



Generosity

Noun

the quality of being kind, understanding, and not selfish: the quality of being generous; especially: willingness to give money and other valuable things to others¹

You may recall the last time you gave a gift for a birthday or special celebration to a friend. Most likely their response was to say ‘thank you’ and return the honour by giving a gift to you when your special moment came up.

In today’s economy, giving and receiving is a fair exchange of repaying a gift with a thank you and then giving in return, to receive a thank you....and so on.

John Bunyan said: “**You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.**”



QUESTIONS:

- How would it feel to give a gift and not receive anything in return, even a thank you?
- How would it feel to receive a gift and know there was nothing you could do to repay the kindness?
- Describe the last amazing gift you received. Why was it amazing?
- How did you say thank you, or attempt to relay the impact it had on you to the giver of the gift?

The fact is we just may not know what it is truly like to receive a gift of such great price that our ability to repay would render us helpless, either because we did not have the words or the resources to do so.

Consider the following scenarios:

- ~ you open up your mortgage statement to find out it has been marked PAID IN FULL
- ~ you pull up to the pay window at the Starbucks drive-through to find that the person in front of you has paid for your skinny vanilla latte.
- ~ you show up to the courtroom to contest your speeding ticket and find out the policeman has not showed up, your ticket is waived and you are free to go.



QUESTIONS:

- What would your response be in any of the situations above?
- Who would you thank?

It very well may be that we actually haven't experienced true Generosity because we have either received gifts that can be repaid, or we have given out of excess and it has not cost us anything.

Jesus, on the other hand, had the art of Generosity down pat. Read the following Scriptures:

Ask for anything in my name.

John 14:14 (ESV)

You know the **generous grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty He could make you rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9 NIV)

QUESTIONS:

- In what ways does the world give?
- Unpack what it means to you that you could be made rich out of Jesus' poverty?
- How have you personally experienced the generosity of Jesus?

John 1:16 (NLT) tells us: *"From His abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another."*

In other words, we receive grace upon grace, grace after grace after grace...and there is no end to the grace we receive which renders us unable to either repay it all or even receive it all.

This generous grace of God is like looking up in the sky to see the first star and then seeing another and another and another until you cannot count them.

This generous grace of God is like catching a snowflake on your tongue and before it melts, another comes, and another, and another.

This generous grace of God is like going to a buffet and filling up your plate, and before you are even finished with that portion, your plate is whisked away and you are given a clean plate to put more food on it.

There is just no end to the generosity of God. It is beyond your ability to repay it. And that is why Jesus paid for this grace, through His gracious act of giving His life for yours. Through His generosity, even giving His very life, He made you rich enough to live in the middle of the waterfall of grace. He modeled the perfect definition of Generosity. Giving above and beyond. Giving without expecting to receive what can never be repaid. Giving from pain, suffering and sacrifice. Giving from a deep and generous abundant love.

Generosity begins at the end of that which you have a hard time letting go.



QUESTIONS:

- When is Generosity really Generosity and not just giving because you have it and can afford to give it away?
- How does the model of God's generosity toward you inspire you to be generous? In what ways?
- Is it harder for you to give of your time? Your money? Your personal space? Or something else?

Generosity is a matter of love. In Week Two we shared that the highest form of love is truly sacrificial, and when we are generous we have to give something away. It might be time, resources, belongings, some of our personal equity in a relationship setting.

QUESTIONS:

- What do you find easy to give away, whether it be tangible or not?
- What do you hold on to and have a hard time sharing or giving to others?

To the casual observer, it may have looked like Jesus had little to offer anyone. Yet, it was His earthy poverty that proved His generosity.

As followers of Jesus, then, His generosity ought to serve as an example for us.

When we recognize the gifts we've been given, and are grateful to the Father, it becomes an expression of thanksgiving to pass on those gifts.

"I could share the grace, multiply the joy, extend the table of the feast, enlarge the paradise of His presence. I am blessed. I can bless. A life contemplating the blessings of Christ becomes a life acting the love the Christ."

Ann Voskamp, One Thousand Gifts

QUESTIONS:

- How has Jesus made you 'rich', and how can you share those "riches" with others?
- Share about a time you did something good for someone else that nobody else knew about?
- Share about a time you gave something truly valuable away, something that cost you.



Next week how will we, in humility, choose words and actions that, in their expression, literally wash the feet of others? The last week will synthesize all of the characteristics that Jesus modeled for us in His final days on earth. We are grateful you have come on this journey of belonging with us.

PRAYER By Elle Pyke

Generosity

Father, teach us to be abundantly generous.

Forgive us for times we have withheld what we should have freely given.

Forgive us for the times that enough, didn't seem enough.

Create in us a clean heart God.

With eyes and hearts bent toward humility and surrender.

Give us appetites for more of You, rather than appetites of acquiring more.

Whether big or small, You take what we give and make it overflowing.

May our hands be bridges between the abundance You freely give us Father, to the scarcity we find around us.

May our hands be marked by sacrifice

Our hearts be leaned towards compassion.

May we be women who are marked by generosity to see your Kingdom come and your peace and justice reign.

Amen.



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1 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/generosity>