



PRAYERS



LEARN

Guarded Generosity

There he is again. Every time you are near this place, there he stands. His clothes are tattered and dirty. Sometimes he is wearing shoes, sometimes not. You may feel compassion for him and have a sense of curiosity, but not enough to talk to him. Instead, you *sometimes* hand him the change you have while trying to avoid eye contact.

When we think about generosity, it's often around money. But is there more to generosity than that? Think about all the different categories of people in our lives. First, there's our immediate family and closest friends. Then there are those with whom our lives overlap, not necessarily by choice, like our co-workers, colleagues, or classmates. We also have acquaintances – those people we've never really taken the time to get to know and of course, strangers. Are we generous with our time, our means, forgiveness, grace, or encouragement with all these people, including the strangers? Jesus was.

God's Generosity

Think about the people Jesus spent time with - they are probably the same people we would mindlessly pass on the street or never choose to be in the same room with. But for *all* people - the broken, tortured, fearful, and defeated - God's generosity is abundant and immediate. How do we respond to that? Jesus teaches us lesson after lesson about how to move from a place of guarded generosity to living out the kind of generosity we experience from God. The story of the Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:25-37](#)) and the Prodigal Son ([Luke 15:11-32](#)) are just two examples of the kind of generosity God offers us. God generously gives us time, talent, means, compassion, patience, and encouragement – not to mention Jesus's life to save us from ourselves. Are we living our lives this generously, in ways that draw the attention of others like Jesus did? Or do we have a gap in our generosity?



LIVE

Discussion questions: Read the text and scriptures below, and prepare to answer the questions.

1. Read [Matthew 22:37-39](#) and [James 2:14-18](#). How do you understand God's love for you and how does it help you generously love those with whom you work?
2. Read [Matthew 25:40](#) and [Psalm 122:3-5](#). What opportunities do you have every day at work to generously serve others?
3. Read [Luke 3:11](#) and [Proverbs 11:24-25](#). How do these passages change your view on the means God has given you to be generous?
4. Read [James 4:12](#) and [1 Thessalonians 5:12-15](#). What relationships would benefit from your generous encouragement rather than judgment?
5. Read [Colossians 3:12](#) and [Matthew 5:44](#). Talk about a time in your life when God was generous with compassion, patience, or forgiveness. How have you similarly responded to others and what difference did it make?

Application Question: Where do you have gaps in your generosity and what step will you take today to improve?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer





PRAYERS

Opening Prayer & Prayer Requests



LEARN

Before you begin, read the AGENDA LEARN introduction together and review the APPLICATION QUESTION from the previous meeting's RECAP.



LIVE

Discussion Questions: Have someone read each Bible verse aloud and then ask the corresponding question. Be sure everyone has enough time to find the Scripture before the verse is read.

- 1) Read [Matthew 22:37-39](#) and [James 2:13-18](#). How do you understand God's love for you and how does it help you generously love those with whom you work?



There is a healthy tension between loving yourself in a way that acknowledges your brokenness and suffering and the gracious love of God that helps you better love yourself and others.



Many people are insecure and do things to get notice, praise, or acceptance and define themselves by a conditional love of what others think rather than the gracious, self-sacrificing love of God. Jesus radically cuts through this complexity and offers a clear, powerful, simple summary of the Gospel of hope, modeling it with His every step on earth. Jesus lived a nomadic life, born in a stable, and no home to rest His head ([Luke 9:58](#)). Because He embraced deviations and was flexible to be generous with anyone He encountered, he was able to meet people in our weak and wounded state and still deeply love us.



For additional discussion, you might say, "It takes time to love others well. What is one thing you could implement today and do consistently to generously love others?"

Ex. Keep your office door open, answer the phone even if you look to see who is calling and don't want to, and be fully present with someone who interrupts your schedule.

Notes:

- 2) Read [Matthew 25:40](#) and [Psalm 82:3-4](#). What opportunities do you have every day at work to generously serve others?



You may not think there are any "least of these" with whom you work and while they may not need the shirt off your back, they may need something else – do you know what it is?



