



Welcome back to DRIVE!

Tonight: Part Three of Discovering Spiritual Maturity.

In this episode, we will discuss:

- ▶ Why we teach generosity at Crossroads.
- ▶ What “tithing” is, and what it means for us.
- ▶ Biblical truths that should guide our giving.
- ▶ Developing the discipline of generosity.
- ▶ Why we give at church.

We trust the DVD content, and the information provided in this workbook will help you as you continue to grow deeper in your relationship with God, by influencing others for Christ.

***But remember the LORD your God,
for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth,
and so confirms his covenant,
which he swore to your ancestors,
as it is today.***

(Deuteronomy 8:18, TNIV)



WHY DO WE TEACH GENEROSITY AT CROSSROADS?

Because Jesus **COMMANDED** that we be generous in everything we do. Why?

Our generosity is to remind people of God's generosity. Our generous forgiveness of those who fail us, giving to those in need, of openhandedness to those who were clinging so hard to the scraps of life, and welcome to those who are without a place in this world would be nothing more (and nothing less!) than a reflection of the generous love of God into the whole world. And how abundantly, astoundingly, astonishingly generous God is!

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16

He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Romans 8:32

...God, who gives life to all things... 1 Timothy 6:13

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...James 1:17

God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. 2 Corinthians 9:8

Jesus taught us not to cling to money and the things money buys us. He said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15). In fact, he called those "fools" who store up treasure for themselves on earth but are not "rich toward God" (Luke 12:20-21). He told us not to worry about the things we often seem to consider so important in life, and He said, instead of focusing our attention on building our own personal wealth (and hanging on to it) here on the



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earth, to “provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted” (Luke 12:33).

Everything that Jesus taught about MONEY pointed us toward GIVING, not GETTING.

And making no distinction between our attitude about giving and our attitude about FOR-giving, He gave this promise:

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸
give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. **For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.**" (Luke 6:37-38, ESV)



TITHING FAQ'S...

What is TITHING?

Tithing is Biblically-based tradition of regular giving established by God for the Hebrew people. Tithing is widely taught in churches throughout the world and is an accepted tradition among Christians.

What does TITHE mean?

Tithe means “the tenth part”.

Are we commanded to give 10% of our earnings to the church?

Jesus said, “Do not store up treasure for yourselves on earth, but rather store up treasure for yourselves in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-10; Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33; Luke 18:22). **Jesus never commanded us to give 10% of all we earn to the church.** The early church recognized that the standard for followers of Christ was much HIGHER than that (see Acts 4:32-35).

The only time Jesus talked about tithing (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; Luke 18:12), was to demonstrate that some who considered themselves religious were tithing “*down to the tiniest herb in their garden*” while ignoring the more important things: love and mercy. Jesus encouraged the keeping of the law (through the tithe as one example), but not at the expense of grace.

To clarify: “keeping the law” for Jews concerning tithing, did not mean giving the church 10% of their income, or increase. There was a tenth part to be given annually to the Levites (workers in the temple) called the Levitical tithe or “the Lord’s Tithe” (see Leviticus 27:30-34; Numbers 18:23-28; Nehemiah 10:37-38); a tenth part to be given once every three years to feed the poor called, “the Poor tithe” (Deuteronomy 14:28-29); and a tenth part to be expended annually in a manner chosen appropriate by the giver to celebrate God’s goodness and mercy, called “the Festival tithe” (Deuteronomy 12:17-18).

Wow! If we as Christians were actually following the Hebrew law concerning tithing, our giving would be more like 23.3% of our income and not 10%!

Does that mean we’re off the hook and don’t have to give to the church, or give regularly?

Uh...no, sorry. We are totally commanded by Christ to give and to give *liberally*. Let’s look at a few passages of Scripture that get us on the right track where our giving is concerned. Then we’ll share some definable goals that we can apply to our lives to help keep us in step with Jesus, and what he taught us about money and possessions.



SO WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?

Here's an important instruction for Christians:

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you excel in everything—in *faith*, in *speech*, in *knowledge*, in complete *earnestness* and in your *love* for us—**see that you also excel in this grace of giving.**

My growth as a Christian is also reflected in my personal commitment to _____.

Here's an important example for Church leaders:

2 Corinthians 8:20-21 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For ***we are taking pains to do what is right***, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men

Crossroads is committed to honoring your gifts by distributing them with _____ and _____.

Here is TRUTH that should guide our giving:

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 ⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

As a Christian, there's a direct correlation between what I _____ and what I will _____, not just in terms of money, but in love, forgiveness, kindness, mercy, and grace.

⁷Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Each man should _____. *Not* _____ is *not* an option.



