



# GENEROSITY

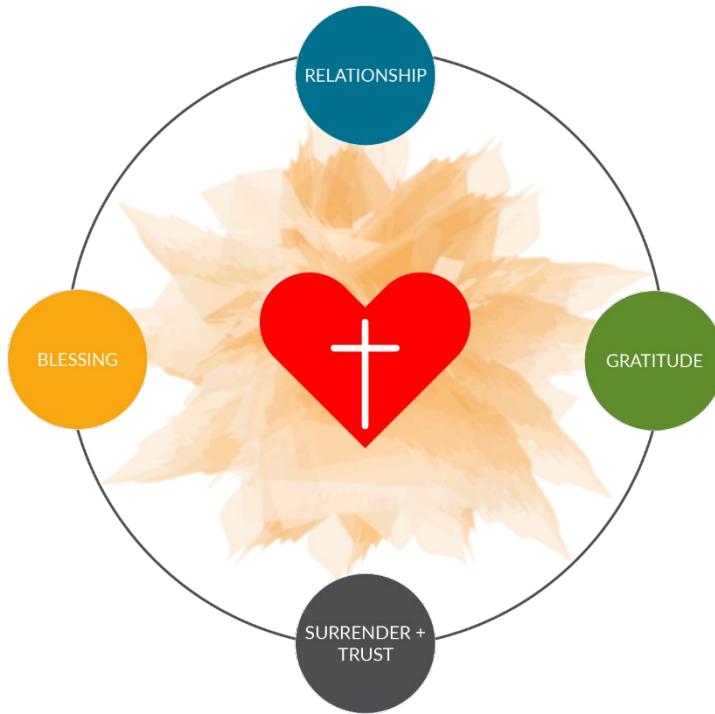
*All of life. All we have. All we are.*

BAPTIST.CA/STEWARDSHIP

## Whole Life Generosity

4-week Sermon Series Outline





## *Introduction*

Generosity is the overflow of a grateful heart. When we live generously, we give our praises to God. The giver praises God for the joy of partnering with him; the receiver praises God for his provision... through you.

*Relationships deepen with God and others.  
 Gratitude clears the way to focus on the right thing.  
 Surrender ends the fight to hold on to everything.  
 Releasing everything to his purpose bears fruit and joy in all circumstances.*

A circle of grace.

*Whole Life Generosity* is a 4-part sermon series outline prepared to help your congregation [re]discover the joy of generosity. Each sermon comes with a short accompanying Generosity video that you can use during a worship service. We invite you to use or adapt the sermon outlines for your context or simply use for inspiration.

For each of the four sermons we have included a transcript of the video (videos are free and accessible at [www.baptist.ca/stewardship](http://www.baptist.ca/stewardship)). We have also included some suggested scripture passages, big ideas, application points and talking points

Our hope and prayer is this series will help your congregation cultivate disciples of Jesus who are increasingly generous.

**More resources are available at [www.baptist.ca/stewardship](http://www.baptist.ca/stewardship)**  
**All scripture verses are from the NIV unless otherwise stated.**

The heavens are yours, and yours  
also the earth; you founded the  
world and all that is in it.

Psalm 89:11

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that  
in all things at all times, having all that you need,  
you will abound in every good work... You will be  
enriched in every way so that you can be generous  
on every occasion, and through us your generosity  
will result in thanksgiving to God.

2 Corinthians 9:8, 11

**Video Transcript**

Generosity. Why do we give? Why is this important? What if generosity was more than simply giving what is expected, more than what we do? What if generosity is designed by God to form our identity? We are created in the image of a generous God as His children he calls us to live counter to the world's culture of fear, scarcity, false securities, selfish ambitions and end consumption. We are called to open our hearts and hands and love generously just like Jesus. Whole life generosity is exactly what it sounds like-being generous with all of life, all we have and all we are. The core of generosity starts with Jesus as our model. Jesus gave up everything for our sake so that we might become like him, rich in generosity.

Want to discover how you can live more generously? Start by getting to know Jesus in a deeper way. Let the work of Christ dwell in you richly so that you can live richly toward him and the world. Commit to living all of life in relationship with God so that your heart starts to beat in tune with his. Live out loving God and your neighbor in your everyday life not just at church, but at home, at work and with everyone you encounter.

Father in Heaven, May the offering we give reflect our desire to live all of life in relationship with you. Use what we give back to you to further your kingdom. Amen

This week as you reflect on living all of life in relationship with God take time each morning to cultivate a listening attitude. Throughout the day watch for signs of his generosity listen for his voice, let his presence permeate your whole being.