We are invited to think and act beyond the human worldview to God's divine social structure. When we live like we have the power of Christ in us ([Ephesians 1:18-20](#)), our works are far greater than when we live by our own power. Jesus rejected the social norms of the day and chose the most unlikely, not the all-star leadership team. As we embrace our identity as God's sons and daughters, we can recognize the same in others and selflessly use our gifts and abilities to not only serve them, but to glorify God.

Notes:

3) Read [Luke 3:11](#) and [Proverbs 11:24-25](#). How do these passages change your view on the means God has given you to be generous?



God's Word helps you think differently about what matters most and what matters least, challenging your priorities.



God's ways are not a minor adjustment of our own. Instead, they often represent the opposite end of the spectrum. While we like to be comfortable and our human nature can justify just about anything we want, God sets denial of self as a primary condition of discipleship and promises that we each have a cross to carry. (See [Matthew 16:24](#))



For additional discussion you might ask, "In this world of instant gratification, when was the last time you delayed gratification for yourself and instead, generously gave to someone else?"

Notes:

4) Read [James 4:12](#) and [1 Thessalonians 5:12-15](#). What relationships would benefit from your generous encouragement rather than judgment?



The world makes us think we are nothing, have nothing, and need everything we don't have, but God says we are infinitely valuable not because of what we do but who we are.



Judging is God's exclusive right and when we do it, we pretend to be God. But, placing true value on others helps us see them the way God does and the need for us to be generous with our encouragement. For example, avoid insidiously judging others with false labels that make us sound like we are just conveying facts like: "She hangs out with *those* people" or "he lives on *that* street." Instead, speak God's truth, like: "You are my brother or sister in Christ." ([Matthew 12:50](#)), or "You are so valuable that God counts the hairs on your head like he does mine." ([Luke 12:7](#)) or "We are all fearfully and wonderfully made by God" ([Psalm 139:14](#)).

Notes:

5) Read [Colossians 3:12](#) and [Matthew 5:44](#). Talk about a time in your life when God was generous with compassion, patience, or forgiveness. How have you similarly responded to others and what difference did it make?



When your generosity reaches into every facet of your life, God's love is reflected to others in a way that is radical and intriguing.



Generosity relieves us from selfishness and is in direct contrast to the brutally harsh culture of self-interest, self-serving, and self-motivation driving the world today. It's easy to never admit fault and respond with revenge or vengeance. But God, has forgiven us, shown us compassion and patience, and asks us to do the same – even with our enemies.



Have a generosity contest. Report back next week and share stories of how you astonished people by closing your generosity gap!

Notes:

Application Question: Where do you have gaps in your generosity and what step will you take today to improve?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer



LEAD

Ask Yourself: How am I responding with generosity in the same way God shares generously with me?

Sample



PRAYERS

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ROADMAP

This **BBT** volume of curriculum reveals God's generosity and all the many ways it is shared with us. In turn, we are called to respond to others in the same generous ways. Do you have a gap in your generosity?



LEARN

John the Baptist began to challenge the social norms of the time in preparation for Jesus. Jesus responds to the religious experts with a simple, radical message of hope. James reminds us that there is only one Lawgiver and Judge and we have no right to judge.

Scripture References for this study: [Luke 10:25-37](#), [Luke 15:1-10](#), [Matthew 22:37-39](#), [James 2:13-18](#), [Luke 9:58](#), [Matthew 25:40](#), [Psalm 82:3-4](#), [Ephesians 1:18-20](#), [Luke 3:11](#), [Proverbs 11:4-25](#), [Matthew 16:24](#), [James 4:12](#), [1 Thessalonians 5:12-15](#), [Matthew 12:50](#), [Luke 12:7](#), [Psalm 135:4](#), [Colossians 3:12](#), and [Matthew 5:44](#)



LIVE

- Generously love with generous time
- Generously give with generous means
- Generously encourage with generous truth

Application Question: Where do you have gaps in your generosity and what step will you take today to improve?



LEAD

Ask Yourself: How am I responding with generosity in the same way God shares generously with me?