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We are quick to remember not to give under compulsion, but we must also remember not to be _____.

When you give from the heart, you'll never regret it!

⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

God's plan for us is to have all that _____ and plenty left over to _____.

⁹As it is written:

"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

Everything I have, came to me from _____.

¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

God's desire is for me to _____ in every way.

¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,

My personal *increase* is meant to fuel my personal _____.

and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. ¹²This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

My personal giving results in others giving _____.

¹³Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.



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The integrity and value of my confession of Christ is _____ on my personal generosity.

¹⁴And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

God's grace to us is evidenced by His _____.
God's grace to others is evidenced by our _____.



DEVELOPING THE DISCIPLINE OF GENEROSITY (3 Targets for Giving)

1. Make it a _____

Make Gods priorities your priorities. “Before I fund MY kingdom, I’m going to fund God’s Kingdom”.

*(Jesus) “Seek the kingdom of God **above all else**, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” (Matthew 6:33, NLT)*

*“Honor the Lord by **giving him the first part** of all your income.” Prov. 3:9-10*

2. Pick a _____

“I’m going to choose a percentage UP FRONT (not by need, not by gut reaction, not because someone is compelling me to), and use it to fund things that may have nothing to do with me at all, but everything to do with what God is doing in the world”

*Again: For each man should give **what he has decided in his heart to give**, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7, NLT)*

3. Make it _____

Make more, give more, do more. “As my income goes UP, I’m going to UP my percentage”.

Again: But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. (2 Corinthians 8:7, NLT)

These targets are designed to develop the discipline of intentional generosity in your life, and in so doing, develop obedience to the will of God. That is how we “excel in the grace of giving”. But perhaps the idea of giving 10% or more of the INCREASE (what you earn) that God has generously given you is not something you can wrap your brain (or your heart) around today. Fair enough. But start *somewhere*, and start now. It’s as easy as **1 – 2 – 3**:

1. You make it a **PRIORITY** by giving FIRST PLACE to GIVING.
2. Then pick a **PERCENTAGE** that you are WILLING to commit to.
3. Then you make your giving **PROGRESSIVE**. As your income grows, your faith grows, and your percentage grows right along with it. The discipline of living generously is not about separating you from your money. It’s about honoring God, by giving back a portion of what He’s blessed you with, so His plans and purposes can be fulfilled!



WHY WE GIVE AT CHURCH

God has a part, a plan, and a purpose for each individual to fulfill. While we all have unique gifts, talents and abilities, we are ALL called to demonstrate our commitment to Christ by honoring the Body of Christ (the church) with financial support. It's not at all a new idea:

*"All the believers were one in heart and mind. **No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.** With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need." (Acts 4:32-35, NIV)*

Further, we are instructed not to withhold our support from those who teach us:

*"Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, **the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.**" (1 Corinthians 9:13-14, NLT)*

In a passage of Scripture that is FOUNDATIONAL at Crossroads, Paul, speaking of the Body of Christ writes:

"As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy, and growing, and full of love." Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)

1. We give at church, so the church is _____

In the same way that a **person who is to be healthy requires nurturing, so the church requires nurturing to be healthy.** Simply put, the financial condition (health) of the church is the responsibility of those who ARE the church.

Crossroads – like the church of the first century – is non-denominational. We are not a branch of the "Mother Church" that ensures our financial well-being. We are a community of believers living out our faith. There's no "home office" somewhere cutting checks to meet our obligations. We ARE the church.

How important is regular giving? Here's a great illustration: What would you say if someone went on vacation and left their household pets without food and water? It would be bad, right? Sadly, it happens. Many members of the body are in the habit of



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only giving when they attend church. That puts an unbearable strain on the body. The health of the church is always dependent upon the healthy habits of its members.

Your regular giving ensures Crossroads can thrive, and be in GOOD HEALTH!

2. We give at church, so the church is _____

We are called to “go into all the world and make disciples...to baptize...to teach”. The church’s ability to “GO” is directly tied to its member’s willingness to GIVE.

At Crossroads we are committed to the growth not just of our church, but of God’s kingdom. That means our church is not focused on “transfer growth”, or people who are already believers changing churches and coming to Crossroads. **Our focus is “conversion growth”**; people who are returning to faith, or who have made a first-time decision to trust Christ, or those who are “seekers”; people who may be “just looking” when it comes to spiritual things. That said, God has called – and will continue to call – those who are already Christians to stand alongside us, becoming a part of the Crossroads community because they share the same desire; to see the lost, or un-churched, come to faith in God through Jesus Christ.

