

Four Keys to Financial Freedom
Part 2: "Give Generously"

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection

- At TCC we often talk about "transformation into the image of Christ"—but it's easy for that to remain a bit vague and undefined. Do you find the idea of becoming "kind and generous to ungrateful people"—as Christ is (Luke 6:35)—attractive or repellant, and why?
- From 1 Timothy 6:17-19, make a list of we (since we all qualify as "rich") must, and must not, do. **Why** do you think we must **not** do those two things listed in v. 17? Support your answer biblically. **Why** do you think we must do the things which are listed in v. 17-19? Support your answer biblically. Which of those "dos and don'ts" do you find most challenging—and why?
- If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? How would you explain it in **plain language** that anyone could understand?
- **How** do we know that Proverbs 3:9-10, Luke 6:38, and 2 Corinthians 9:6–11 ("the principle of increase") **don't** teach the so-called "prosperity gospel"?
- Pastor Doug noted that the single clear New Testamental criterion for giving is "generosity". Many people would prefer a law: "Give this much..."—but God didn't do that (although he could have). **Why** do you think that is? What is the **danger** of a law. What is the **benefit** of a principle?
- How **voluntary** (ie, personally determined) is your giving?

How **proportionate** is your giving?
(ie, how well does it mirror God's generosity to you)

How **systematic** is your giving?

Are you in financial bondage?
For hope and help go to:
tcc.org, Keyword: MoneyWise

Application-Challenge

- Become a generous giver.
- Believe that God will give an increase as you give.
- Do what God shows you to do in regards to giving.



Take One Step: What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



Sermon Summary

Because God gives generously, we should give generously (1 Timothy 6:17-19). God wants us to be generous. And when we are, God seems to multiply our resources, enabling us to give even more. This principle of increase is found throughout the Scriptures (Luke 6:38, Proverbs 3:9-10, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11). Giving is a supernatural way to bring increase to your finances. From a secular perspective, getting ahead by giving doesn't make any sense, but God says that if you do it, he will bless you.

When it comes to giving, you should prayerfully ask God to show you how much to give, where to give, and when to give. And just as importantly, God wants your attitude about giving to be cheerful. He wants you to actually enjoy giving (2 Corinthians 9:7)! Based upon your income, your giving should be generous. This is highly subjective; however, it is a good starting point in making decisions about charitable contributions. You could ask yourself this question: Based upon how God has blessed me, am I a truly generous giver? It is important to recognize that your giving accomplishes three things: it acknowledges God, it helps the needy, and it spreads the gospel.

Giving Acknowledges God Giving starts with God. God is the ultimate owner of all that we possess. There is nothing that exists that did not come from God. Therefore, all that you have comes from him. Your ability to give comes only because you have something and that something came from God (Psalm 24:1). By giving a portion of what you have to God, you are acknowledging that he is the owner of it all. The greater the blessing we have received, the greater the proportion we should give. God blesses us differently. But to whom much is given, much is required (Deuteronomy 16:10).

In I Corinthians 16, we find four principles which should guide our giving to the local church:

1. Giving is to be **systematic**. Paul suggested putting aside money at the first of every week. The idea is that our giving should be regular and planned as opposed to irregular and spur-of-the-moment.
2. Giving is to be **personally determined**. It is not to be imposed from without. You should prayerfully determine the amount you want to systematically give.
3. Giving is to be **proportionate** with how God has blessed us. The standard by which our contribution is judged by God is in relation to what we have, not what we don't have. What is a generous amount for me might not be a generous amount for you, and vice versa.
4. Giving is the **responsibility of all**. "Let each one of you...." We cannot file for an exemption!

Giving Helps the Needy Taking care of the needy is not a new idea created by the government. Charity is God's idea. God is compassionate and he wants his people to care for the poor and needy. The Bible teaches us to give generously to the poor (Deuteronomy 15:11). In fact, did you know that when you give to the poor, when you extend hospitality to the needy, you are really giving to God (Matthew 25:37-40)? As important as it is to give to the physical needs of others, God cares most deeply about where individuals will spend eternity: with him or without him. And that brings us the third thing that our giving accomplishes: it helps spread the Gospel.

