



Generosity flows from a joyful heart.

The people **rejoiced** over the offerings, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord, and King David was filled with **joy**. *1 Chronicles 29:9*

They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant **joy**, which has overflowed in rich **generosity**. *2 Corinthians 8:2*

You must each decide in your **heart** how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives **cheerfully**." *2 Corinthians 9:7*

How do you become a joyful giver?

1. See yourself as God's money manager.

1 Chronicles 29:10-14

Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be **generous**. *2 Corinthians 9:11*

2. See yourself as the beneficiary.

A generous person will **prosper**; whoever refreshes others will be **refreshed**. *Proverbs 11:25*

"The more generous Americans are, the more happiness, health, and purpose in life they enjoy." The Paradox of Generosity

"Give, and it will be **given** to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." *Luke 6:38*

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows **generously** will also reap **generously**. *2 Corinthians 9:6*

3. See yourself as living forever.

For this world is not our permanent home; we are **looking forward** to a home yet to come. *Hebrews 13:14*

"You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe." Dallas Willard

Matthew 6:19-20

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**... take hold of the life that is truly life. *1 Timothy 6:18-19*

Will you live a more generous life?

For Group Discussion

Answer these questions prior to your Small Group meeting this week.

Introduction

The Bible says that God wants us to be cheerful givers. The Hebrew word for cheerful literally means "hilarious." That means, when we give we should be filled with joy in the same way as we are when sharing our favorite joke. This describes the paradox of generosity- the idea that it is more exciting to give than to receive and that generosity somehow benefits the giver more than the receiver. So how do we become more joyful givers?

Discussion Questions

1. Generosity flows from a joyful heart. Read 1 Chronicles 29:6-9. Why do you think there was so much excitement and celebration surrounding the gifts that were given? What does this level of excitement and celebration say about the people who gave freely?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:7. Why do you suppose God would use this emotion ("cheerful") to describe the way He wants us to give? What alternative emotions have you felt when it comes to giving? Why?

2. We can become more joyful givers by seeing ourselves as God's money managers. Read 1 Chronicles 29:13-14. The "consumption assumption" says, "because the money comes to me, it must belong to me". What does it look like to behave as a manager of God's money, and not to assume ownership? What are some factors that make this transition in thinking so difficult?

Read Luke 16:10-11. How is God calling you to be faithful and honest in little things, and trustworthy with your worldly wealth?

3. We can become more joyful givers by seeing ourselves as the beneficiaries. Read Proverbs 11:25 and Luke 6:38. These passages say we receive a personal benefit when we are willing to give. Why do you think the Bible includes the promise of blessing those who freely give?

Share a story of how you've been blessed as a result of your generosity.

4. We can become more joyful givers by seeing ourselves as living forever. Read Hebrews 13:14, Matthew 6:19-21, and 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Share some ways we can have an eternal impact with the resources we have today.

What are the factors that keep you from living a more generous life? What steps are you willing to take to become more generous?

OUTREACH: GROUPS IN ACTION

1. Make a decision to go on a short-term mission trip. Emmanuel is putting together a team to go to Nicaragua, and YOU can join. Check out eclife.org/next-steps/serve/global/ for more details. After you prayerfully commit, you'll experience serving and giving in a way you have never experienced.

2. Help someone stay warm this winter. Drop off hats, gloves, and scarves for all ages by December 24. The collection box is located at the Information Desk in the lobby. All items collected will be given to individuals in need in our communities.

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: _____.