**Text:****Psalm 24:1-2;****John 15:9- 17;****1 Corinthians 4:1- 5****Topic(s):****Generosity, stewardship, Giving,****Relationship with God (discipleship)****Big Idea of the Message:****Generosity is dependent upon how we see the world. Is it possible that God lent us this world so we could build a relationship with Him? What does it mean, then to love God in the context of what we have?****Application Point:****Loving God is at the root of generosity**

## **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines generosity as the quality or fact of being generous.  
(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/generosity>)  
In turn, generous is defined as being characterized by a noble or kindly spirit; being liberal in giving; being marked by abundance or ample proportions.  
(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/generous>)  
How can we be generous people?
2. **Psalm 24:1-2** As citizens of God's kingdom, we must be mindful of this premise: This world and what it contains is not ours. It belongs to God. However, in his wisdom, He has granted us stewardship of it. To care for the world, its people and its environment is a matter of relationship. It is amazing that God trusts us so much as to ask us to care for His creation. How do we respond to His trust? How do we relate to God through how we interact with our world?

**It is a lie from Satan that we own anything. He wants us to believe that we are in control, that we have ownership, that it is not a matter of relationship with God.**

3. **1 Corinthians 4:1-5** speaks of stewardship of what we have. As citizens of God's kingdom, we have been entrusted with everything God has. What we have is a gift from God. He has entrusted us to look after it in ways that will bring us joy. Paul is saying that as stewards of God's treasure – his world and everything it contains, we no longer are in competition. We no longer need to strive to have more or be better and or be more "successful" than those around us. Our business is not to be in a competition. Our business is to look after what is given to us. What has been entrusted to us is not about us. It is about God.
4. Martin Luther King Jr wrote, "From time immemorial men have lived by the principle that 'self-preservation is the first law of life.' But this is a false assumption. I would say that other-preservation is the first law of life. It is the first law of life precisely because we cannot preserve self without being concerned about preserving other selves. The universe is so constructed that things go awry if men are not diligent in the cultivation of the other-regarding dimension. 'I' cannot reach fulfillment without 'thou.'" (Martin Luther King Jr. *A Testament of Hope*, p. 625 as quoted by Craig L. Bloomberg *Christian in an Age of Wealth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013, p. 29)
5. God puts all His resources at our disposal so that our lives, our whole lives and everything that comes with it are at His disposal. (Randy Alcorn *Managing God's Money: A Biblical Guide*, Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011, p. 20)  
The question is:  
What do we do with what is at our disposal?  
Do we use it to build our relationship with God as Christ taught us in **John 15:9-17**?  
How does our living show we love God?
6. What is your most important relationship? Who is it with? Be careful how you answer because your life might reveal something different than your words.  
"Our relationships with products tend to be short lived: rather than hoarding treasure objects, consumers are characterized by a constant dissatisfaction with material goods."

This dissatisfaction is what produces the restless pursuit of satisfaction in the form of something new. *Consumerism is not so much about having more as it is about having something else*; that's why it is not simply buying but shopping that is at the heart of consumerism. Buying brings a temporary halt to the restlessness... *This restlessness – the moving on to shopping for something else, no matter what one has just purchased – sets the spiritual tone for consumerism.*" (John de Graaf, David Wann, and Thomas Naylor *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2001, p. 2) (Italics are mine.)

It is not God's desire that we chase after something that will never give us any satisfaction. It is His desire that we build a relationship with Him, understand that He provides what we ultimately need: His love.

7. **John 15:9-15** teaches us that it is by loving that we experience Christ's love. Therefore, true generosity can only exist in the context of a relationship with Christ, rooted in His love for us.

It is out of pure joy that God shares His love with us. It is not because we deserve it. It is not because we are so special. It is because He has so much to give. Plus, He loves to give. God's gift of love does not depend upon how He feels about us on a certain day. It does not depend upon our behaviour. God's gift of love is a decision He has made. His love for us fills Him with joy. This in turn, allow us to be filled with joy, able to love others as we realize how we are loved.

8. Think of how dogs unconditionally love their masters. Every time the master returns home, whether the absence was for five minutes, an hour or 4 hours, a dog is always just as happy to see their master. Dogs crave relationships. They exemplify the true meaning of love. Dogs are generous in giving love because have complete trust in their humans. They rest in that trust and assurance of their owners love and care.  
As we have that complete trust with God, we develop into generous beings, resting in the assurance of God's care.

