

GRACE OF GIVING

The Speed of Generosity | Shawn Johnson | 12.9.18

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

Describe the time in your life when Christmas was the most magical for you? How old were you?

SHARE

As we approach the end of the year and anticipate 2019, it is a great time to get back to the basics. As Shawn reminded us at the beginning of this series, "We have to learn the basics before we can excel!" In this short series, we are going to get back to the basic principle of giving. Being generous is one of the greatest things we can do for our spiritual journey! It is close to the heart of Jesus as well as one of our core values here at Red Rocks Church.

Shawn shared this weekend multiple things to celebrate as a result of being generous as a church. We heard individual stories as well as stories from across the globe of the ways God is blessing our obedience as we give to Him. What an honor it is to be a part of His great love story for people all over the world!

How was your week? What were a few of the highs and a few of the lows? Take some time to check in with your group.

This weekend Shawn wrapped up this series, share with your group the way God used it

to draw you into a place of deeper generosity.

G R O W

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

As we read in 2 Corinthians, Paul is speaking to a people who have very little to share while reminding them that God gives in abundance. There is so much joy that we all experience when we give generously out of delight and not out of duty; giving out of freedom that we have in Christ and not from fear. We need not to give out fear, God says that our lack of generosity will reap sparingly. In fact, God says that He loves a cheerful giver (9:7), one who gives out of delight. It is important to consider when God says there are certain characteristics that He loves. God loves when we give cheerfully. Being generous not because we have to out of duty but because we desire to out of delight, being generous because it is at the very heart of God.

Paul says that we have the wrong perspective of who God is if we sow sparingly and lack generosity. When we give out of duty, this is sowing sparingly. We must remember the heart of who God is that He loves so deeply to the point He gave us everything and it was out of His great joy and delight. When we begin to fully understand God's grace and His generosity towards us we will then have His perspective on giving of ourselves for others.

God gives to us, so we can abound in doing good works. What if we live from the perspective that all we have is His, instead of all that we have we have earned with our own ability. "Yes, God is more than ready to overwhelm you with every form of grace, so that you will have more than enough of everything-every moment and in every way. He will make you overflow with abundance in every good thing you do (9:8)." If we truly believe what Paul is writing here about God, we then will be able to give more freely with joy and delight just as Christ! It is possible, and it is an invitation to more. Not more things necessarily, but more of God and resting in Him.

During the holiday season it is easy to get rushed here and there and miss the God moments all around us. Let us be aware of this and press even more into the character of God and His son. We have to believe this will bring a new and refreshed perspective of the opportunities God perfectly places in our daily lives to generously give of ourselves with great delight!

When being reminded of God's grace and generosity towards us, how does this shift your perspective when thinking about living a generous life?

What thoughts do you have when hearing about the difference between giving out of delight and giving out of duty?

M O V E

Read Matthew 13:44

Generosity is the way of Jesus. It is an invitation to be the light in the darkness. It looks different in every moment. It may be giving of your finances to help a friend or a family in need. It could be opening your home to share a meal and fill the hearts with joy of community or even stopping long enough in the rhythm of your day to be that listening ear. Whatever it is, generosity costs us all something yet we know as followers of Christ that God delights in our generous giving because it is at the very heart of His Father.

As we read in the scripture, Jesus is away from the crowds and speaking directly to His disciples at this point in their journey. He is walking them through the way of the kingdom in these last parables. Jesus is preparing His disciples for what is present and what is to come, the kingdom of God.

When Jesus spoke of this man who found the treasure in the field, He emphasized how "in his joy" the man went and sold *a//* that he had to gain this treasure. It cost him everything, yet it was his joy, his delight, because he knew what he was gaining was everything that he had ever desired, true abundant life that only comes through Jesus and Jesus alone (John 10:10).

When we give generously out of delight we know the treasure is much greater than the cost. Jesus wasn't sharing this story about the man to make us feel sorry for him or even to make us feel shame, He is sharing this story to remind us that being generous costs us all something, yet joy is the true exchange for generosity.

As God is preparing you to be generous this holiday season, ask him to make you aware of

those places throughout your normal, everyday rhythms of life. As you seek Him, He will place in you the desire to press into those He has in your life to be an extension of His great love for. Because that is what we are doing. We are the light to the world (Matthew 5:14.) The salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). And He is our great joy we receive.

When we think of this man who sold everything he had to gain the kingdom of God, how does this story connect you to the way of generously giving? Share with your group.

We know that being generous can be difficult, especially if it is asking of us more than we want to give of ourselves. Tell of a time when you have experienced generosity from another? Did this experience change your perspective on generosity? If yes, how so?

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

T O G O

Isaiah 26:3

“You will keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”