



**CONNECT**

*with*

**GOD**

**GENEROSITY**

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## GENEROSITY FAQs

### Does “generosity” just mean giving to the church?

No. Have you ever heard someone say, “It’s just hard for me to be generous”? That’s true of most of us. But giving away some of our income is an act that, over time, can produce generosity in us. It can change our hearts. This is particularly true of percentage giving as opposed to random gifts to charities or non-profits. Regularly giving away a defined percentage of our income rapidly builds our capacity for generosity. Why give to the church? Well, if you believe in the mission, vision, and strategy of your local church, and you believe that God is at work in people’s lives through your local church, why wouldn’t you want to financially support what’s going on there? It will help you grow, and it will help others to connect with their heavenly Father and into a community of believers who can support and encourage them.

And remember: percentage giving to the local church is just the foundation of the spiritual practice of generosity. It doesn’t mean you can’t also give to charities and nonprofits.

### Why does God want us to give?

We face the temptation to worship our stuff. In Luke 16:13, Jesus says, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Giving a percentage of our income back to God is a practical way to make sure we’re serving God and not money. If you talk to people who give, they’ll tell you it’s almost eerie how such a material act has the power to orient our hearts toward God.

### Are Christians required to give?

For Christians, generosity isn’t following the rules. It’s about a relationship. Jesus tells us to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Giving to the church is about loving God by placing our trust in him instead of in our possessions (which is really just trusting that we can provide for ourselves).

### What if I need help getting my finances in order?

Some of your group members may be in dire financial straits—they may be jobless or upside-down in their mortgages. Be sensitive to this. Some may need help getting their financial feet back under them or shifting their financial priorities. They may be victims of the bad economy or they may have created financial messes they have no idea how to clean up.

Point them to these resources for assistance:

- *Balanced* (a financial series by Andy Stanley)
- *MoneyWise* ([northpoint.org/moneywise](http://northpoint.org/moneywise))
- *Financial Peace University* ([daveramsey.com/fpu](http://daveramsey.com/fpu))

Each offers a practical biblical perspective on getting out of debt and managing your money responsibly.



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## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR DISCUSSION

If you're in a group, use these questions to have a conversation about how you can support and encourage one another as you explore giving. If you're not in a group, reflect on these questions to help you consider what it would look like for you to connect with God through generosity.

1. Are you a planner or do you tend to fly by the seat of your pants? How has that tendency influenced the way you manage your finances?
2. During the message, Andy said most people spend, repay debt, pay taxes, save, and give in that order. To what extent does that describe your current financial priorities?
3. Does prioritizing your finances so you give first, then save, and then live on the rest sound realistic to you? Why or why not?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 9:7. How would you go about deciding what to give?
5. Giving is an act, but generosity is a spiritual practice. In what ways do you think the *act* of becoming a percentage giver might help you to develop the *practice* of generosity? How do you think giving away a percentage of your income might change your heart over time?
6. What are some obstacles to you giving to the local church? What would you have to do to overcome those obstacles? If you already give, talk about how that has changed your relationship with God.

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## GIVE

All we have comes from God. When we acknowledge him by giving back a small portion of what he gives us, our faith is deepened and our relationship with him is strengthened in surprising and powerful ways.

The challenge is to decide in your heart what to give.

It shouldn't be a knee-jerk decision based on emotion or guilt.

- Pray about it.
- Think about it.
- Investigate it in the pages of Scripture.
- Seek good advice from wise people you trust.

Here are three simple steps for increasing your generosity:

### 1. **DECIDE**

Pray about it. Ask people you trust for advice. Take a look at your finances. Create a budget if you don't have one.

### 2. **COMMIT**

Once you've decided what to give, commit to doing it. Understand that giving will require adjusting your spending priorities.

### 3. **GIVE**

Once you've committed to giving, it's time to move. As you give, you'll be amazed at how radically it grows your faith in God. In Luke 12:34, Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." It's true.