

Spiritual Giving and the Generosity Ladder: A Mid-Year Check up

Thesis: We are a people who are responding to God's invitation to make a journey in generosity and spiritual giving.

Text: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Intro:

Last year, we began to respond to an invitation from the Lord to take on a spiritual practice more intentionally as a congregation.

Here is a part of our corporate identity: **We are a people who are responding to God's invitation to make a journey in generosity and spiritual giving.**

Like every other area of spiritual maturity, giving is a growth process. We have to take the first step at some point. But then, God continues to grow us over time.

After a while, a generous heart becomes part of a believer's identity.

- When you consider the stages of generosity, where are you on your journey?
- With the Lord helping you, where would you like to be?
- What is the next step to get there?

Last year, we came to the conclusion that we needed to do things differently regarding our stewardship of funds individually with our tithes and offerings.

1. We discovered that we have room to grow in our stewardship as a church.
 - a. Nationally, only 5% of professing Christians tithe.
 - b. At Calvary, we have 38% tithers compared with 5% nationally. This reality is exciting and challenging.
2. **Let me ask two questions:**
 - a. How many of our people do we want our people to be like Jesus?
Answer: 100%.
 - b. How many of our people do we want to tithe, to give generously, and to be good stewards with their time, talents, and treasure? Answer: 100% in accordance with the way Scripture teaches us.
3. So, we have realized that we have room to grow as a church family.
4. Last year, we spent several messages casting vision for tithing and giving for the health of the body of Christ at Calvary. We raised our vision by engaging in a sermon series regarding stewardship and generosity. And, we have talked about our unique calling as a congregation.

Since we are approaching the halfway point of 2026, we want to revisit God's invitation to us in making an intentional journey in generosity and spiritual giving.

Our goal is to be a healthy body and beautiful bride for the Lord Jesus. And, we have an awesome calling locally and globally to join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence, together with others.

The Generosity Ladder: an invitation to make a journey in giving by moving up the ladder of generosity. [See the graphic below.]

1. **Give.**

- a. The initial giver is at the dawn of their giving journey. You have felt the desire to give and contribute for the first time. This phase is characterized by an exploration of trust, spiritual growth, and the beginning of a deeper bond with God through generosity.
- b. If you have never given to what the Lord is doing here at Calvary Community Church, start by giving today.
- c. Start where you.

2. **Regular.**

- a. The next stage of giving is to give consistently, regularly, and purposefully.
- b. The purposeful giver deliberately re-evaluates their finances and priorities to ensure giving holds a significant place in life. You are on a transformative journey from perceiving blessings as solely your own to understanding that everything belongs to God. In turn, you are dedicating more of yourself to the Lord.
- c. The invitation at this stage is to start giving regularly where you are and to ask God help you grow in your spiritual practice of giving.

3. **Tithe.**

- a. The next stage of giving is to bring the whole tithe into the local storehouse.
- b. You are responding to the Lord's invitation to go further in your spiritual practice of giving.
- c. *Malachi 3:6–12 (NIV84) 6 "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are*

robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

- d. The tithe or first 10% of our income and increase **belongs to the Lord** (Leviticus 27:30; Proverbs 3:9-10). **We bring our tithe to the Lord; we don't give it.**
- e. Offerings are something we give over and above the tithe.
- f. **Through bringing the tithe to the Lord and giving offerings over and above the Lord as God leads, we start living according to the economy of the kingdom of God.** The other option means trusting ourselves, doing what we think is right in our own eyes, and living according to the economy of this world system.

4. Generous.

- a. The next stage of giving is to give generously.
- b. By the grace of God, you recognize that everything you have belongs to the Lord.
 - i. You understand that the tithe is just the floor or launching pad.
 - ii. You desire to live generously like the Lord is generous. So, you give generous offerings both spontaneously and systematically.
 - iii. Sometimes you give as the Lord leads.
 - iv. Sometimes, you give as you have determined in your heart to do in the context of generosity (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- c. *Acts 2:42–47 (NIV84) 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*
- d. *2 Corinthians 9:6–15 (NIV84) 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things*

at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 *As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."* 10 *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.* 11 *You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.* 12 *This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.* 13 *Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.* 14 *And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.* 15 *Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

5. Extravagant.

- a. The next stage of giving is to give extravagantly.
- b. **You have reached the stage of living in the revelation that everything you have belongs to the Lord.**
 - i. So, you have a "yes" in your spirit to give extravagantly as the Lord leads or as you have opportunity.
 - ii. The goal is to set a budget to live on and to sow as much as you the Lord enables you to give into the kingdom of God.
 - iii. And for some of you, the Lord has given you a vision of leveraging your job, funds, and resources strategically to advance the kingdom of God through extravagant giving.
- c. *Luke 21:1–4 (NIV84) 1 As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2 He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 3 "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. 4 All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; **but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.**"*
- d. *2 Corinthians 8:1–7 (NIV84) 1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also*

to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Remember: Like every other area of spiritual maturity, giving is a growth process.

- When you consider the stages of generosity, where are you on your journey?
- With the Lord helping you, where would you like to be?
- What is the next step to get there?

Action:

This past year was a challenging year for us financially. We realized that we had to do some things differently as a congregation. And the first five months of this year have been bumpy.

As a family, we come together in challenging times, we learn, and we change as needed.

We are a people who get in action through prayer, asking what the Lord would have us do financially to sow into what we are doing as a congregation, that our base might be whole and healthy. And, we **want to get in action through our financial gifts**.

The Lord is speaking to us. What is the Lord saying to you? What is getting stirred up in you? What questions do you have? Where are you feeling resistance? Where are you cynical or resigned to ever changing?

You and I are invited to try on this new way of being... this new way of giving. **It is challenging, but you and I were created by the Lord to rise up to the occasion.**

Invitation:

Let's sit before the Lord and listen to what the Spirit is saying or highlighting for each of us.

Lord's Supper:

Now we want to gather around the Lord's table as a congregation.

SPIRITUAL GIVING

TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

GENEROSITY
LADDER

Extravagant

Generous

Tithe

Regular

Give

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2 Corinthians 9:8-11

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