



Connect Group Study - #3 November 18-24, 2018

Gratitude: Giving GENEROUSLY to God

2 Corinthians 8-9 This week's teaching

*God seeks, deploying His grace, to mature his children in generosity when encountering opportunity
...to be just like Him.*

**CONNECT
[] GROUPS**

GETTING STARTED – to get the ball rolling, discuss what you think the following statements mean... (and, Do you agree with them?)

The more you have the less you can give, and the less you have the more you can give. -- Mother Teresa

We are never more like God than when we give. -- Charles R. Swindoll

A man there was, and they called him mad; The more he gave, the more he had. -- John Bunyan

Not how much we give, but what we do not give, is the test of our Christianity. -- Oswald Chambers

There are many ways to be generous. List as many as come to mind. Who have you seen in real life who exhibits a lifestyle of generosity?

IN THE WORD

Jesus spoke of generosity on many occasions. He claimed that since His Father was generous, the Father's children should live similarly.

Take a close look at **Matthew 5:43-45**. Read and then observe the passage:

How does God our heavenly Father display his generosity, according to Jesus' words? How else might you describe God's generosity to an often unaware world? (cf. Isaiah 42:5, John 3:27, Acts 17:25, 27, Romans 2:4)

In light of our Father's generosity, in what specific ways in his teaching does Jesus urge US to express generosity?

What makes living this way, reacting this way, treating the people described in vs. 44...so challenging?

- ♦ *What enemy have you ever been called to love?*
- ♦ *What person-making-your-life harder (i.e., persecutor) have you been called to pray for?*
- ♦ *How and when did Jesus himself do this? (cf. Luke 23:34)*
- ♦ *Anyone else? (Acts 7:54-60)*

Imagine a friend of yours, a parent, had an 9 year old who was being bullied by a stronger classmate. When the teacher isn't looking, there is physical and emotional intimidation happening. Yet the boy wants to obey Jesus' teaching. Your friend asks you to weigh in. What advice would you offer? Steps you'd suggest?

- ♦ How does Jesus' teaching on "generosity" fit here?

MY LIFE – OUR MISSION

We will never fruitfully connect people to life-defining, life-changing relationships in Christ apart from living and loving generously the way our Father does, the way our Savior did, the way the Spirit encourages.

Finish by exploring together the opportunities God himself is putting in front of you to be generous with HIM and with others. Let the following questions stimulate some personal application

- Is there some financial need that my sacrificial giving can help meet?
- Is there someone not yet in the family of God to whom I can intentionally and consistently demonstrate care?
- Are there specific Scriptures concerning generosity I should memorize and embed on my heart?
- Is there another specific step of generosity that I sense God's Spirit urging me to take?

Listen to each other in this...and may this be more than a one-meeting discussion. What could God do through specific steps together than would shine with His glory?

TAKE A LOOK TOGETHER at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ruly61CRXd0> What is Stewardship?