

Greed and Generosity
Gulf Gate Church / 07.27.08 / Will Groben

Proverbs 4:23 [NIV]: “Above all else, guard your heart,
for it is the wellspring of life.”

Luke 12:15 [NET]: “Then he [Jesus] said to them, ‘Watch out and guard yourself from all types of greed, because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”

1 Timothy 6:17-19 [NASB]: “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

Luke 12:33-34 [Jesus speaking]: “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

All we have is a gift from God. We have more than we need.

Why would God give us more than we need? What would God want his representatives on Earth to do with the surplus?

Does your spending indicate you are more like the man in the parable of Luke 12:16-21 or more like Christ?

Is your purpose to live for Christ or to indulge yourself in the things of the world? Is your perspective kingdom oriented or worldly?

What percentage of your income do you give away now? What percentage do you think is a good goal for you?

Generosity will lead to increased devotion to God, increased dependence on God, increased intimacy with God, increased realization of the fruit of the Spirit, healing and cleansing, a heightened sense of being truly alive, more treasure in Heaven, and an increase in the blessing of others!

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One Method to Develop a Discipline of Generosity

- † Try what Andy Stanley calls, “Percentage Priority Giving.”
 - Choose a percentage of your income and decide up front that before you fund your lifestyle you will give this much away; thus you will put others first and sacrifice a little.
 - If this frightens you, start low, say at 2% of your income; or increase your current level of giving by one percentage point.
 - Increase this percentage every few months until you are giving away more than 10%. 15% of pre-tax income is an attainable level for the average person or family. If you can give even more, that’s great!
 - This will require some sacrifice and change of habits, but you will still be well off and you will become a better steward over the money you retain. If you make lots of money, you can give a higher percentage of your income at the same level of sacrifice.

- † Next, prayerfully prioritize your giving allocation:
 - The bulk of your giving should help fund God’s work: church, missionaries, scholarships for seminary students, scholarships for youth and children’s camp, Angel’s Attic, Gifts from God, Sarasota Medical Pregnancy Center, et cetera.
 - You can allocate a lesser amount to other good causes: food bank, Hospice, Easter Seals, charities fighting diseases like the American Lung Association, Selby Gardens, Mote Marine, educational institutions, et cetera.
 - Keep some aside for spontaneous giving: when you see someone in need, give; isn’t that what you would expect of God if you were in need? Be God’s instrument of blessing!

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