

WHEN YOU

GIVE

**A SHORT GUIDE FOR
CHEERFUL GIVERS**

INTRODUCTION

GENEROSITY ORIGINATES WITH GOD. It's easy to recognize generosity. People whose lives are marked by kindness and grace set the pace in their willingness to bless others.

From the moment of creation, God's generosity has been on display. From the creation of the world, to the gift of Jesus, God provides abundantly. The birds of the air and the flowers of the field have all they need (Matthew 6:25-34) and humankind is invited into a life-giving relationship with God.

Breaking into a friend group can be hard. When they've known each other forever and share common life experiences, it's easy to feel like an outsider, to feel unwanted. But God, in his generosity, invites us in.

Instead of keeping His people at an arm's distance, God invites us in to experience the true community of the Trinity. The invitation promises safety and fulfillment and eternal life. God is generous and humans are created in God's image. Humans are restored to God's image by being generous and practicing generosity.

“SINCE GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF GENEROSITY, I WILL EMBRACE A LIFESTYLE OF GENEROSITY.”

THINK ABOUT

OTHERS

GENEROSITY IS AN ATTITUDE, NOT AN AMOUNT. There's a story in the Gospel of Mark about rich people giving large amounts of money at the temple. Along comes a poor widow and throws in two copper coins. In that moment, Jesus gathered his disciples and said, **"Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything— all she had to live on."** (Mark 12:43-44)

Most people would make a big deal out of the big gifts and gloss over the smaller one, but Jesus noticed this humble donation. Today, it might seem like generosity only makes the news when it comes from CEOs or celebrities. But most churches are funded by ordinary people.

No matter the amount, when you give, God pays attention.

The widow's sacrifice was the headline of the story. It wasn't the amount, but her attitude.

When Paul later instructed the church on how to give, he said we should give happily, not out of obligation, but out of joy. It is impossible for joy and greed to coexist.

As you think about your own personal giving, remember the story of the widow.

Think about how your contribution—whether large or small by the world's standard—can be used to make a difference in our community and around the world. When we give, we are being stewards of the blessings God has given us. An attitude and practice of generosity inspires others, impacts the world, and blesses the donor.

**“AS A STEWARD OF ALL THAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME,
I WILL MAKE IT MY PRIMARY OBJECTIVE TO GIVE
GENEROUSLY OF MY RESOURCES.”**

THINK ABOUT

OUR CHURCH

GENEROSITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Living generously has a ripple effect that extends beyond the gift we've given. When we give it impacts the lives of the recipient and the giver. Giving changes others and giving changes you.

Giving changes others. When you give generously, people are impacted.

Each time a need arises, many people speak up to offer thoughts and prayers. And we are grateful for thought and appreciative for prayers.

But as a Christian community, wouldn't it be great if those thoughts and prayers inspired action?

When you give, you take a tangible step. It's more than thinking about doing something, it's an action. When you give, your generosity doesn't just pay the bills, your generosity makes a difference.

Every single act of generosity toward our church is combined with others to make a very real difference in our community. Your gift is going to be used to make other people's lives better.

You provide opportunities for children to hear the Good News of Jesus. You provide counseling resources for families in need. You meet the physical needs of those who are hurting in our community. Your generosity changes others.

Giving changes you. Some people give to a big, bold cause. They are inspired by huge vision and want to make a difference. Others give to specific needs. They see an opportunity right in front of them and want to meet the need.

There are plenty of reasons to give, but here's one you might not have considered before — giving is actually good for you.

Whether you're giving your time, your influence, or your resources, studies show that giving is good for the giver's physical and mental health.

Generosity improves our relationships.

Generosity makes us healthier.

Generosity lowers our stress.

Generosity makes us happier.

Your generosity changes you for the better!

“BECAUSE GENEROSITY CHANGES ME AND THE OTHERS, I WILL MOVE FROM BEING A PERSON WHO GIVES WHAT IS LEFT OVER TO BEING A PERSON WHO GIVES TO GOD FIRST AND THEN LIVES ON WHAT IS LEFTOVER.”

THINK ABOUT

THE GOSPEL

GENEROSITY REQUIRES A PLAN.

Generosity, like most other disciplines, is rarely spontaneous. Sure, it's easy to end up in the Chick-fil-a drive-thru, but you generally don't end up with an unplanned trip to the gym. To get in a workout, you need the right clothes, enough time, and maybe even a membership. It takes planning.

Being generous is like that. We don't typically stumble into generosity. We work our way toward blessing others and putting their needs first. Generosity is more than random acts of kindness, generosity is a way of life.

