

JESUS STRONG IN GENEROSITY

Part 12 of Jesus Strong. Philippians 4:15-23.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. December 8, 2024.

CHRISTIANS TEND TO BE GENEROUS

Followers of Jesus are generous.

- Surveys indicate that practicing Christians tend to donate more than others to good causes.
- According to one study by the American Bible Society, 95% of practicing Christians gave to charities in 2022, compared to 68% of non-practicing Christians and 51% of nonbelievers.
- <https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/faith-culture/research-practicing-christians-more-generous-than-others/>

PHILIPPIANS 4:15-23

The passage teaches us the secrets to generous churches and Christians.

And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided — a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you greetings. 22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

THE SECRETS OF A GENEROUS LIFE

Secret One: A Big Mission - verses 15-17.

- There has to be a good reason to be generous - a big mission.
- The Philippians wanted to advance the gospel.
- They received the gospel from Paul and their gratitude overflowed in giving.
- They wanted other cities to hear the gospel. So they financed Paul's outreach in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 (CSB) ... you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit. 7 As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place that your faith in God has gone out.

- Look for a church or ministry or team that is advancing the gospel.

Secret Two: A Big Heart - verse 18.

- Paul loved the Philippian people and they loved him.
- They had a big heart for Paul's welfare.
- Their help was an "abundance" and a "full supply."

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (CSB) We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that was given to the churches of Macedonia: 2 During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

- How do we get a big heart like that?
 - View generosity as worship - Philippians 4:18.
 - Cooperate with the Holy Spirit as he conforms us to Christ.

Secret Three: A Big Expectation - verses 19-20.

- This is not a promise of extravagant wealth.
- Verse 19 must be interpreted in light of verse 20.
- The genuine Christian's goal is God's glory, not wealth and privilege.
- God will supply our all our needs. He revealed his riches, glory, and power in Christ, who atoned for sin, conquered death, and is exalted in heaven for our salvation. If God can do that, he can surely meet our every need.
- God will take care of you. Expect it.

TRY IT

We don't talk about giving to the Cornerstone very often.

- It's not because I'm afraid to talk about it.
- It's because I don't have to talk about it. You are generous.

However, newer Christians or people new to the Cornerstone may not know the practical details of giving to the church.

- If you've never been a generous giver, try it for 30 days. See if the Lord meets your needs even when you give time or money away.
- Ask for information. Alex Rowling or I are happy to help.

My assurance to you:

- I'm not after your money. I don't know who gives or how much people give. The Lord has always taken care of the Cornerstone.
- I'm after the glory of God and your joy, growth, purpose in life.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review the December 8 study guide.
- What were the highlights of the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- Which of the three secrets to generosity is the most compelling for you? Explain your answer.
- In your opinion, what are the main obstacles to generosity? Why? How can these obstacles be overcome?
- Take a look at 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. What do these verses teach about godly generosity towards Christian ministries?
- What advice would you give to a newer Christian who does not know 1) whether to give to the church/ministry, and 2) how to give to the church.
- What are some ways the Lord supplies Christians' needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus? Evaluate Peter's insight into verse 19 that *"God is totally capable of meeting every need. How? He is rich, glorious, and powerful. God revealed this in Christ who atoned for sin, conquered death, and is exalted to heaven for our salvation. If God can do that, he can meet our every need."*