## Week 2: GRATITUDE

# ALL WE HAVE RECEIVED WITH GRATITUDE FROM GOD

### Video Transcript

Whole life generosity starts with Jesus as our model. Then all of life is lived in relationship with God. The next step is a choice. Choose Gratitude. Our culture of endless consumption wants us to feel perpetually unsatisfied with what we have and envious of others. When we forget to express gratitude, we start to think we did it, it's all ours and we forget God. Gratitude is not a feeling, it's a state of mind and being. A heart of gratitude leaves no room for complaining. We cannot be truly thankful and ungrateful at the same time. Gratitude is the secret to finding joy and contentment. It fills our hearts and replaces our fear of not having enough with joy in God's overwhelming grace and provision.

Dear God, we give our offering today out of hearts of gratitude. Helps us to live generously with our whole being. Amen

This week as you reflect on all we have received with gratitude from him, challenge yourself to a week of cultivating gratefulness. Remember to thank God each day and vocalize gratitude for the kindness you see in others.

**Text:**

**Ephesians 5:20**

**Topic(s):**

**Living a life marked by gratefulness  
Why thankfulness matters  
Growing as a disciple of Jesus**

**Big Idea of the Message:**

**Thanksgiving is a key part of a vibrant relationship with God. We move deeper into that relationship in order to accept who we are in Christ and to deal with all that life brings with a heart of gratitude to God.**

**Application Point:**

**You can have an attitude of gratitude today, because of your focus on God.**

## **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. When Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians he did so from prison. Yet the letter he wrote is filled with an upbeat message that encourages his readers to take advantage of all the benefits of the life provided through Christ Jesus. You can imagine that the believers would have been concerned about the predicament that Paul found himself in. Maybe they even questioned God's providence. However, even in jail, Paul writes about God's blessing and the fact that we should 'always' be filled with thankfulness. When writing to the Thessalonians he put this thankfulness into context by saying that they should give thanks '*in* all circumstances' not *for* all circumstances (**1 Thess 5:18**). We can be consistently grateful when we are motivated by our trust in God, who is sovereign over life events.
2. Rudyard Kipling, author of 'Jungle book', was once approached by a journalist who suggested that Kipling was now so famous that every word he wrote was worth one hundred dollars. 'I'll give you one hundred dollars for you to say one word to me,' said the journalist. Kipling took the hundred dollars and said one word; 'Thanks.' An 'attitude of gratitude' starts when we become thankful even in the small things. As we deliberately choose to be thankful, a remarkable thing begins to happen; our thankfulness produces a greater desire to be thankful. As we demonstrate our thankfulness in word and deed, thankfulness is produced in others (**2 Corinthians 4:15-16**). It is infectious!
3. We have a limited capacity for things that require our energy. Like a jar that has a capacity only for a certain number of stones, you too can only contain a certain number of things emotionally. If you have 10% bitterness, 25% unforgiveness, 5% regret, 15% envy and 30% jealousy filling you then there is only 15% left for positive things. **Psalm 103:5** says 'God fills my life with good things.' Is God trying to fill you but there is no room? If you are to make room in each day for thankfulness, it may require that you resist the negative emotions that do not give room for gratitude.
4. When Paul describes God as the object of our gratitude, he describes him as a Father. Like any good parent, he will seek the best for his children. Only by knowing that His will is 'good, pleasing and perfect' can gratitude truly come from a heart of love and trust (**Romans 12:2**).
5. God pays particularly attention to those who have an attitude of gratefulness. **Psalm 22:3** says that he makes his home where there are people who give thanks. Gratitude attracts God's blessing because it is an act of obedience (**Deuteronomy 28:1-3**). When people are generous and grateful, they become attractive and compelling and we want to spend time with these people. In the same way, God loves spending time with people who are like that. He will not show favoritism (**James 2:9**) but he does bestow favor on his people (**Acts 7:46**).
6. Paul was writing to real people who needed to face life's challenges from a perspective of gratitude. Practicing thankfulness each day would produce in his readers a commodity that is sought after, but rarely found; true contentment (**Philippians 4:11-13**). Begin today to give thanks to God and look for ways to be thankful to others.

## Week 3: SURRENDER + TRUST

# SURRENDER AND TRUST OUR ALL TO GOD

### Video Transcript

Whole life generosity starts with Jesus as our model. Then all of life is lived in relationship with God. All we have is received with gratitude from God. Next, we need to surrender and trust our all to God. We all struggle with living generously. Although created in the image of a generous God, our desire and will is often committed to providing for ourselves first and giving only if anything is left. To truly discover the freedom of generosity we must let go of our fear and worry of not having enough, of not being enough and accept God's invitation to trust that God will look after us as we follow him and that we will be ok. Generosity is forged in us as we choose to believe that God is good and trustworthy and that we can spend our energy, time and money for the cause of others even when that doesn't make sense.

