

Christians are supposed to be the most generous people alive.

God showed how much he loved us by sending his **one and only Son** into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. *1 John 4:9*

Therefore be **imitators of God**, as beloved children. And **walk in love**, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:1-2*

Some people are always greedy for more, but the **godly** love to **give!** *Proverbs 21:26*

There is no epidemic of generosity today among Christ followers.

“Many Americans live fairly ungenerous lives. They do not, for example, engage in much or any voluntary financial giving to valued organizations and good causes. They do not volunteer their time and labor to help others in need. They do not extend themselves much in relationships with family, friends and neighbors.”

— The Paradox of Generosity

We haven't seen the vision of a generous life.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be **generous** and **willing to share**. In this way they will lay up **treasure** for themselves as a firm foundation for the **coming age**, so that they may take hold of the **life** that is **truly life**. *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

A generous person experiences increased happiness.

*“It is more **blessed** to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35*

“Giving is actually inherently rewarding. The brain churns out a pleasurable response when we engage in it.” — Dr. Jordan Grafman

“Generosity triggers chemical systems in the brain and body that increase pleasure experiences of reward, reduced stress and suppressed pain, which tend to lead to greater happiness and health.”

— The Paradox of Generosity

Where are you?

“If it is more blessed to give than it is to receive, then most of us are content to let the other fellow have the greater blessing.”

— Shailor Matthews

29 % Give 12 % Serve

Group Prep

Please read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, then answer the following discussion questions prior to attending.

Introduction

Who doesn't love a generous person? People with big hearts who give much and help others are fun to be around. Christians are supposed to be the most generous people in the world. Why? Because we are to model our lives after the one who gave everything, even His very life, to connect us to the Heavenly Father. If He is our example, why isn't there an epidemic of generosity among Christians?

Discussion Questions

1. Where did you get your ideas on how to handle your time, money, talent and resources?

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Paul instructs followers of Christ to be generous with everything God has blessed them with. Do you believe Christians today are as generous as Paul expected? Why or why not?

2. Describe one idea Paul shares in 2 Corinthians 8 that challenges your level of generosity. How does Paul describe the church of Macedonia in 2 Corinthians 8? What can we learn about generosity through the example of the Macedonians?

In verse 8, Paul says, “I am testing how genuine your love is.” What does Paul mean by this and how does this apply to us? In verse 9, Paul shares about grace and how it impacted the generosity of Jesus. In what ways did Jesus exemplify generosity, and how closely do your personal levels of generosity align?

3. Share a time when you saw a real need in someone's life, and wanted to help, but felt you weren't financially able. Read Acts 20:35. Share a time when you were able to experience this biblical truth for yourself.

At Emmanuel, about 12% of attendees serve somewhere in the church and about 29% give financially. What do you think keeps us from being more generous with our time, talents, and money? What do you think would convince us to live a more generous life?

4. What would have to change in your life to be the kind of Christ-follower who sees a need and is able to act generously? What practical steps do you feel you could take this coming week to become a more generous follower of Christ?

Outreach: Groups in Action

Mark your calendars for Emmanuel's **Pack the House** service project being held November 19 from 4:00-5:30pm (or until they are all packed). Come help pack the boxes that will go to Shepherd Community to distribute to families in need over the holiday break. Any questions, email Kerry Carmichael at kcarmichael@eclife.org.

We are collecting hygiene items that will be used for the upcoming tote-packing service project held November 19 called **Pack the House**. Please pick up some \$1 items from Dollar Tree (i.e. toothpaste, toothbrushes, small bottles of shampoo, and bars of soap), then drop them off at the Information Desk between now and November 16. The boxes we pack will include non-perishable food and hygiene items that will then be delivered to inner city families over the holiday break.

Action Step

Fill in the blanks below for this upcoming week.

My action steps are _____.

I'm accountable for _____, and their action steps are _____.

My memory verse is _____.

This coming week, I'm praying for: _____