

“You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. ‘For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’”

- 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 NLT

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

WE GET TO GIVE BECAUSE HE GAVE TO US.

- ***Cheerful - It is about POSTURE of heart.***
- ***Open - It is about POSITION of hands.***
- ***Willing - It is about PERSPECTIVE of Him.***

WEEK 5

GENEROSITY

Generosity should be a natural response to the generous God we serve.

One of the top Core Values at DFC is: **GENEROSITY IS OUR RESPONSE.** Here is a simple explanation of what this means:

“We live to give, and we give because God gave. We are generous with our time, our talents, and our treasures over and above what is required. Our hands are open for God to pass his resources through us.”
[dfcnow.org/about]

What insights does this definition give you to how we at DFC view generosity?

What a great opportunity we have to be used by God! When we simply live with open hands towards God, two incredible things happen:

- **God freely gives to us.**
- **We freely give to others.**

When we get this right, everything else seems to fall into place. No longer are we worried and stressed about our

financial situation. We are able to see that we — and our finances — are a small part of something much bigger.

1. GOD FREELY GIVES TO US.

Let's imagine for a minute that your boss hands you check. You excitedly look at and quickly realize it does not have your name on it. You look back questioningly, as if to say, "Is this a joke?!" He sees your confusion and asks if you can deliver this to Maggie in accounting. You have a few ways you could respond to your boss:

1. You could say, "*This is not my job; you do it.*", and walk away, angry that he would even ask you to do such a thing.
2. You could respond with, "*Of course!*", take it, forget about it, and never complete the task given. This probably is going to lead to an inquiry of why you did not do the job asked of you.
3. You could respond just like before with, "*Of course!*", but this time you pocket the money and look for a way to cash Maggie's check, seeking self gain. This is going to have some follow-up questions and consequences as well.
4. You could say, "*Sure...*" with a lack-luster attitude, and do it knowing this is not really in your job, but whatever. It is definitely not a joy. In fact, you are frustrated that Maggie in accounting keeps getting checks and you do not.

5. Lastly, you might cheerfully respond with a, “Yes! Of course! Thanks for asking me to do it!”. You take the check to Maggie and go about your day, happy to have helped.

What does this story teach us about giving?

Now this may have seemed like a ridiculous story, but there is a point.

The first four responses are a pretty sure-fire way to never be asked to do this job again. The last response, however, let’s your boss know that you are willing to faithfully complete the task asked of you.

God wants to give good gifts to us. Just look at what Jesus said:

*“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? **10** Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! **11** So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.”*

[Matthew 7:9-11 NLT]

But what if God wants to use you to operate as the vessel to physically give the gift? To keep with our illustration: first, we must realize that the check was never ours to begin with. Look at what David wrote:

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”

[Psalm 24:1 NLT]

Part of giving is doing so with the realization that **God owns it all.**

Secondly, we can give and still do so without the right attitude and heart behind it.

“Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. 7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. ‘For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’”

[2 Corinthians 9:6-7 NLT]

Paul is clear that the Holy Spirit should guide us in our giving and our heart behind it.

How does this shape your view of giving to the local church?

2. WE FREELY GIVE TO OTHERS.

Because of God’s great love and generosity in giving His Son as a ransom for our sins, we get the opportunity to partner with Him in giving, simply out of a response of gratitude. We can be glad to receive and glad to give because we know the supply will never run out!

*“For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. **11** Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.”*

[2 Corinthians 9:10-11 NLT]

What do these verses teach us about the joy of giving?

“Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.” [Luke 6:38 NLT]

How will your giving change in response to a verse like this?

When we have an open hand to God and an open hand to others, we become someone God can consistently use to bless His world. Simply put: **You cannot “out-give” God.**

Do not mishear. We do not *give* to get; **we get to give.** Scripture makes it clear that a natural outpouring of giving is a continued opportunity to do so. How do you have that opportunity? By having more given to you to steward well. As Pastor John Ryser says,

“We aren’t given gifts from God to increase our standard of living, but rather to increase our standard of giving.”

Next week, we will look at the topic of honor. Why should we honor others? What exactly does that mean? How does the church stand out differently in this regard?