



Part 4: Fighting the fear of Scarcity

Luke 12:22-34; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

We need not be afraid of having our needs met if we make the Kingdom our priority. The Father will bless our generosity in creative ways.

I. The Generosity Paradox

Secular Western view: more money = more happiness

Jesus' view: more generosity = more happiness

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'There is more joy in giving than in receiving.'" Acts 20:35

Our battle against the lie of our culture is usually fought on one of two battle fronts:

1. Greed (Luke 12:13-21).
2. Fear of Scarcity (Luke 12:22-34).

Our greatest emotional deterrent may be fear. We are worried that if we give too much away, we will not have enough to live. Jesus takes our fear into account, and he makes us a promise.

The economics of the Kingdom work in such a way that we are able to fight the fear of scarcity with faith in God's promises (which are incredible).

II. Jesus Makes Us a Promise (Luke 12:22-34)

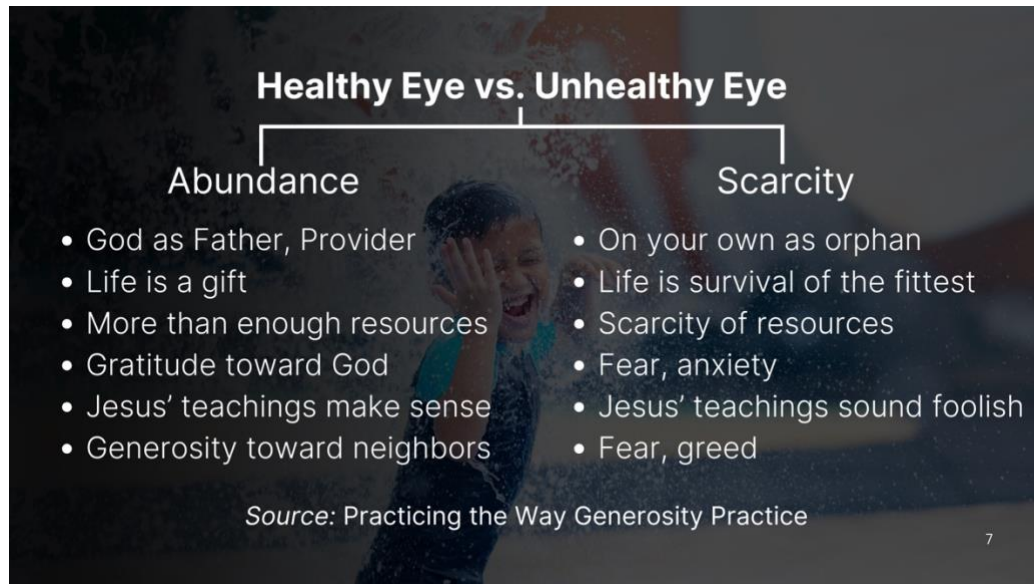
We need not be afraid of having our needs met if we make the Kingdom our priority. The Father will bless our generosity in creative ways.

"Therefore, I tell you do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes." Luke 12:22-23

He uses two examples from the natural world. In both cases, his point is to show how much more graciously the Father will care for His children.

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the Kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Luke 12:33-34

Note: Jesus’ teachings on generosity will seem foolish or even dangerous if you do not share His vision of God the Father.



“He is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep to receive what he cannot lose.” – Jim Elliott

“We store up eternal treasures in the coming age by giving away temporary treasures in the present age.” – Randy Alcorn, *Giving is the Good Life*

It’s not all a tradeoff for the life after death. There is promised blessing now in God’s beautiful Kingdom. There is greater joy now!

III. The Principle of Sowing and Reaping (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

Paul addresses the same fear of scarcity in 2 Corinthians 8-9. He is writing to remind the Corinthians about their earlier promise to give to help the poor Jerusalem Christians. He addresses their fear of scarcity with the spiritual law of the harvest.

“Remember this: **whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.** Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all

grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

God has set up reality according to certain physical laws, i.e. gravity, sowing seeds leads to growing plants etc. God has done the same thing with spiritual laws as well, i.e. sin leads to death; no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood; and sowing and reaping in financial generosity.

We should be motivated to give generously, because we will be rewarded according to our financial generosity.

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:10-11

Paul is addressing the same fear of scarcity addressed by Jesus. Our fear = when money is tight, we need to hold onto it rather than give it away. According to Jesus and Paul, we should do just the opposite!

The Father’s character is to replenish the stores of those who strive to be faithful and generous conduits for His Kingdom mission.

IV. The Practice of Generosity

“But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – **see that you excel in the grace of giving.**” 2 Corinthians 8:7

“Generosity is the practice by which we index our heart from a scarcity mentality to the abundance mentality of Jesus.” – John Mark Comer, The Generosity Practice

A. Where should we give?

1. The poor (Luke 12:33; Galatians 2:10)
2. The Local Church (1 Corinthians 9:1-14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).
3. Greater Kingdom Missions (Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31; 2 Corinthians 8-9).

B. How much should we give?

Jesus and the New Testament writers do not give us a clear rule to follow. Paul says it should be what we can give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). This question should be made in conversation with the Lord, guided by His Word, and your Christian community.

There are Biblical guidelines that Christians have followed:

1. **Priority giving** = of all the items in your monthly budget, the Lord’s share comes first. We give to Him before we pay bills, save or spend money on ourselves (1 Corinthians 16:2; Proverbs 3:9-10).
2. **Percentage Giving** = you decide on a % of your income you will give regularly regardless of your emotions or circumstances (1 Corinthians 16:2; Deut. 16:10, 16-17). Most people

have considered the tithe (10%) the basic starting place, but you may need to work up to that % or move well past it depending on your income.

3. **Progressive giving** = you decide you want to grow in generosity and increase your giving over time (a graduated tithe). Some set a standard of living and give everything over that amount.
4. **Prompted giving** = you are sensitive to the Holy Spirit to prompt you on occasion to give over and above your regular giving. Some people set aside a special account for this giving.

“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘There is more joy in giving than in receiving.’” Acts 20:35

“The Kingdom that Jesus preached and lived was all about a glorious, uproarious, absurd generosity.” – N.T. Wright

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9

Recommended Resources:

1. A Theology of Kingdom Generosity – Pastoral Counsel from the Elders of Greenwood community Church (greenwoodcc.com/resources/articles).
2. The Practice of Generosity (4- Part Video Series) (practicingtheway.org).

Discussion Questions:

1. What has the Holy Spirit done in your heart in this 4-week series?
2. Has anything changed for you because of learning about generosity?
3. What challenges do you anticipate as you consider money and generosity?
4. Are there any steps you sense the Lord leading you to take in regard to money and generosity?

Prayer:

Where our hearts have shrunk, and our giving with them, Holy Spirit come.

Silence.

To the fears that restrain us, and our anxiety for material things, Holy Spirit come.

Silence.

To our other-blindness, and the busyness that causes it, Holy Spirit come.

Silence.

That we may overflow in abundant generosity, Holy Spirit come.

Silence.

That our giving may transform the world, the poor, the church, and us, Holy Spirit come.

Silence.

That we may know you greatly, through the expansion of our offering, Holy Spirit come.

Silence.

Father, you're the embodiment of “giving is better than receiving,” and we want to be like you. We praise and love you, honor and desire you, with all our being, now and forever, amen.

Source: The Generosity Practice, Practicing the Way