

giving

Honour the Lord with your
wealth and with the best part
of everything you produce.

Proverbs 3:9-10

Giving

ONE IN GENEROSITY

In more recent years, we pulled back from bringing a weekly teaching about tithing. This came from the heart to shed whatever was old or tired, and allow us all, through our connection in a discipling community, to come to grow in personal conviction around generosity. We thank you church that you have continued to be faithful in generosity in this time.

With many new members joining us, and recognising generosity is a core principle. In both values and as evidence of a disciple of Jesus it is important for us to reintroduce teaching and guidance as part of our weekend services.

Be encouraged to take time in prayerful reflection to consider how you can incorporate generosity into your life. This thoughtful consideration will lead to meaningful steps forward in your faith.

WHY DO WE GIVE?

In the Old Testament, the people gave up to three tithes, which means a tenth, to God. In its conception it was an act of obedience and trust, practised by both Abraham and Jacob. It eventually became part of their law and as a practice was intended to support the religious community, sustain the priesthood, and care for those in need within society. It was seen as a way of acknowledging God's ownership of all resources and expressing gratitude for His provision.

Jesus challenged many aspects of religious practice during his ministry, including the way people approached the tithe. While the tithe was originally meant to express gratitude to God and support the community, Jesus criticised the Pharisees and religious leaders for focusing too much on outward observance without genuine compassion and justice (Matthew 23:23). He emphasised the importance of love, mercy, and justice over legalistic adherence to rituals.

And yet, in Jesus' teachings, we consistently see an expectation for people to embody generosity in all aspects of their lives—through love and mercy, by investing time and energy in others, and by sharing their resources freely. He praises the widow for her sacrificial offering (Mark 12), commends the wealthy young ruler to give up his possessions for the sake of serving others and following Him (Mark 10), and addresses the significance of our attitudes towards wealth, loving God over money, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6).

Above all, Jesus exemplifies radical sacrificial giving through his own life, urging us to trust God completely and to live selflessly for one another.

GIVING FROM THE HEART

While the tithe serves as a guideline for believers to prioritise God in their finances, Jesus emphasises the deeper principle of sacrificial generosity from the heart. It's about willingly giving of ourselves in ways that reflect God's love and care for others, mirroring Jesus' own sacrificial love on the cross.

This was exemplified in the foundations of the early church, recorded in Acts 2. The call to live a generous life, and the promises towards those who trust God in this way is regularly taught by the apostle Paul.

As believers we are to steward our finances in a way that we can be a blessing to one another and those in need around us.

John Wesley thoughts for stewardship can be an interesting thought for consideration. An encouragement to:

Earn all you can.

Save all you can.

Give all you can.

“All you can”, is the important caveat here. This is not about condemning us for what we can't do, it is freeing us to contribute to what we can.

Earn all you can

The Bible encourages us

The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need.

- Ephesians 4:28

You may say to yourself, 'My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,' 18 but remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant He swore to your fathers, as it is today.

- Deuteronomy 8:17-18

Earning all you can is about devoting our time to earn what we can in legitimate ways with the ultimate motive to be able to provide for our needs and those we are immediately responsible for. It also enables us to remain in a position that when need arises we have the capacity to help people financially as led.

Save all you can

This is about stewarding what you earn to have enough to put away for your future, but also by cutting back on things of excess to be able to provide for others. Where we fight against the cultural sickness of, *Affluenza* – buying things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people.

Give all you can

1 Corinthians 16:2 encourages us to

“give wisely and cheerfully. On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he prospers...”

This scripture suggests we each make regular provisions for giving and that our commitment is both consistent and proportionate to what we have. It emphasises giving within our means and in accordance with our earnings; a principle that recognises that financial situations vary among individuals and that giving is not about equal giving but equal sacrifice.

It encourages us to give wisely and cheerfully, and would attest if one is burdened with unmanageable consumer debt, to seek wisdom on how to navigate generosity in such a time.

Furthermore, we encourage giving from a perspective of "I get to" and "I choose to," rather than feeling obligated with "I have to." Pray and ask the Lord to deepen your trust in Him, and if necessary, seek guidance from a trusted Christian friend on how you can participate in this grace-filled practice.

2 Corinthians 9:7-9 teaches us that

“Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.”

As a church community we give as an act of obedience and worship to God, to partner with one another in providing for the needs of our church, our local community and beyond.

We are all part of God’s royal priesthood and giving to the body empowers us to minister to others and represent God faithfully.

THE RHYTHM OF GIVING

Some people give weekly, and some people fortnightly. Some via manual deposit and others by setting up a regular direct debit. Whatever it looks like for you, we encourage you to make a plan you can be encouraged to continue.

Just remember it is out of a heart of gratefulness and generosity that we honour God with our finances and the first fruits of what he has given us, so how you do it is your choice and whatever works best with your finances.

Head to c3monash.org.au/give for options.

Thank you for your generosity, and may God richly provide you seed that you may be blessed to be a blessing.

May you adopt an attitude of generosity and encourage others in your family and community to consider the same.

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2 Corinthians 9

