

# TALKING POINTS

## STRETCH - GENEROSITY

### LEANING IN

As followers of Jesus, it's essential we develop the discipline of generosity in our lives. Generosity is giving to God and others as a result of a transformed heart. It is an issue of character, and should be our normal response to the grace of God.

We have two major instructions regarding generosity - It has to be done cheerfully, not grudgingly, and we are to excel at it. But, we have one major obstacle - we have to decide *who* really is in control when it comes to what we have - *us* or *God*. When it comes to generosity, there are two things we must bear in mind. First, we have to learn to trust God, not money, Second, we are managers, not owners. At the end of the day, we keep nothing.

We can learn to be a cheerful giver by studying the greatest giver this world has ever known: Jesus Christ. Leaving behind the riches and glory of His heavenly kingdom, He came to Earth and willingly gave His life so that we could keep ours. He is our model of what generosity truly is.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:7

How do we get to a place in our lives where we can trust God more than material things?

### LIVING IT OUT

Since compassion reflects the very heart of Jesus, it would do us well to imitate Christ by practicing compassion ourselves. Here are four decisions you can make to cultivate compassion in your life:

**Give Off The Top, Not The Bottom** - we need to make what we give to God our first concern and practice, not our last. For what the Lord has done for us, He deserves our best.

Read Proverbs 3:9

Why do you think God asks for our "first fruits"?

**Give Selflessly** - when we give, whether it's to God or to others, we are not to be concerned about whether we'll receive anything in return. True generosity gives for its own sake. We give freely to others, because Jesus gave freely to us.

Read 1 John 3:16-18

How does giving selflessly change *us*?

**Give As The Priority Of Life** - our priorities are the expression of where our heart really lies. If our relationship with Jesus is the priority in our life, then our generosity should reflect it.

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Are there priorities in our lives we need to re-evaluate in order to be more generous?

**See Life Through The Lens Of Eternity** - treasures we store up on earth are neither permanent nor even ultimately satisfying. Treasures stored in heaven are both. We can't serve money and God's kingdom at the same time.

Read Matthew 6:19-24

What does generosity with an "eternal view" look like in the day-to-day?