Giving Spreads the Gospel Mankind is afflicted with a spiritual malady called "sin." Everyone has it. If untreated, it leads to eternal spiritual death. This malady is so great, it required Jesus' death to remedy it. God cares so much about our souls that he gave his only son (John 3:16). Giving financial support to ministries that spread the gospel, the good news about Jesus, is another way of giving to those things that God cares deeply about. In fact, Paul thanked the Philippian church for their support of his gospel ministry (Philippians 1:3-5). You can give cheerfully because you know that are helping people come to have a personal relationship with God that will transform their eternity.

Let's determine to take the time this week to pray and meditate about our financial generosity and listen to God's voice in this critical area.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Many people think of freedom as the ability to do whatever we want—but those in prison today did exactly that! So, what is freedom? God's Word, of course, clears away the fog...

Monday—What is “freedom”—really?

- According to 1 Peter 2:16, truly free people don't automatically **act as** free men (or else it would not be commanded). What does this passage say is the alternative to “acting as free men”? Ordinarily, we don't think of slaves as “free”—so how do you explain the final phrase in this passage?
- Read John 8:34-36. According to v. 34, how common is slavery? Were you a slave? Are you still?
- Explain this: “I walk in freedom **because** I have devoted myself to your commandments.” (Psalm 119:45). **How** does **obedience to rules** result in freedom? (Who is **truly** free: the mountain climber who is “limited” by his ropes, or the one who ignored the rule of gravity, and now is—*quite freely*—falling?) God is **absolutely** free—but we humans **aren't**—why is that?
- So, what exactly is “freedom” for us humans? Write a definition.

Tuesday—What is **financial** freedom?

- According to Luke 16:13, what are our two options for who/what our master will be? Who or what is **your** master? What evidence can you give to support that conclusion?
- Read Matthew 19:16-17, 20-22. Jesus never required anyone else to give away everything they have in order to be saved—so why do you think he made this the requirement for this young man? Do you think that this man ever regretted his decision? If so, when?
- Is there any “possession” for which you would say “no” to God if he asked you to give it up? (Include “possessions” such as your health, your retirement, your reputation, your income, etc.)

Wednesday—Time for a reality check...

- Proverbs 18:23 says that “The poor plead for mercy, but the rich answer roughly”, but according to Revelation 3:17, what is Jesus' evaluation of **every** human being (including me and you)? Which of those descriptions do you have the most difficulty agreeing that they actually describe you?
- Read Proverbs 30:7-9. What is the danger of having **less** than we need? ...**more** than we need? Which of the dangers found in v. 9 frighten you more—and why? Why do you think that the writer of Proverbs **prayed** about these issues?
- Should you be more afraid of the deceptiveness of riches? Why or why not? What changes **should** you make? What changes **will** you make?

Thursday—“Paradox” [par-uh-doks]: an apparent contradiction which, in reality, expresses the truth.

- Read Proverbs 11:24-28. At first glance, verse 24 appears paradoxical, but think of the farmer: How much would a farmer harvest if he refused to scatter seed (v. 24a)? Verse 25 broadens the principle beyond agriculture—so, why do you think we're so afraid to give?
- Notice that the greedy man (v. 26) isn't even willing to **sell** grain—much less **give** it away (v. 24-25). He **trusts** in riches (28). This is a moral/spiritual issue—read Psalm 52:7. What is the **alternative** to trusting in riches? Does the rich man think that he needs a refuge? Why or why not? Back to Proverbs 11:28. What happens to the rich man who trusts in his wealth? What happens to the righteous man who makes God his refuge?

Friday—Read Luke 12:16-21, then...

- Why didn't the option of **giving** occur to this fellow? If he would have generously given, how do you think the story would have ended? (See v. 33.)
- According to Luke 12:25-26, 32, why aren't we generous? What does v. 28c add as a motive?
- Do you operate more out of faith, or out of fear? What evidence can you give for your answer?

Saturday—**Preparing to gather with your church family tomorrow on “the Lord's Day” (Revelation 1:10)...**

Tomorrow Pastor Doug will explore the role “spending wisely” plays in gaining financial freedom.

- What are examples wise spending in your current life-state?
- What are some examples of foolish spending from your past?
- Do you more often learn through instruction or from “the school of hard knocks”? Which method of learning is more pleasant? (Tomorrow Doug will help us learn the easy way!)