

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: The Power of Generosity

"Generosity is not something that God wants *from* you, it is something that God wants *for* you."- Andy Stanley. Too often when we talk about "generosity" in church, we think of it as something God or church leaders want from us; something we are obligated or commanded to give. But what if generosity means more than just a habit of giving away money? What if living generously is actually a lifestyle that God wants us to experience and enjoy? Join us this September as we discover the power of generosity to make our lives better, because living generously allows us to experience community and freedom, to live with joy, and make an impact in the world.

Message description

Generosity makes us happier. Studies show that when we give to others, our brains release chemicals that lead to feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, and happiness. It feels good to give because we were made to give-our brains are even hard-wired for it! This not surprising for those who believe that we were created in the image of a generous God; we were made to be generous too. When we practice generosity with the right heart and trust in Jesus, he will lead us out of a life of fear, scarcity, and self-centeredness, and into a life of joy, freedom, and community. Generosity doesn't just benefit the other person; it also has the power to transform us with joy.

Key Scriptures

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. Tell us about a time when you gave to a person, mission, or organization and you knew it helped someone or made a difference. How did it make you feel?
2. If giving makes us feel so good, then what holds us back from practicing generosity more often? Do any of the examples offered in the teaching resonate with your experience [fear, scarcity, worry over having enough or being prepared, afraid your contribution won't make a difference]?
3. "Jesus leads us out of a life of fear and into a life of joy. Generosity is the way." Where do you long to experience the joy and promise of God right now?
4. Our vision as a church is to join Jesus in the revolution of transforming lives through teaching and serving. Our second core value is **RESURRECT: learning to live like Jesus**. Here at Revolution, we believe that lives are transformed as we learn to live like Jesus and receive his grace every day. Our community groups are a central place where we experience the ongoing grace to learn, dig deeper, and grow in knowledge and love of God. These groups include Renovation house groups, Celebrate Recovery, men's bible study, rVillage women's ministry, seasonal bible study and book study groups,

Impact Student Ministries, RevKids, and LittlePeeps. Where have you witnessed this transformation? Where is Jesus calling you into deeper areas of trust as he leads you into a life of joy?

5. **Last week we asked:** Do you consider your financial giving an aspect of your spiritual life or discipleship? **Follow-up for this week:** How is God challenging you to practice generosity as a part of your spiritual life right now? How are you prayerfully considering your gift to Revolution church for 2022? How can we as a house group help you with this?

Going Deeper:

Over the course of this series, we will dig into the passage from 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. This is a letter from Paul to the church in Corinth encouraging the believers in their giving. His specific ask is for a financial gift for the Christians and poor in Jerusalem, which the Corinthians had already promised to send (9:1-5). But as Paul will go on to explain, their giving goes beyond Jerusalem to join in with the mission of the gospel as their generosity leads others to worship and offer thanksgiving of God.

This week, we will explore generosity as a transformational gift.

Re-read 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 [CEB read in teaching, ESV referenced here]

1. In the ESV, verse 5 Paul says, "So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, *so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.*" In the CEB version Paul says, "*I want it to be a real gift from you.*"
 - According to this passage, what makes something a real gift?
 - Do you find it easy to give in this spirit? Why do we so often feel obligated in our gift-giving (whether financially, to the church, or between friends)?
 - In our social context, money carries expectation for a good or service. We are trained that you get what you pay for, and you are paid what you deserve or earn. How do you think our social location impacts our understanding of generosity? How does Paul's understanding of "real" gifts impact your understanding of the radical, counter-cultural nature of God's love and grace?
2. You may be familiar with verse 7: "God loves a cheerful giver." According to Paul in this passage, what makes a giver cheerful? Why is this important? What are the main reasons people are reluctant to give? [Could be connected to conversation on the teaching above in question #2.]
3. Verse 11 ESV says "you will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way." Or said another way, you will be blessed to be a blessing. This is foundational to the identity of the people of Israel: they were an elect, chosen people of God, a nation set apart, so that one day they would bless the nations with the gift of the Messiah, who was not just for them but for the world. They were blessed to be a blessing.
 - Do you believe you have been blessed to be a blessing?
 - What are some of the ways God has "enriched" you with gifts that you can use to bless others? Not just financially, but with your talents, time, and service?
4. Re-read Psalm 112, which Paul quotes in verse 9. Considering this week's teaching on trust, what characteristics of the righteous person stand out differently?

Family-Related Questions:

- Oftentimes, our own discipleship is the best teacher we can offer our kids. When we model trust in Jesus in every aspect of life, they can learn to do the same. How can you invite your kids into your practice of generosity? If you have decided to make a regular gift to the church, consider sharing with your kids how you came to that decision. If they earn an allowance or have a job, how can you provide opportunities for them to practice generosity with you?