

THE WISDOM OF GENEROUS GIVING

Proverbs 11:24-25

- **On Mother's Day we began a series about "wisdom" (Proverbs 10-15) because we want God's people to have the wisdom to make the best decisions in life.**
- **The Lord wants us to be wise when it comes to our decisions, our living, our working, our relationship building and our giving.**
- *"Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."* (Proverbs 11:24-25)
- **God wants to prosper us in more ways than just financial compensation.**
- *"Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens."* (James 1:17)
- **Our giving and prayer do not forcibly compel God to financially bless us.**
- *"'My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,' says the Lord. 'And My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.'"* (Isaiah 55:8-9)
- **Prosperity is not an absence of Christian suffering, and our giving will not keep us from enduring difficulty. (Jeremiah 29:10-14)**
- **We should never elevate the blessings of God above the God who blesses. (Matthew 6:33)**
- Jesus - *"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need."* (Matthew 6:33)
- **When we learn how to be generous givers, we will experience more of God's direction, help and provision in our lives.**
- ***What does it take for us to become "wise and generous givers"?***

Becoming Wise And Generous Givers Requires:

BELIEVING BIBLE PROMISES ABOUT <u>PROSPERITY</u>

- *"Give freely and <u>become more wealthy</u>; be stingy and <u>lose everything</u>."* (Proverbs 11:24)
- **God desires to prosper us in more than just our finances.**
- *"Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens."* (James 1:17)

- **God wants us to experience prosperity in every area of our lives, but our success in those areas is often related to godliness and generosity in those areas.**
- *"You will always harvest what you plant."* (Galatians 6:7)
- **The Lord wants to bless and prosper our *Relationships*.**
    - *"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.'"* (Genesis 2:18)
    - **Relationships are an essential part of God's design for our lives.**
    - **God desires for us to have: 1) Meaningful Marriages (Proverbs 31:10-11), 2) Godly Kids (Proverbs 22:6), 3) Faithful Friends (Proverbs 27:5-6), and 4) Cordial Co-workers (Ecclesiastes 4:9).**
- **The Lord wants to bless and prosper our *Careers*.**
    - *"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people."* (Colossians 3:23)
    - **For God to bless our career, we need to have a "blessable" work ethic.**
- **The Lord wants to bless and prosper our *Finances*.**
    - **God wants to bless our finances, but not necessarily for our own benefit.**
    - *"The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.' The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'"* (Matthew 25:20-21)
    - **God grants us financial prosperity as capital for building His Kingdom.**
    - ***Why isn't every Christian financially prosperous?***
    - *"For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows."* (1 Timothy 6:10)
    - **God will strip us of anything and everything we put in His place.**
- ***What are some areas where my life does not seem to be prospering?***

Becoming Wise And Generous Givers Requires:

APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES ABOUT <u>GENEROSITY</u>

- *"<u>Give freely</u> and become more wealthy; <u>be stingy</u> and lose everything."* (Proverbs 11:24)
- *"<u>One gives freely</u>, yet grows all the richer; <u>another withholds what he should give</u>, and only suffers want."* (Proverbs 11:24 ESV)
- **God blesses the one who gives, not the one who withholds.**
- **Generosity is not just a narrowly focused financial principle, but a broad principle that applies to every area of our lives.**
- **The Bible teaches us that God's People should be generous with our *Treasures*.**
    - Jesus - *"Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be...No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money."* (Matthew 6:21, 24)
    - **Generosity in any area is a reflection of our heart and priorities.**

    - Jesus - "*Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full - pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."* (Luke 6:38)
    - **There are essentially 4 levels of giving:**
        - **Occasional Giving - *Sporadic or spontaneous giving compelled by a momentary desire or conviction.***
        - **Proportional Giving - *Regular giving in accordance with a modest portion of income.***
        - **Obedient Giving - *Giving at the Biblically prescribed rate of 10%.***
        - **Generous Giving - *Sacrificial giving beyond 10%.***
    - **Obedient giving brings the promise of God's provision.**
    - *"'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in My Temple. If you do,' says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, 'I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put Me to the test!'"* (Malachi 3:10)
    - **Generous giving brings the promise of God's prosperity.**
    - *"Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything."* (Proverbs 11:24)
- **The Bible teaches us that God's People should be generous with our *Time*.**
    - *"Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom."* (Psalm 90:12)
    - **Time is the most precious resource we have because we can never make more of it.**
    - **We need to be willing to generously give time to serve God and help others.**
- **The Bible teaches us that God's People should be generous with our *Talents*.**
    - *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago."* (Ephesians 2:10)
    - **God has given us both natural and spiritual gifts with which to serve Him and build up His church.**
- **Of our *Treasure, Time,* and *Talent,* most people tend to be more stingy with their *Treasure,* despite the fact that it is our most easily reproducible resource.**
- ***What are some areas of my life where I need to be more generous?***

- **When we are generous to the Lord and others, He will be generous toward us, but when we are stingy toward the Lord and others, He will be stingy toward us.**
- *"Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything."* (Proverbs 11:24)
- **Stinginess can reflect that we either: 1) lack the discipline to do what we desire to do, or 2) lack the faith to value generosity in the first place.**
- **When discipline is our challenge, we need to build structure, but when faith is our challenge, we need to press into and trust the Lord.**
- *"'What do you mean, 'If I can'?' Jesus asked. 'Anything is possible if a person believes.' The father instantly cried out, 'I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!'"* (Mark 9:23-24)

- ***What is the Lord communicating to me through this message, and how am I going to respond to it?***