



Every day this week we have read the same passage in Luke — the same words of Jesus — and we have explored the same principle of faith that is so core to the life of those who choose to follow Christ. Christians are supposed to be different. Jesus says in verse 34, “Even sinners lend to sinners expecting something back . . . but you, love your enemies.” Then Jesus reminds us that God is kind to even ungrateful and evil men. And finally, Jesus teaches us a principle that when generous seeds are planted, they will grow.

*One of the key places to plant seeds of generosity is in relationships. Where are the relationships in your life where being generous with yourself can begin the promise of a harvest later?*

*Another place to plant seeds of generosity is in giving financially. Is this an area you have fully explored?*

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**GPS for Families**

*GrowPrayStudy.org/family*

Parents should begin giving a small allowance to children at around age 4 or 5. They may not fully understand the concept of money yet, but it is a great age to instill habits as a way of life.

Give a predetermined amount each week or month and then help them sort it into three jars. I recommend clear jars because they can see the money accumulate. You can decorate the jars and label them “God,” “Save” and “Fun.” Or come up with your own creative names, or draw pictures of a church, a bank and a wallet.

Each time you give your child allowance, give it to them in small bills or change that they can easily break down into the three categories. Help them put 10% in the “God” jar, at least 20% in savings and the rest is for fun. They may not understand percentages, but they will understand that we always give to God first, and we always save for later.

As it adds up, take the “God” jar to church for their offering, and open a savings account with savings. You can expand on the learning by monitoring the monthly statements and later a checking account. Let them choose how to spend fun money, even if you think it is not a good idea. Of course, you are still the parent and have final authority, but let them deal with the consequences of poor choices. Learning lessons about wasteful spending at a young age is better than as an adult!

MESSAGE “How Does Generosity Define Our Relationships?”  
SCRIPTURE Luke 6:32-38

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How someone embodies extravagant generosity will define the relationships they will have with family, friends, workplace, church and even with God. Generosity in relationships is the key to the abundant life that Jesus lived, exemplified, offered and taught.

1. Extravagant generosity begins with the truth!
2. Extravagant generosity has to be a core value!
3. Extravagant generosity is a lifestyle!

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

*Almighty God, we want to thank you for the many ways you are generous with us. You provide in great and faithful abundance. You forgive with amazing grace. You walk by our side in gentleness and power. You save us, help us, guide us and fill us with hope. We are grateful. May the spirit of generosity represented by your gift of Jesus Christ be reflected in us. All glory and honor is yours. Amen.*

In this passage, Jesus teaches us a great deal about generosity, both the broad nature of it as well as the spiritual philosophy of generosity that is the core of the Christian faith and Christian relationships. Just as no relationship can exist without generous forgiveness, so the Christian life cannot be experienced in fullness without stretching into a generous nature. After all, Jesus was the most generous person who ever lived. Generosity describes the heart of God just as the cross of Christ is the most generous act of all time.

*How can giving to others be the same as giving to God? Why is loving the unlovable and doing good to others who are not so good divine?*

*How is showing mercy a quick trip into the presence of God? Why do you think God is serious about the planting and harvesting principle of verse 38?*

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We are reading the same words of Jesus we read yesterday with a special emphasis just on verse 38, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over . . . for whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return."

The analogy Jesus uses is related to the way wheat was harvested in biblical times. After the harvest, it was placed in bushel baskets, often in increments called "measures." To ensure that the basket was full, they would press it down, shake it and press it down again until it was running over. This is a simple principle of the harvest. Plant seed, care for it, water it and watch it multiply.

*Why do you think Jesus relates a generous life to this principle of the harvest? (Remember, the miracle is in the seed, but someone must plant and harvest.)*

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If you have been doing the GPS this week, then you are aware that this is the third time we have read this passage. It is an important one and shares one of the most important teachings of Jesus, not only in what He said but how He lived His own life. Jesus was a seed planted in generosity, a gift offered in obedience to God that has exploded into the life of the Church and billions of Christians for 2,000 years. As generous as Jesus was, He expects those who follow Him to be generous as well.

As we receive mercy, we give it. As we are forgiven, we forgive. As we are loved, we love. As God is generous with us, we are generous with God.

Stop and thank God for His generosity and then rethink the ways you can live out what God has given you.

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As we read these words from Jesus again, we begin to understand not only who Jesus is, what His teachings were about, but who we are, can be and what a relationship with Jesus, others and how we interact with our world might really look like — or better, what it could look like. We live because the world is a fruitful world. There is a miracle in every seed; a seed has the ability to become a harvest. A heart given to Christ has the ability to become a harvest as well, to multiply not only in the principle that Jesus teaches but through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in God's people.

*How does giving financially release the principle of the harvest? How does showing mercy, forgiving and serving others do the same?*

*Why is it so hard to risk the seed God has given rather than planting it?*

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