



# WAYS OF LIFE



As disciples of Jesus, we desire to grow in stewardship and generosity for two reasons:

1

Growing in generosity - specifically through our resources - teaches us to trust God more and more.

2

As we grow as wise stewards, we participate and contribute to the mission of making disciples.

Jesus spoke more about money and possessions than about heaven or hell.

Over 15% of Jesus' teachings have to do with money and possessions.

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and money.*

Matthew 6v19-24 (ESV)

What is your treasure? [Matt. 6v19-20]

Treasure Assessment (A. W. Tozer)

What do we value most?

What would we most hate to lose?

What do our thoughts turn to most frequently when we are free to think of what we will?

And finally, what affords us the greatest pleasure?

Jesus encourages us to *invest wisely*.

We always pay dearly for chasing after what is cheap.

- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn



Where is your heart? [Matt. 6v21]

Jesus is saying:

*where you invest your money, your heart will follow.*

Your heart will always follow your treasure.

God wants our hearts, not just donors. He wants a particular sort of people who are sold out to the mission of God in the world; people who have a vision for eternity that is so big that they wouldn't dream of *not* investing their time, money, and prayers where the will of God is breaking into the world!

“There is a powerful relationship between our true spiritual condition and our attitude and actions concerning money and possessions.”

- Randy Alcorn

*The way of generosity transforms our hearts.*



The practice of giving transforms our hearts toward Jesus and his way of life.

Generosity fuels the mission of God and partners with him to make disciples of all nations.

## Moving from a heart of **scarcity** to **abundance**.

Scarcity	Abundance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Control</li><li>● Entitlement</li><li>● Owned <i>by</i> possessions (debt or attitude)</li><li>● Stingy</li><li>● Fear</li><li>● Money is the means for security</li><li>● Self-protection</li><li>● Privacy and defensiveness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Freedom</li><li>● Steward</li><li>● Manager of possessions</li><li>● Generosity</li><li>● Joy</li><li>● Money as the means to transformation of self and others</li><li>● Self-denial</li><li>● Accountability and openness</li></ul>

# Five values of generosity from New Testament teachings:

## **Voluntary**

2 Cor. 9v7 "You must each make up your own mind as to how you should give..."

## **Cheerful**

2 Cor. 9v7 "Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully."

## **Proportional**

2 Cor. 8v11-12 "Give what you can according to what you have. If you are really eager to give, it isn't important how much you are able to give. God wants you to give what you have, not what you don't have."

## **Regular**

1 Cor. 16v2 "On every Lord's Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once."

## **Sacrificial and Generous**

2 Cor. 8v2-3 "Though they have been going through much generous trouble and hard times, their wonderful joy and deep poverty have overflowed in rich generosity."

God's plan for giving is not to raise money for the church.  
Giving is part of God's plan to make disciples.

Giving as a means of growing in discipleship:

Giving has great implications for **my** discipleship to Jesus.

Giving has great implications for **others'** discipleship to Jesus.



You must each make up your own mind as to how you should give, not reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully.

2 Corinthians 9v7

# Stages of Growth in Giving

Stage 1	Emerging Givers
Stage 2	Growing Givers
Stage 3	Faithful Givers
Stage 4	Generous Givers

# Stage 1

## Emerging Givers

- Usually early in the process of following Jesus or even before profession of faith
- Give out of Ego-centric reasons
- I feel good when I give
- I think I'm supposed to give
- I probably should give something

## Stage 2

### Growing Givers

- Socio-centric in nature, even for philanthropic reasons
- A desire for everyone "to play their part"
- I'm blessed, so I owe it to give
- I believe that God tells us we should be generous, so I will when I can
- I'll do more later

## Stage 3

### Faithful Givers

- Usually involves some type of commitment to give and is socio-centric for those who don't yet follow Jesus
- I'm in, I believe in this cause
- I want to make a difference and see it through
- Gives through a Theo-centric perspective.
- I give because God has given everything for me
- I give out of worship to God
- I give because I want to participate in the Kingdom of God and his work in the world
- I give because I care and want to love others



## Stage 4

### Generous Givers

- Gives from a place of maturing, Theo-centric perspective
- God blesses me to be a blessing
- I love to give!
- God created me to give and be generous because all I have is God's to begin with.
- God gives me opportunities to give
- God provides all I need and seems to give me more to give away
- How could I not give considering what God has given to me?

A few best practices when it comes to generosity:

- Giving of "firstfruits" (Tithe)
- "Bless Others" fund
- Simple living
- Grace-giving (sacrificial and spontaneous giving)

Jesus Christ was the most generous gift given from a loving God who knows no bounds when it comes to generosity. Because of this, we desire to give God glory by embodying the generous heart of God by being a generous church.

We aspire to follow Jesus with an attitude of abundance, believing God has already provided everything we need in time, talent, and treasure for every good and beautiful work in the Kingdom. We seek to develop hearts of generosity and teach principles of responsible stewardship through everything we engage in as a church community.

We will be obedient to God by faithfully giving to support the work of Jesus in our local church, our community, and throughout the world. We will diligently find ways to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ by meeting the needs of others through acts of generosity in a world that has great need.