The Apostle Paul knew this was the case. In his writings to the church at Corinth, Paul gives them specific instructions to help them prepare to be a blessing to the Jerusalem church community. **“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”**
(1 Corinthians 16:2)

**"I WILL CREATE A GIVING PLAN
BECAUSE GIVING WITHOUT A PLAN
LEAVES ME VULNERABLE AND AT THE
MERCY OF MY OWN EMOTIONS."**

THINK ABOUT

THE FUTURE

GENEROSITY IS THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL.

Because God gave His Son, we can receive the free gift of salvation.

That's the heart of the gospel.

But because God has been so generous toward us, we want to be generous to others.

That's the heart of loving our neighbor. Giving truly is an amazing thing. Generosity is at the heart of God and generosity is the story of the Gospel.

Because God gave generously, I will give cheerfully.

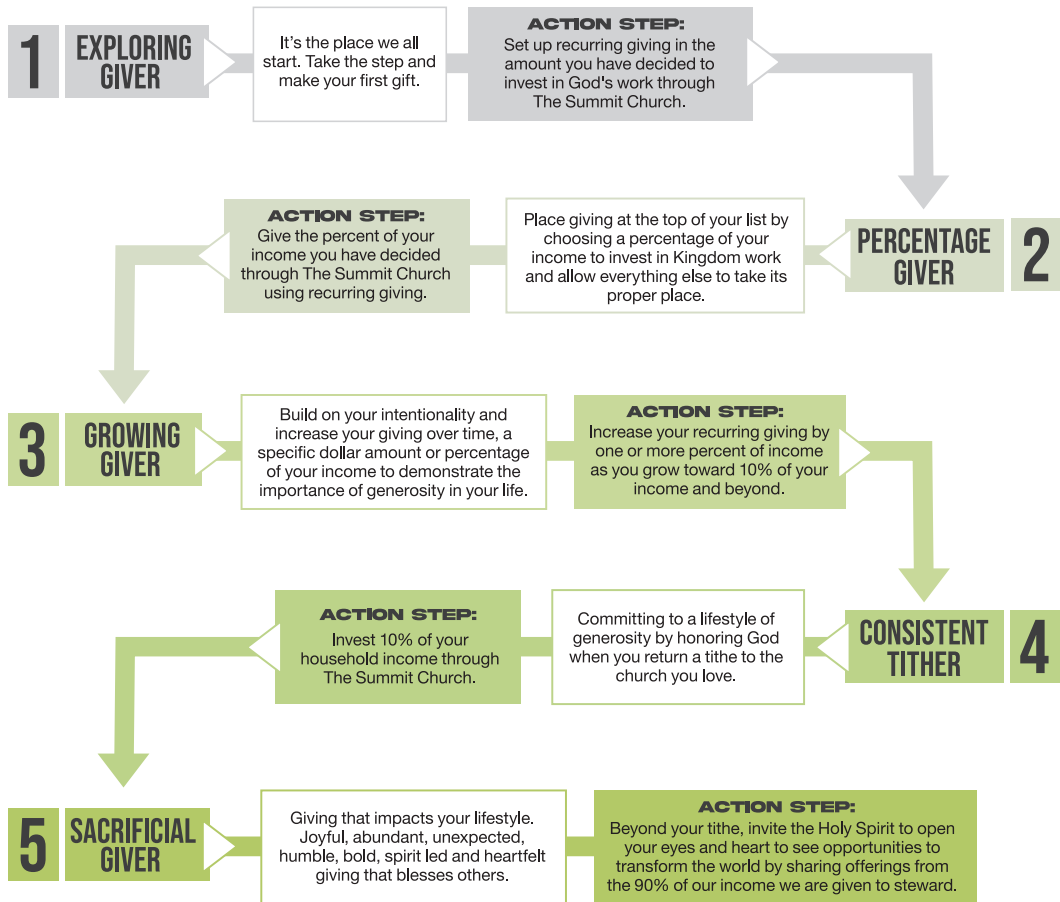
"I WILL STRIVE TO BE A SACRIFICIAL GIVER BY

**REACHING FOR
A LEVEL OF
GIVING**

**THAT INCREASES
MY DEPENDENCE
ON GOD."**

5 STAGES

OF STEWARDSHIP



ONE LAST

THOUGHT

Thinking differently about our stuff changes our lives. Our focus shifts from the temporary, what I need and what I can get, to the eternal, doing the work of God on earth as it is in heaven.

As we grow in Christ, we recognize that what we treasure is a reflection of our heart. Our hearts are changed when we grow in our desire to:

- be givers, not takers
- overcome a consumer mentality and adopt an eternal perspective

- learn to be good stewards of our money and possessions

- hold loosely onto material things and give away possessions to help others

- cheerfully and expectantly financially support the ministry of the church

- take risks that require faith to the glory of Christ alone.

**“FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS
THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.”**

MATTHEW 6:21



THE SUMMIT
CHURCH