

# The 360° Leader and Generosity

*“So let everyone give as he purposes in his heart,  
not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”*  
2 Corinthians 9:7

The effective 360° Leader is generous in attitude and action. In all of his relationships he models generosity.

In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul encouraged generosity among the Corinthians by bragging on the generosity of the poverty-stricken church in Macedonia. Paul’s words prove to us that generosity has nothing to do with any of the following:

- Feeling \_\_\_\_\_
- Having \_\_\_\_\_
- Calculating what one can \_\_\_\_\_
- Being \_\_\_\_\_

Stan Toler in his book, *The Cycle of Victorious Giving*, says, *“There is a kind of giving that warms the heart as it relieves the burden of another; a giving that wells up inside like a spiritual fountain, refreshing the soul, and strengthening the faith. It is grace giving.”*

Grace giving is giving out of a heart of gratitude for God’s faithfulness and love. It loves to give because God lovingly gave.

In Doug Carter’s book, *Raising More Than Money*, he explains that the pathway to generosity involves three levels:

1. Sons and daughters: When we receive forgiveness for our sins and are adopted into God’s family, we often show the characteristics of babies. We think first of ourselves and our needs.
2. Servants: As we feed on the word of God, we discover our call to servanthood. We encounter the “towel and basin” attitude of our Lord. We begin to invest time, talent and resources in serving others and meeting their needs.
3. Stewards: As we walk obediently with our Lord and discover the life of full surrender, we renounce self-centeredness, self-promotion and self-reliance. Our hearts and minds are captured by the most basic of all Biblical stewardship principles – God is the owner of everything. We own nothing! The wonderful privilege of partnership with God in His redemptive plan for a lost world energizes us.

*(Note: For more insight on the topic of biblical generosity, Raising More Than Money is available at [www.iequip.org/webstore](http://www.iequip.org/webstore).)*

## **Biblical Case Study: Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 2:8-4:10)**

The Bible is filled with stories of generous leaders – leaders who understand that a candle loses nothing when it lights another. No one models this better than Boaz, who became Ruth’s husband. Boaz owned a large field, and like other landowners, employed reapers to gather his harvest. When the reapers were

finished, the very poor were permitted to enter the field and take whatever leftovers they could find. Ruth was one of these less fortunate people.

Boaz demonstrated his generosity in several ways:

1. He was generous with his \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He was generous with his \_\_\_\_\_.
3. He was generous with his \_\_\_\_\_.
4. He was generous with his \_\_\_\_\_.
5. He was generous with his \_\_\_\_\_.
6. He was generous with his \_\_\_\_\_.
7. He was generous with his \_\_\_\_\_.

Before Boaz even suspected that Ruth might become his wife, he practiced generosity toward her.

You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. Leaders who fail to show generosity should ask themselves: *Do I really love the people I lead?* Jesus talked about this generous spirit when He said, *“If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.”* (Matthew 5:40-41)

#### **Discussion:**

- Can we have a right relationship with God while having a selfish attitude toward the time, abilities, possessions and relationships He has given to us?

#### **Biblical Words of Wisdom: Solomon (Ecclesiastes: 11:1-9)**

Solomon understood wise investing. In Ecclesiastes he counsels leaders to be generous, giving before they receive. Here are some truths about generosity, based on the words of Solomon:

1. Givers go \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Givers receive a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The return may not be \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Giving does not keep us from \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If you do not give, you cannot expect a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The return will be in proportion to your \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ for giving is love for God.

Some people seem to find joy in gathering wealth, others in accumulating the things money can buy, but the generous Christian steward finds the greatest joy in giving.

**Discussion:**

- Reflect on the following statement: “A rich person is not the one who has the most, but is the one who needs the least.”

**Principles for Becoming a Generous Biblical Giver**

In his book, *God and Your Stuff*, Wes Willmer argues that our use of possessions is an accurate barometer of our faith. He offers several Biblical principles for being a faithful and generous Christian steward:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ who is the Lord of your life.
2. Count your \_\_\_\_\_ – you have more than you realize.
3. Give to God \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Give to God \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Give according to your \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Give \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Give \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Give regardless of your \_\_\_\_\_.

Remember that generosity is an attitude before it is an action!

**Biblical Case Study: Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)**

The early church leaders were marked by generosity. Leaders at all levels gave freely of themselves. The whole church enjoyed generosity, but it started at the top. The example of the apostles spread a spirit of generous giving throughout the whole community of believers. Unfortunately, there were a couple of pretenders, Ananias and Sapphira, who sold some land and gave part of the money to the apostles. However, they reported that they had given all of the money to the church. God revealed their deception to Peter and he confronted them. They wanted to be thought of as generous without actually paying the price. Let’s look more closely at what happened. Ananias and Sapphira...

1. Held tightly to their \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Agreed to lie about their \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ to be something they were not.
4. Thought they could get by with appearing to be \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Felt more concerned about their \_\_\_\_\_ than their relationship with God.

**Discussion:**

- What do you think was the root cause of their sin—their dishonesty or a lack of generosity?

## Building Generosity into Your Life

Nothing speaks to others more loudly or serves them better than a leader's generosity. Generosity is a beautiful reflection of the giving nature of our Lord. He is an extravagant Lord Who gives generously to everyone with a need. He doesn't just give of His resources, but of Himself. He calls us to a similar life of generosity. Regardless of circumstances, genuine 360° Leaders who are committed to Christ will invest in others every day.

Consider several ways to cultivate generosity in your life:

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_ for whatever you have.
2. Put \_\_\_\_\_ first.
3. Never allow \_\_\_\_\_ to control you.
4. Regard \_\_\_\_\_ as a resource to use in God's service.
5. Develop the \_\_\_\_\_ of giving.

Sometimes we hold on to our possessions because we fear we might run out. We have a scarcity mind-set. We forget that God is our source and supply, and that His riches will not be depleted. Generous givers develop an abundance mindset. They serve Him who gives and gives and gives again, always in abundance! Their situation may be difficult and their resources may be small, but their God is great and mighty! Life seems abundant, whatever the circumstances. This is the life Jesus had in mind for us (John 10:10).

### Discussion:

- Reflect on this statement: *"We worship God and use things or we worship things and use God."*

### Roadblocks to Generosity

Many Christian leaders struggle as they travel on the road toward generosity. Their journey toward stewardship maturity seems very slow. Here are some possible obstacles they encounter on the pathway:

- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of surrender.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of humility.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of trust.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of obedience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of vision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of passion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of discipline.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – lack of information.

## How to Overcome the Roadblocks to Generosity

In order to overcome these roadblocks on the generosity journey, we must...

- \_\_\_\_\_ our lives fully to Christ.
- See a \_\_\_\_\_ through His eyes.
- Diligently \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ His Word.
- Seek the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.
- Stay \_\_\_\_\_ on Christ and His Great Commission.

## God's Generous Plan

When we understand the giving nature of our God, we begin to see the plan He has designed for us as generous givers. Think about it...

1. He provides all our resources.
2. His Word guides us in how to manage these resources wisely.
3. We can experience the joy of giving.
4. We can be His partners in Great Commission outreach.
5. We can lay up treasures in heaven.
6. We can spend eternity with Him and those we helped to reach with His salvation message.

## The 360° Leader Models Generosity in All Relationships

1. When leading up, he is a generous \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When leading across, he is a generous \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When leading down, he is a generous \_\_\_\_\_ in his team.

### Assessment and Application

#### Assessment:

Do you consider yourself a generous person? Why? Do you think other people see you as a generous person?

#### Application:

List ways you could be more generous toward your spouse, your supervisor, your peers, your team, and other ministries.