



Generosity

Phil 4:14-23 | Ryan Pfeiffer | November 24, 2024

INTRO. Paul's letter to Philippians- a thank you letter for their support

We get this incredible glimpse into the radical generosity of the early Church

And how sacrificial, joyful, countercultural generosity fuels the Christian life!

Bragging about the Philippians, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8:2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

Wow! "They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing..."

The Philippians generosity was:

- Generous
- Consistent.... in good times and bad times,
- Regular (v16...you sent me aid more than once)
- Sacrificial
- Voluntary ... not under compulsion or guilt
- Cheerful

I could say the same about you North Coast Calvary!

1. You gave so generously through COVID! Held steady. No lay offs!
2. When we sought to help Christians flee from Afghanistan... you gave \$250K helping tons of people escape to safety.
3. Your generosity overflows to the tune of 1.2M to support Churches in ME, Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America
4. Through your generosity we are able to support local missionaries with FCA, YL, SDRM
5. And help those in need here, rent, mortgage, food, hospital bills.

There is a counterintuitive nature to Christian generosity...

Paul quotes Jesus in Acts 20:35 "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Intuitively we think of the blessing in the opposite direction...

FOCUS: What are the blessings of generosity? Paul highlights 4 in this passage. 1. Helps others. 2. Advances the Gospel. 3. Changes us. 4. Pleases God!

HELPS OTHERS. 14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles...18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.

The first blessing of generosity is that others are helped in practical ways.

Generosity is the practical expression of our faith in Jesus.



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James 2:15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead... I will show you my faith by my deeds.

The practical nature of generosity has multiple effects:

- Gives others a tangible experience with the grace of God.
- Helps us surrender our possessions, our time, our talents for God's glory!
- Moves our faith from good intentions to good deeds.
- Strengthens the social fabric of our relationships and society.

ADVANCES THE GOSPEL. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only...

The second blessing of generosity is that it fueled the spread of the gospel.

These missionary journeys by Paul launched the gospel into Europe... world!

It's why we as a church are committed to supporting churches like The Church of the Resurrection in Lebanon... for the sake of a gospel witness!

It's why we're committed to tithing < 10% to support churches, orgs globally .

Phil 1:4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now...

INVITE. Invite local partners to raise hand... then come up to front.

CHANGES US. 17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

Paul uses the language of a financial manager... credited to your account.

Paul is talking about how generosity not only blesses others it blesses us.
The Third blessing of generosity is that it changes us.

Every time we give even in the smallest way... something changes in us.

- Generosity blesses our emotional/ mental health.

In a study at UC Berkeley titled the "Science of Generosity" they found:

1. One study found that toddlers younger than two exhibited more happiness when giving treats to a puppet than when receiving treats themselves and were even happier when they gave some treats from their own bowl
2. Participants in another study were instructed to perform acts of kindness for others or the world over a six week period; these participants reported increased positive emotions and decreased negative



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emotions, while others who were instructed to perform acts of kindness toward themselves did not report any emotional benefits

3. Study involving 29,000 adults found that people who volunteered for religious organizations reported greater happiness, better heart conditions, and lived longer than those who did not.
4. Maybe Jesus wasn't crazy! Jesus... "blessed" → happy → Deep joy"

2) Generosity re-centers our life in loving interest and concern for others.

3) Generosity frees us from greed, materialism and envy. Which only lead to conflict, anxiety, and restlessness. (CH4- Euodia, Anxiety, Contentment).

PLEASES GOD! 18 They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

The greatest blessing of generosity... it pleases God. PAUSE. Wow!

That's why I think we are happier giving than receiving... cuz God's happy!

Many reasons why God loves generosity but let me focus on one:

Generosity reflects the grace of Jesus on the cross. 2 Cor 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

This kind of generosity is gratuitous, reckless, crazy— its the GRACE OF GOD

Giving generously is an act of worship to God.

Woman w/ nard- And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. Jhn 12.