

## Generosity

### Week 3—Generosity and Wealth<sup>1</sup>

#### **TRUTH**

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church and author of numerous bestselling books including the *The Purpose Driven Life*, suggests a simple way to determine whether or not you are actually generous. “Show me your calendar and checkbook stubs, and I’ll tell you what is really important to you,” he explains.<sup>2</sup>

As Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we live in an unprecedented time of wealth, comfort, and prosperity. It is true that the way to someone’s heart is through their wallet. Once in a while, such as on Christmas morning, we revel in the joy of giving rather than receiving. But what about the other 364 days of the year?

Time and again, we buy into the lie that we will find joy and fulfillment in *stuff*. We are a culture controlled by instant gratification and consumerism, with very few threats to our comfort. We know that it’s better for us to eat kale than to go to McDonald’s. But fast food is cheap and convenient, and those greasy, salty fries just taste so good going down! We’d rather enjoy the fleeting pleasures of the drive-through than think about what a fatty diet will do to us in the long term. In other words, we don’t keep the end in sight.

We often do the same thing with our finances. Rather than investing in the future, or in the Kingdom, we spend for the here-and-now. Pastor Tim Keller notes, “Americans of 40 years ago would be shocked to see what Christians today think of as necessities. But we view things this way because we keep defining ‘basics’ the way the consumer capitalist culture wants us to—which is always being defined upward, and fast.”<sup>3</sup>

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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.

<sup>2</sup> *Generosity in the Present and Future* by Evan Kirkpatrick

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/more-than-money-tim-keller-on-how-to-live-generously/>

## EQUIP

1. What do your calendar and your checkbook reveal?
2. What does it mean to “keep the end in sight” in the context of our spirituality and specifically regarding our wealth?
3. What are the possessions you hold most dear?
4. Read Luke 18:18-30 and Deuteronomy 10:12-15. In Luke 18, the rich ruler claimed that he had faithfully kept all the commandments since his youth. Why, then, was it so difficult for him to follow Jesus’ command in verse 22?
5. Is Jesus’ command to sell everything and give to the poor required of everyone who seeks to follow him? Why or why not?
6. What are some of the things in which we place our trust and security? And why are these things such spiritual traps?
7. According to Deuteronomy 10:12-15, what was lacking about the rich ruler’s obedience?
8. Jesus says that no one who has forsaken family or riches to follow him “will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.” What are some things we find in Jesus that our idols cannot provide?

## **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. What would it look like to faithfully serve God with our wealth and all he has given us? What area of your life would be most affected?
2. What are some ways we can be more generous with our money? How could we limit some spending in order to increase our giving?
3. In what ways do we make our wealth and material things more important than they actually are?
4. What events over the past week encouraged you? What *discouraged* you?
5. Without focusing on something you're "doing," describe your relationship with the Lord.
6. How have you worshipped the creation rather than the Creator?
7. What lies have you been believing?
8. Describe a situation or relationship that you would like prayer for.
9. Which spiritual discipline (prayer, study, fellowship, etc.) has blessed you recently? Why?
1. 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?

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