Dear God, Grant me a spirit of gratitude in all life's circumstances. Whether I have much or have little, help me to give like you gave. Amen.

This week as you reflect on what it means to surrender and trust your all to God, challenge yourself to let go of your need to control and own your own stuff and believe that God will look after you as you ask, "How can I be used by you today?"

**Text:**

**Matthew 6:24-33**

**Topic(s):**

**Do not worry.**

**Big Idea of the Message:**

**To truly discover the freedom of generosity, we must first surrender to God's invitation to trust that God will always provide and that we will be OK.**

**If it's all given to us by a God of Generosity and Love, then can we choose in all circumstances to trust this God?**

**Application Point:**

**Moving from worrying to seeking first the kingdom of God.**

## **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

### **1. Context of Matthew 6:22-23**

Jesus is not speaking to the rich and powerful. He is talking to the crowds who were often poor and hungry. They were preoccupied with basic human needs of food, drink, and clothes. For Jesus to say, “do not worry” to this particular community of the hungry, poor, and thirsty is quite remarkable. Scot McKnight challenges some common conceptions that the Beatitudes are a list of virtues:

“The Beatitudes are normally *misunderstood* as a list of virtues. The Beatitudes, however, are not a virtue list: they are a list of the *kinds of people* in the society Jesus maps for his listeners. Those who are responding to his kingdom vision are the poor and the hungry, those who weep and those who are despised by the powerful — and those who are not responding are the rich, the well fed, the party-prone, and those who are approved by such powerful folks. No, this is not a virtue list but a sociopolitical statement: the work of God in Jesus and through the kingdom is to include the marginalized, to render judgment on the powerful, and to create around the marginalized (with Jesus at the center) an alternative society where things are (finally, by God) put to right. Here we come into a vision of the kingdom of God on the part of Jesus that is an extension of the Magnificat and the Benedictus and Jesus’ inaugural address.” (Scot McKnight, *A Community Called Atonement: Living Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.)

### **2. Worry**

“Worry” is mentioned five times in this passage (verses 25, 27, 28, 31 and 34). The imperative, “Do not worry” is mentioned at the beginning of the section and at the end (verses 25 and 34).

Invitation the congregation to take 1 minute to silently reflect on this question: “What are you worried about?”

Preach Jesus’s words to them in the midst of their worrying.

### **3. The Ineffectiveness of Worry**

“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Worrying can actually reduce your life expectancy. “Many studies have found a link between anxiety-prone personality and shortened lifespan. The tendency to always react to frustration, loss, or threat with negative emotions is referred to as neuroticism by researchers who have found this trait to be widespread and worrisome. A 2009 article published in *American Psychology* stated that ‘there is growing evidence that neuroticism is a psychological trait of profound public health significance. Neuroticism is a robust correlate and predictor of many different mental and physical disorders, comorbidity among them.’

For instance, for a study published in 2008, researchers at Purdue University followed 1,600 men, ages 43 to 91, for 12 years to examine how those with neurotic personalities fared over time. At the end of the study, only 50 percent of the men with high or increasing neuroticism were alive compared to 75 percent to 85 percent of the other

group.” (<https://www.verywellmind.com/worry-and-anxiety-impact-longevity-2223983>)

#### 4. Two object lessons: Birds and Flowers

##### **Birds** (verses 26-27)

- Jesus' Question: Is not life more than food, and body more than clothes?
- Object Lesson: “Look at the birds of the air,,, **YET** your Heavenly Father feeds them.
- Promise as a question: “Are you not much more valuable than they?”

##### **Flowers** (verses 28-30)

- Jesus' Question: “Why do you worry about clothes?”
- Object Lesson: See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. **YET** I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”
- Promise as a question: “If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow thrown in the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith?”

#### 5. This passage is deeply theological in that it makes profound statements about who God is and the relationship between God and humanity. Humanity is valuable. God takes care of persons and things that are valuable. Human beings are more valuable than birds. God takes care of birds. He will take care of you. Flowers of the field are beautifully dressed by God. God takes care of the flowers. He will take care of your need for clothes.

The imperative, “Do not worry” (25, 34) is mentioned at the beginning and end of this passage. At the end of the passage, Jesus adds a new imperative in the positive. “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all (food, drink, and clothes?) these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

We are invited to be preoccupied with the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God and let God take care of the rest.