What does that mean in practical terms? It means that because we’re not just reaching people who are already committed Christians, Crossroads will have a lot of folks that attend who give very little because:

1. They don’t know about giving,
2. They don’t understand giving, or
3. They have trust issues.

So it is up to us to support the Kingdom work going on here, while we reach our community for Christ, until those who come to Christ have grown in the area of generosity.

3. We give at church, so the church is _____

Speaking of the freedom we have in Christ, the Apostle Paul writes, “**What is important is faith expressing itself in love**” (Galatians 5:6b). This echoes his teaching in 1 Corinthians 13 that even gifts of the Spirit are little more than noise without love. John teaches us, “God is love” and that “those who love God must also love one another” (1 John 4). Jesus said simply, “Love one another”.



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**The message is clear: To follow Christ is to love.
To love those *outside* the church,
and to love those who are *part* of the church.**

When Jesus taught about love, he didn't talk about feelings, he talked about action. Jesus came to show us the Father's love, and as He does, we come to see that God wants us to love others in the same way. Christ reveals that love, to God, resembles things like:

- ▶ Feeding the hungry
- ▶ Giving drink to the thirsty
- ▶ Clothing the naked
- ▶ Sheltering the homeless
- ▶ Welcoming the stranger
- ▶ Helping widows and orphans
- ▶ Caring for the sick
- ▶ Visiting those imprisoned

Here are 2 things that are true:

1. Doing those things is not optional.
2. Doing those things effectively takes resources.

Here's something else that's also true:

*"...God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, **you will abound in every good work.**"*

(2 Corinthians 9:8)

For Crossroads to be FULL OF LOVE, we must ABOUND in every good work. As you practice the discipline of GENEROSITY through regular giving at Crossroads, something truly amazing happens:

**God makes all grace abound to us
So that in all things
At all times
Having all that we need
We (the church) abound in every good work!**

When we give at church:

We're not just "giving to a building"; **We're being rich towards God!**
We're not just "paying the bills"; **We're "paving the way" for the Gospel!**
We're not just "making a donation"; **We're honoring our Heavenly Father!**



RFECAP: HOW TO START AND MAINTAIN GOOD HABITS

STEP ONE: DESIRE!

You must start with a strong desire. You must be internally motivated. External motivations don't last. If you start only half-heartedly, you will never make it to the success point.

STEP TWO: DECIDE!

Begin right now! Don't wait. Don't procrastinate. You don't slide into a new habit. "One of these days" never arrives. You must have a starting point. It's easier to break a bad habit today than it will be tomorrow!

Those who wait for perfect weather will never plant seeds; those who look at every cloud will never harvest crops. Eccl. 11:4 (NCV)

STEP THREE: DECLARATION!

Announce your intentions publicly. Make a covenant or resolution. The power of a vow is awesome. It is particularly powerful if you put your commitment in writing.

"Make your vows to the Lord your God and perform them." Ps. 76:11 (ESV)

STEP FOUR: DETERMINATION!

Never allow an exception until the new habit is securely rooted in your life. Each lapse will be fatal. A single slip unwinds many turns at first. Continuity and success at the start is essential. Never be swayed by "just this once". The act of yielding weakens the will and reinforces your lack of self-control. It takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit and it takes another 3 to 4 weeks (doing it daily) for it to become a part of your life.

STEP FIVE: JUST DO IT!

Whenever you feel the slightest urge or prompting to practice this new habit - DO IT THEN! Don't wait. Seize every opportunity to reinforce your habit. Those feelings will not last, so whenever you feel inclined to perform your new habit, do so!

STEP SIX: DOUBLE UP!

Get a partner who will support you and encourage you. Find someone who is willing to hold you accountable and check up on you especially in the early days before the habit is firmly rooted in your life.

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Hebrews 10:24 (TNIV)



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Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help... Eccl. 4:9-10 (NLT)

STEP SEVEN: DEPEND ON GOD!

Rely on God's power to help you establish the habit. Remember, Satan does not want you to develop habits that help you grow spiritually and make you like Christ so he will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, or discourage you. Pray!

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and power to do what pleases him. Philippians 2:13 (NLT)



KEEPING IT SIMPLE

CROSSROADS _____:

To create a church that people who don't like church would like to attend.

CROSSROADS _____:

To love God, love others and serve the world.

CROSSROADS _____:

To connect people to God, to each other, and to the world around them.

To accomplish our mission, we ask people to do three things at Crossroads:

SHOW UP: Attend Sunday service (**connect to God**).

GROW UP: Get in a small group (**connect with others**); and attend Crossroads U!

STEP UP: Get involved in an area of ministry (**connect with the world**).