

Reflection on Generosity  
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**Generosity vs. Stinginess**

Generosity is carefully managing my resources so I can freely give to those in need.

As we come off of Thanksgiving we (hopefully) have spent time being thankful for what God has given us. As you reflect back on your year I hope you see a God that is very generous to you since we are in the world's top 8% of financial wealth and health☺!

It's easy to be generous when things are going well and we have money in the bank after we pay our bills, but what about in this economy when things are starting to get a little tighter? Are we tempted to think more about ourselves and less than others?

One of the classes I took was on spiritual discipline and was instructed that one of the spiritual disciplines is generosity. It almost struck me as an oxymoron. Discipline to me is something you have to work at since you may not always feel like doing it. It seems odd that you would have to work at being generous. In theory it seems like it would be easy to be generous but in actuality we can be hoarders and selfish instead of selfless. As we examine God's character we see a God who is extremely generous and selfless who wants us to be like Him.

Let's look at the Christmas story with our generosity vs. stingy measuring stick. As Mary & Joseph went to the inns, we saw stingy innkeepers who couldn't find room anywhere. Until we come to a generous one who thought "outside the box" and was willing to give up his stable for them instead of turning them away. Because of his generosity Mary was able to have some privacy as she delivered the Savior to the world.

Look at the Wise Men. They were generous with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to a stranger in need. Those gifts probably helped Joseph, Mary and Jesus live they were in exile in Egypt avoiding the wrath of King Herod.

In the same way, we too can be generous. It's easy to give gifts this season to people we know and love like friends and family but can we be generous like the inn keeper and the wise men to people we don't know? People we just met with needs? There are plenty of them out there. Some are people we know who have lost their jobs. Some are people who need clothing, food or bills paid that we may never meet, but we can be generous to them. How? By meeting a need of someone you know, giving to Salvation Army, giving to the Toys for Tots, helping fill a local food pantry, giving to World Hope, Samaritan's Purse or other organizations that help those in need around the world.

You can be generous with your time as well. Sometimes we are so busy with our lives we don't take the time to listen or be with someone who is lonely. It could be someone in your family, a neighbor or someone you don't know that you could visit in a nursing home. Maybe you could give of your time to invest in lives who feel they have no hope and talk with them, encouraging them and help them feel hopeful again. There are many organizations in the city that could use your help investing in people's lives helping guide them to find a future with hope. Offer to be a Big Brother or Sister to someone, help tutor kids who are having a hard time, help do repairs for those who can't afford them, drive someone to a job interview, or doctor's appointment etc. City Mission, Salvation Army, Hope Refugee Services, West Side Read and Play are just some organizations that can use your help.

2Corinthians 9:6 says "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." Enjoy a generous Christmas and New Year as you give of your time, talent and treasure abundantly☺!!