

## Generosity

### Week 2—Generosity and Relationships<sup>1</sup>

#### TRUTH

Financial generosity will translate into relational generosity. Generosity is not a *part* of one's life; it is a response and disposition that touches *all* areas of life. Financial expert Brad Leeper has said, "Generosity is now the best apologetic we as Christ-followers have to a watching and needy world."

Indeed, the world is not only watching how Christians use their money, but also how their convictions translate into loving and serving people. Are we being generous with our time, talents, and relationships? Money is only one form of currency in our world today.

We live in a time when people are more aware than ever of what other people are doing—or not doing. Our Christian witness is not only demonstrated by how we steward our resources, but in how we *live*. The apostle Paul touched on this theme when he wrote to the church at Thessalonica: "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God *but also our own selves*, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thessalonians 2:8, emphasis added).

Pastor Tim Keller helps us understand Paul's statement by shedding light on the cultural dynamics of the first century. He writes:

*"The early church was strikingly different from the culture... the pagan society was stingy with its money and promiscuous with its body. A pagan gave nobody their money and practically gave everybody their body. And the Christians came along and gave practically nobody their body, and they gave practically everybody their money."*

The early Christians were deeply transformed by the grace of the Gospel, and as a result, their financial *and relational* generosity was on display for all to see. They were generous in forgiving others, for example, because generous people cancel debts and absorb the cost themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> A significant portion of this study was drawn from Tim Keller and the staff at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Copyright, 2016.

## EQUIP

1. How has our culture affected your relationships, whether for better or worse?
2. Compare and contrast the Church in the first century and the Church today. What can we learn from them?
3. Read Luke 17:3-10 and Leviticus 19:17-18. In the Luke passage, Jesus makes it clear to His disciples who they really are—servants whose extraordinary debt to God, their master, has been forgiven. As a result of experiencing such forgiveness, the appropriate response is to seek reconciliation with those who wrong them. What is *your* response to being called an “unworthy servant” whose duty it is to offer unlimited forgiveness?
4. What is the connection between Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4) and his response to His disciples about faith and duty (vs. 6-10)?
5. What are the specific steps listed in Jesus’ command to forgive, and how is this different from the ways we have thought of forgiveness?
6. What do you think it means to “rebuke your neighbor frankly” in the context of loving your neighbor as yourself?
7. Jesus came “not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). How does Jesus’ life as a servant transform your understanding of what it means to forgive?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

NOTE: Your study group does NOT need to go through every one of the following questions. Devote the final 30 minutes of your study time to the ACCOUNTABILITY section, and cover as many questions as you can depending on your group's size.

1. How does the forgiveness God offers us through Jesus radically transform the way we extend forgiveness to others?
2. We are called to be people of reconciliation and peace, yet we often find ourselves in situations where unforgiveness has alienated us from those who have wronged us. What are some practical steps we can take to reach out to those who have sinned against us?
3. What events over the past week encouraged you? What *discouraged* you?
4. Without focusing on something you're "doing," describe your relationship with the Lord.
5. How have you worshipped the creation rather than the Creator?
6. What lies have you been believing?
7. Describe a situation or relationship that you would like prayer for.
8. Which spiritual discipline (prayer, study, fellowship, etc.) has blessed you recently? Why?
9. Which spiritual discipline have you neglected lately? Why?

## **MISSION**

1. Village Seven's 2020 emphasis is **For the City: Gospel Love, Living Local**. How can God use you to seek the welfare of Colorado Springs?
2. Do you have a place where you serve in Colorado Springs? If so, how's it going? If not, what are some places where you could get excited to serve and engage?
3. God has placed you at your job, in your neighborhood, and in this city for a reason. Who are people in your life that don't know the Good News of the Gospel?
4. We are praying as a church for God to give us boldness to have spiritual conversations with non-believers we know. How are you doing with this?