



Greed vs Generosity
Prv 11:24-25 & 2 Cor 8 & 9 August 27, 2017

I. Introduction:

- A. Greed and Generosity are polar opposites in many ways:
 - 1. One is a sin; the other is a grace.
 - 2. One is all about getting; the other is all about giving.
 - 3. One thinks about yourself; the other thinks about others.
 - 4. One destroys your own soul; the other blesses you and others!
- B. Let's start with a simple definition: greed, coveting and envy are all about getting for me; generosity is all about giving to others!
- C. This is important because if you struggle with greed, envy or coveting it is like cancer to your soul; but if you have the grace of generosity you are going to experience God's life giving blessings!
 - 1. Read Prv 14:30
 - a) Tranquil – Hebrew – peaceful, contented
 - b) Passion – Hebrew word can mean either envy or jealousy!
 - c) Key point I want you to see is what it does to you
 - (1) NASB – Tranquility/contentment gives life to the body but passion/envy is like rottenness to the bones.
 - (2) ESV – Tranquility gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot!
 - (3) NLT – Peace leads to healthy body; jealousy is like cancer in the bones!
- D. So these are the questions we must face today to reveal the condition of our hearts to see if it is healthy and growing or if it has a spiritual cancer in it.

1. Are you always considering the next thing you want to get for yourself or your house or your particular toys, (cancer), or are you satisfied with what you have and considering ways to help others in need and further God's Kingdom with what you have (life giving)?
- I want to take a closer look at generosity by looking at two passages regarding it. So let's start by turning to ...

II. Proverbs 11:24-25

A. Read 11:24-25

1. Read it in Message
2. Simply stated he is saying if you are generous you will be blessed all the more, but if you are tight fisted, stingy and withhold your hand to others you will suffer want!

B. Note what he says about the generous.

1. 24a – increase
2. 25a – prosperous
3. 25b – waters = to lavish upon or give in abundance – figuratively used of raining profusely or drenching an object. The focus is that the person who lavishes abundantly upon others will be drenched themselves with abundant provisions, they will be satisfied!

C. If you are one who withholds, one who restrains from reaching out to help others, then you will only end up in want, need or lack!

D. Now all of this goes against my accounting background, and anyone who understands math might struggle with this as well.

1. Generosity

- a) Here is your asset pool. (marbles)
- b) You give some away to help the needy or further the Kingdom
- c) Accounting and math says you will end up with less assets.
- d) Proverbs here says you will actually end up with more.

2. Withholding

- a) Here is your asset pool. (marbles)
- b) You do not give any to the needy or to further God's Kingdom.
- c) Accounting and math say you will end up with the same amount.

d) Proverbs says you will actually end up with less!

E. How can that be?

1. Prov 19:17

a) Turn and read

b) God Himself will repay you for graciousness to the poor.

2. I remember in earlier years we were struggling a bit financially, and my 3 little girls wanted donuts for breakfast.

a) I told them we could not afford donuts, so no donuts today.

b) One of my daughters went to her piggy bank and got money out of it and gave me money for donuts! What an awesome move on her part, and did I ever feel like a jerk then.

c) So I accepted the money from her (so she could feel the blessing) and bought the donuts, but later that day without her knowing, Kim and I put the money back in her bank with some extra to bless her for her good heart!

3. I believe that is exactly what our generous Father God does when we give to the needy and to His kingdom work. He provides for our needs and gives us a bit extra so my needs will be met, and I will have enough to keep on giving to the needy and the Kingdom!

F. Prv 11:24-25 teaches us that the realm of generosity is not a math thing or an accounting budget thing, but it is a God thing!

- Turn to 2 Cor 9 where we will learn more about supernatural nature of generosity.

III. 2 Cor 9

A. In the Old Testament era we learn that giving was a matter of law, and the 10% tithe based on the principle if you obey I will bless you if you do not obey I will curse you. But in the New Testament era we learn that giving is a matter of grace and generosity based on the example of Jesus at the cross and a promise to provide what you need plus some to keep on giving!

B. First thing we learn in 2 Cor 8 is that generosity is not a matter only for the wealthy. Generosity is not based upon how much money you have or do not have. Generosity is a grace of the heart, whether you are poor or rich or someplace between the two!

1. Read v 1-5

2. Point out a few things:

- a) In verse 1 we learn that generosity is a result of the grace of God operating in one's heart. In other words generosity comes from God and His Spirit working in our hearts.
 - b) V 2 – These were people in deep poverty with generous (liberality) hearts. Read v2
 - c) V3 Generosity is defined here as giving according to what you have and beyond what you can really afford, and all of this is done with a willing spirit. Read v3
- C. After encouraging the Corinthians to be like the Macedonians and to abound in the grace of giving along with all the other graces, he tells them this is not an issue of law but of love! And Jesus is the great example of this generosity!
- 1. Read v8-9
 - 2. Note in v9 he talks about the grace and love of Jesus Christ displayed in His great act of generosity at the cross.
 - a) Speaking spiritually here but using it here to illustrate and apply it in the area of money. Reread v9
- D. Then in chapter 9:5-11 I want to point out just three things he teaches us about generosity.
- 1. Covetousness, greed, the desire for more for yourself will impact your ability to be generous. Generosity and greed cannot exist in the same heart; they are mutually exclusive!
 - a) Read v5
 - b) Bountiful means generous or abundant gift. A gift designed to be a blessing to others!
 - 2. God promises to provide for those who willingly give generously!
 - a) Read v6-7 where we see the generous and willing and joyful giver.
 - b) Read v8 where we see God's promise to provide for those who give generously! God will make all grace about toward you so you will have everything you need! Key word: need not want!
 - 3. The truth about generosity here is that God provides for the generous person, not so they can get more but so they can give more!
 - a) This is not prosperity theology where if you give more God will give you more to spend on yourself.

- b) This is generosity theology where God will give you more so you can give more!
 - (1) Read 8c - abundance for every good deed
 - (2) Read 10 – Supply and multiply so you can sow more
 - (3) Read 11 – God enriches us, increases us, prospers us, waters us so we can be generous with those in need and His Kingdom work!

IV. Life Hack

- A. The best way to examine your heart is to examine your checkbook.
 - 1. Beyond the necessities of life, how much in your checkbook is about getting stuff for yourself, and how much is about giving to MVC, missionaries and poor?
 - 2. Take a look – that checkbook register is the x-ray machine that will give you an accurate diagnosis of your heart condition!
 - 3. And while you are looking at your giving ask: “This is what I am giving according to my my ability to give, below my ability to give or beyond my ability.” That will help you know if you are just giving or if you are a generous giver.
 - 4. And I must admit there are fewer people that I admire more than generous people.
- B. The best way to break the hold of greed and covetousness on our hearts and move towards generosity is
 - 1. Dwell upon the generosity of God at the cross.
 - a) The Father so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son - His greatest asset if you will -- God gave us His best, not some leftovers, He gave us the Holy Spotless Lamb who is the Son of God, Jesus.
 - b) And Jesus gave so much of His riches that He became poor so that we might become rich. Is that not what generosity is?
 - (1) This is exactly what 2 Cor 5:21 tells us when he said: “He who knew no sin became sin (that is rich becoming poor) so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him!” (That is poor becoming rich.)
 - 2. As you are dwelling upon the beauty of God’s generosity, be honest with Him, yourself and others how far short you fall of being a generous person and rely upon the Holy Spirit to change your heart regarding this.

3. Finally by faith write a check, a generous check in light of how God has prospered you and give it to God's work or someone in need!