## Week 4: BLESSING

# RELEASE ALL WE ARE TO GOD FOR THE BLESSING OF OTHERS

### Video Transcript

Whole life generosity starts with Jesus as our model. Then all of life is lived in relationship with God. All we have is received with gratitude from God. Then we surrender and trust our all to God. The final step is to release all we are to God for the blessing of others through generosity and good works. Generosity is the joyous overflow of a grateful heart. When that happens, praise goes up to God. The giver praises God for the joy of partnering with him to heal the world. And the receiver praises God for his provision through you. Relationships deepen with God and others. Surrender ends the fight to hold on to everything. Releasing everything to his purpose bears fruit and brings joy in all circumstances. A circle of grace.

Father, let our heart beat in tune with your as we release our offering and ourselves to you.  
Amen

This week as you reflect on all we are released to God for the blessings of others, challenge yourself to get generous each day this week and give away your time, money or energy. Don't wait. Pray and give and anticipate with joy how God is able to bless you abundantly, in all things, at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work.

**Text:**

**2 Corinthians 8:9, 9:7, 11**

**Topic(s):**

**Jesus as model of generosity**

**Gratitude & Surrender**

**The gift of giving**

**Big Idea of the Message:**

**The final step is to release all you are to God for the blessing of others through generosity and good works.**

**Application Point:**

**We are called to practice abundant living each and every day.**

## **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. Generosity is the joyous overflow of a grateful heart.
  - God is gracious which is another way of saying that God is generous. God's work in the lives of people is to make them increasingly generous with their time, talent and treasure.
  - In **2 Corinthians 8:9** we see Christ's example of living generously. Our time, gifts and abilities are gifts given from God. They are not ours but belong to God and flow out of God's goodness so that we can bless God by blessing those in our neighbourhoods and communities.
  - "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give" (**2 Corinthians 9:7**). Sometimes Christians debate whether they should tithe 10% of their income or if they are free from the law based on this passage. This passage is not a "great, now I don't need to give" passage. For those who have experienced new life in Christ, it is normative to want to increase one's generosity and blessing because of what we have received.
  - "For God loves a cheerful giver" (v7). Sometimes this passage has been used to manipulate people into giving. However, for those who have experienced transformation by Christ our response to the activity of Christ is to joyfully over ourselves and all that we have to God and others.
  - Giving of our time and treasure is painful if we buy into the lie that our time and treasure are ours. But when we see our lives as a gift from God, blessing others shapes our priorities.
  - **Philippians 2:1-11** also provides us a picture of the model of Jesus surrendering his time and talent for others which invites us to "value others above yourselves."
2. Surrender ends the fight to hold on to everything. Releasing everything to his purpose bears fruit and brings joy in all circumstances. A circle of grace.
  - The word surrender is not widely and easily received these days. Surrender is a word that is often used in warfare which is not part of the Canadian peace-loving ethos. However, when we are able to surrender our need to control everything there is an upside-down experience. In surrendering our time and talent to God and others we experience the blessing of joining in God's purposes. Our identity is shaped to be more and more like Christ the more we surrender our time and talents as a blessing to others.
  - Jesus often talked about the upside-down nature of the Gospel, Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (**Matthew 16:24-25**).
  - This could be a great place to invite someone to briefly share their own experience of having to surrender their financial situation to God, or when they choose to give generously. Encourage the person to be real and genuine. To talk about the challenges and the ways that God has been faithful.

### **3. Invitation & Challenge**

This week as you reflect on all we are released to God for the blessings of others, challenge yourself to get generous each day this week and give away your time, money or energy. Don't wait. Pray and give and anticipate with joy how God is able to bless you

abundantly, in all things, at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work. **2 Corinthians 9:8**

- Get together with a few people and read some of Jesus' statements about time and treasure and then ask yourself, "What next step might Christ be calling me to take?"
- Maybe you need to simplify and give away some of your clothes or books or kitchen utensils.
- Maybe Christ is inviting you to get control of your debt and finances so that you don't need to be burdened by the stresses of money and so that you can be more generous.
- Maybe Christ is inviting you to consider how you can give 1-5% more of your income to your church.
- A disciple of Jesus is one that hears the voice of Jesus and responds accordingly. It is easy to tune out the voice of Jesus when it comes to our time, talent and treasure. The more we listen for that voice and respond the more we will continue to hear Christ nudging us to live a life of blessing.



---

5 International Blvd  
Etobicoke, ON M9W 6H3  
416 622 8600 ◦ [cboq@baptist.ca](mailto:cboq@baptist.ca)  
[baptist.ca](http://baptist.ca)