

Extravagant Generosity

“Congregations that practice Extravagant Generosity talk about money frequently.”

They ask questions like:

- What role does money play in the life of Christians?
- What priority do we give money?
- How does God view money?
- What does the Bible say about money?

“Congregations that practice Extravagant Generosity view giving as a gift from God.” Bishop Schnase

Congregations that practice Extravagant Generosity have:

- A high sense of mission.
- A strong desire to please God by making a positive difference in the world.
- A sense of urgency because they know there are more people out there (beyond the walls of the church) that are wandering aimlessly without a Savior that need to be here!

We talk about money because it helps us realign our ideas about the use of money and it realigns our focus on what is important in God’s kingdom.

What is the difference between “stewardship” and “generosity”?

1. Stewardship

Stewardship” is a church word. It is not a bad word, just a church word. The bible teaches us that we are to be good stewards of the earth and all of the things that have been entrusted to us, inherited by us, and earned by us.

Over time “stewardship” seems to mean supporting the church financially.

2. Generosity

Generosity is familiar to people inside and outside the church. Generosity is an attractive, positive quality that I want to cultivate in myself and my children to have.

There are generous spirits, generous souls, people who are generous with their time, their willingness to teach others; they are generous with their love and with their money.

What is the difference between the terms “stewardship” and “generosity”?

Stewardship can sound legalistic and formal whereas “generosity” conveys more of a positive quality trait that we would all like to have said about ourselves.

The New Testament principle of generosity

“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” 1John 3:17-18

The apostle Paul told Timothy to “command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age”. 1Timothy 6:17-19

Our God is Extravagant in the Generosity He has shown to us; in all He has given us, and in all He does for us. That is who our God is.

Extravagantly Generous is who we are called to be!

Chapter 5 – Practice of Generosity (Robert Schnase)

Weekly Readings:

Mon: Exodus. 35:4-21 Offering money and other possessions to God results from generosity of the heart rather than from duty and obligation. Only those who were willing to give were invited to participate.

Tues: Proverbs. 3:9 How we handle our material wealth and resources either honors or dishonors our relationship with God. Generosity aligns one’s life with God’s purposes.

Wed. Malachi 3:8-10 The prophet Malachi calls upon people to rely fully upon God by offering the tithe, implying that when people test God’s faithfulness, they find God’s presence and promises trustworthy.

Thurs. Luke 21:1-4 Jesus’ teaching abounds with tales of rich and poor, generous and shrewd, givers and takers, charitable and selfish, faithful and fearful. He commends the poor widow putting her two coins in the treasury; giving out of her poverty. She ‘put in all she had to live on.’ The story upsets the expectations by pointing to proportion rather than amount as the measure of extravagance.

Fri. Luke 12:13-21 In this story of the farmer who built bigger barns, placing his trust too much in earthly possessions, Jesus asks the spiritually probing question: “And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” Christ warns, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” Acquisition does not foster life rich in God.

Sat. Romans 12:6-8 In addition to the general command for all God’s people to give of their tithes and offering, some people have the Spiritual gift of financial giving. God is the giver of all the Spiritual gifts and as we discover our Spiritual gifts, we use them to edify the church.