

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides **(March 13th-20th)**

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. What is one of the best presents that you have ever received from someone?

Bible Study Questions

1. What is the first thing that you think of when you hear the word, "Generosity"?
 - What do you think most often holds people back from being generous?
2. Many people believe that "generosity is a privilege of abundance." Have you ever thought that way? Why?
3. Many believe that "generosity is an obligation for being a good person." Have you ever thought that way? Why?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-8
 - What do you learn about generosity from the Macedonian Christians? What was their motivation to give?
5. In Acts 20:35, Jesus says that "*it is more blessed to give than to receive.*" How have you discovered that to be true? Even though this is often quoted, why do we hesitate to act on it?
6. Pastor Michael made the observation that we are made in the image of a generous God. When we live generously, we bear that image. How does it impact your life outlook to think of generosity in this way?
7. Make a list of many of the different ways that God has been generous toward you. In reviewing the list, how does it impact the way that you think about generosity?

March 13th
How to be Generous: Why?

The Bible has a lot to say about generosity. No one wants to be an Ebenezer Scrooge. Most people would say that they want to be generous people, but we struggle with it. It is almost as if we want it, but don't know how to do it. Over the next month, we will be talking about generosity and learn about how to become generous people.

I. Common Assumptions

- **Generosity is the privilege of abundance:** This is a common belief that one can afford to be generous once they have an abundance of resources to share. When all of the debts are paid off and there is a large nest egg in the bank, then one can give money. When someone is retired, then they will have time to donate.
- **Generosity is an obligation for being a good person:** Good people are generous. Therefore in able to be good, people will “pay their dues” but doing occasional acts of generosity.

II. Biblical principles

- **Generosity is commanded regardless of life circumstances:** In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul tells the story of the churches in Macedonia. He says that even in the midst of their poverty, they gave beyond what they were able. He then tells the Corinthians to follow in their example. They commended for being generous, even though there was no abundance to draw from.
- **Generosity is an invitation to experience greater joy:** When Paul talks about the Macedonian churches, he says they had begged him to allow them to give to his work. There was an understanding that their generosity allowed them to have ownership in the work that God was doing. In Acts 20:35, Jesus says that “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” That the greater joy is found through generosity instead of just spending on ourselves.
- **Generosity is a way of life in any situation:** When the Bible talks about a generous person, it is not talking about a one time act, but a way of life in which people routinely share with their hands open.
- **Generosity is a part of bearing the image of a generous God:** This is the key reason why we should care about generosity. In Matthew 20, Jesus tells the story of a vineyard owner who hires workers throughout the day. At the end, he pays them all the same making those who worked the most upset. He responds by saying that he has a right to be generous. We serve a generous God who loves to give good gifts to his children. We are made in his image

and we therefore reflect that image when we follow his example in generosity.

Conclusion

When we reject a generous lifestyle, we reject God's image. Furthermore, we are generous because we have received God's outrageous generosity. Next week we will start talking about the “how”.