not a New Testament command, you couldn't possibly call something less “honoring the Lord”.

7. Your problem is not scriptural interpretation; it is more likely that you are ‘generosity challenged’.

C. Change means you are going to need a plan.

1. God's Word gives us a plan.

- a. We are to give proportionately; that is, by percentage.
- b. We are commanded to choose what we will give.

1. First you are going to determine, starting today, what percentage above the Lord's tithe you will give; say, 5%. (It might be more or it might be less; depends on your current level of faith).

2. You get your check or the notice of your direct deposit.

4. **Proverbs 3:9-10**

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the **firstfruits** of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

5. Tithing and giving is not about money, it's about honor. [That makes giving to God FIRST much more important than how much].

6. When reprovng Israel over their failure to tithe and their unacceptable offerings the Lord said this:

Malachi 1:6 A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts...

B. You may need a change of attitude.

1. You certainly will not change your ways if you still don't believe God is challenging us to do this.

2. Some still refuse to even believe in tithing.

3. Study your Bible; tithing was practiced before the law, commanded in the law and commended by Jesus in the New Testament.

4. **Leviticus 27:30** And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land, *or* of the fruit

unspecified offerings the Lord may lead you to give from time to time.

7. You may be thinking, "I can't afford to do all that".

8. If you'd seen God do all I've seen Him do you would know that you can't afford NOT to do all of that!

9. This is not difficult; God only asks us to give out of what He has given to us first.

Another aspect of making this change is:

B. Be reasonable.

1. **Romans 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

2. Giving is a part of our reasonable service.

3. When the rich sinner Zacchaeus (who was the chief tax collector) met Jesus, he immediately became a giver.

4. **Luke 19:8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

5. Every believer can tithe, and every believer can give.

6. As a matter of fact, the less you have, the more urgent is the necessity that you learn to become a generous giver!

7. However, depending on the current level of your faith, you may need to start with just a small percentage above your tithe and then raise that over time as the Lord blesses you.

Next:

C. Be right.

1. Do it for a righteous reason.
2. With giving, this is easy to determine.
3. You do it because the Lord commands it.
4. And you do it because you love Him and want to honor Him.
5. “**not grudgingly, or of necessity**” which means NOT because you have to and NOT because the Church needs the money.
6. Also NOT just because you are going to gain from it, even though you will.

Then:

D. Don't be afraid.

1. Does a commitment to tithing and giving or increasing your offering create fear?

2. It apparently does.

3. Let me ask, when has the Lord ever failed to do in your life as He promised?

4. **2 Corinthians 9:8** And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

5. You **can** do this and there is no reason to be afraid.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Once you have made your decision:

III. Rethink your financial priorities.

A. Determine exactly what must change.

1. With this particular decision, only a few changes may be required.
2. You will need to adjust the way you pay your bills.
3. When you receive income, your offering to the Lord should be the first thing that comes out of it.