

Generous



REDEEMER PAMPA

Generosity:

The Bible is clear that God is the creator and possessor of the world. From Genesis to Revelation, the theme runs consistent: God created the earth, He sustains it, He owns it. It is this truth that drives us toward generosity. Generosity is essentially a reaction to the acceptance of God's ownership; it's an expression of thankfulness for His generosity in sharing His riches with us.

Reasons:

Now for the honest part. We have a hard time being truly generous. Here are some reasons we aren't:

PRIDE: "I did this. I worked hard for it. If other people want something, they need to work for it too."

POWER: If we're honest, we kind of like to have that little edge over others.

FEAR: "I won't stand out without this. It will change my lifestyle and statue to live without it."

IDENTITY: We are scared that we will lose the thing that makes us who we are. *But the gospel compels us to something different.* In realizing that whatever we have is a grace-gift from God, that even when we were LEAST worthy, Jesus gave everything for us, we can start to find some serious reasons to be generous.

RELIANCE: Depending on God to supply our needs.

REVERENCE: Generosity and sacrifice leads us to a greater awareness of God's provision which leads us to worship Him.

REALITY: We begin to view the world through His eyes instead of worldly eyes.

ATTITUDE: Generosity changes our attitude towards our possessions and toward our neighbors. It hits us at the core of how we make decisions.

Some examples:

We love the story of the widow's mite because it informs us on what generosity looks like, even in our areas of need. The widow gave the small amount she had; she gave out of her lack. We all know it's easier to give in areas where we are more than blessed. For some people, that's money, for others it's talents or time. At Redeemer Pampa, we want to be generous in every area, even when, like the widow, we might feel like we have nothing to give.

As you read the relevant scriptures, please take time to note the passage from Matthew 25. Jesus has not simply asked us to be a blessing to people, He makes it clear that blessing others in generosity is worship. Conversely, He had some very harsh things to say about those who neglected to care for their neighbors' needs.

The body:

If we believe that we are one body with many parts and that each part of the body has a unique and indispensable part to play, then we have a responsibility to be generous with each other as well. For some of us, the more difficult thing is to accept generosity when it is offered to us. May we have humble hearts as we give to and receive from each other in the unity of the Body.

For Reflection: In what areas of your life is it easy to be generous? In what areas is it hard? Are you being generous in areas where you are experiencing lack as well as abundance?

For further reading/study:

Scripture:

Galatians 6:7-10
Deuteronomy 8:18
Acts 2:45
Matthew 25:34-46
II Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-8
Proverbs 28:27
Proverbs 11:24
Acts 20:35
Luke 12:48
Psalm 50:9-12
Luke 21:1-4
I Timothy 6:17-19