



US

THE POWER OF CULTURE



GENEROSITY

One key ingredient in our culture is Generosity. In fact, generosity is one of the most important components to the Northplace culture. Generosity is not “giving money”. Generosity is so much more than giving money. You can be a giver of money and not be a generous person.

Generosity is an understanding of grace. When a person recognizes how powerful grace is and how much has been extended to them by God and by people, the logical result is a feeling of gratitude. Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. A people who truly understand God’s grace will be a truly grateful people...and grateful people give, grateful people serve, grateful people offer hospitality...grateful people are generous people. A grace-filled culture is a grateful culture is a generous culture.

Gratitude is the antidote for greed. Greed says, “I deserve this and am entitled to more!” Gratitude says, “Thank you, but you’ve given me more than I deserve!”

The more you understand how spiritually destitute you really were or are - the more you understand how far God had to reach to grab you and the more you fully grasp the measures He had to go to bring you into relationship with Him - the more generous you will be. When you are poor in spirit you understand His grace, you become grateful, and that causes you to walk in generosity.

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Me is about establishing common ground with your group. A group has to buy into the messenger before they buy into the message. Me is about being transparent and vulnerable to connect with the group. Share your own examples, stories and life experience. Your story introduces the topic. If you are including your spouse or anyone else in your story, ask for permission beforehand.



Prompt Phrases (Examples)

- “What is my motivation in giving, in serving, and in volunteering and helping others?”
- “What is my understanding of grace as it relates to generosity?”
- “My wife and I struggle with generosity and this is how...”
- “When we tried to teach generosity to our kids, we taught giving instead of generosity being our motivated response to grace. Now, we would do it differently.”
- “I struggle with the discipline and the consistency to be able to be generous and this is how it affected me...”
- “I have seen generosity and money as the same thing, and this is how it has affected my generosity....”

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Get people to identify with the topic. Once you have clearly established the topic, in the Me, the next step is to include everyone. Moving the focus from the leader to the group. See the topic at hand from the perspective of a single parent, parents of teenagers, blended family, young adult, empty nesters, widows or other life stage. If people engage with the topic, they will stay with you throughout the discussion.

Prompt Questions:

- “Have you ever felt the same?”
- “Does anyone else relate to this?”
- “Am I the only one that struggles with this?”
- “Can anybody else relate to that?”

Example

Have you ever taken a gift to a party and realized after you left that your name wasn't on it? How did you feel? From the following options, what did you struggle with the most?

- You wanted the person to know that you brought a gift.
- The cost of the gift and the reality that you won't “get credit” for giving it.
- That they may think you didn't care.

Quote: Biblical generosity is the result of a transformed heart and mind.

- “Have you examined your heart and mind when giving a gift, deciding to serve, or extending help?”
- “What is your motivation for being generous?”

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Point people to God's Word on the topic at hand. This segment is about what Scripture has to say - God's solution. Do not re-preach the sermon. Do not camp out here, this is not the conclusion, because you are moving the group to application in the next segment.

Transition Questions or Phrases:

(These ideas/examples help you present what God says about the topic.)



GOD

- "What Does God say about generosity?"
- "The good news is we are not the first group of people to struggle with this..."
- "God knew we would struggle with this, because it says in His Word..."
- "Jesus addressed this very issue when He started the Beatitudes with blessed are the poor in Spirit..."

Key Scriptures - Remember, you do not use all of the Scriptures presented here, these are simply suggested passages for your discussion on grace, gratitude and generosity. Be sensitive to where the conversation is going and utilize Scripture to support the discussion.

Scriptures on Grace

Romans 3:23-24 NIV

23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

No amount of work, confession or penance can ever elevate me to a level of earning or entitlement that can change the fact I am broken and sinful. Financial Coach and Author, Dave Ramsey, almost always responds to the question, "How are you?" with the same answer, "I'm better than I deserve." Ramsey says that this response is a conscious acknowledgement that he is a broken sinner who deserves nothing but death, and an eternity separated from God. But, it is by His grace that we get to go on living assured of salvation. We are broken people being restored by the grace of God.



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Scriptures on Gratitude

Romans 12:1 NIV

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

In view of God's mercy, the only proper and logical response is to offer your whole life (time, talent, and treasure) back to God. Gratitude is the antidote to greed. This response is worship. Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.

Scriptures on Generosity

John 3:16 NLT

16 For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

Mark 12:41-44 NLT

41 Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. 42 Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. 43 Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. 44 For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.

Biblical Generosity is the result of a transformed heart and mind. The key issue is motivation. Generosity is not something God does and practices. Generosity is something He is. God is generous...and His motivation is love.



GENEROSITY



YOU

This is the application of the sermon. The group discusses what to do, with what they have heard. This is where we answer the questions, “So what?” and, “Now what?” It’s better to find one application that we can challenge everyone to embrace, than to talk about ten different applications and not apply any of them. The discussion may include multiple applications, but our goal in this case, generosity is the same.

Consider the composition of your group and select those that apply to your group.

How Does Generosity Apply to

- ...a teenager?
- ...college student?
- ...singles?
- ...newlyweds?
- ...parents?
- ...empty nesters?

How Does the Topic of Biblical Generosity Apply to:

- ...you?
- ...your family relationships?
- ...your relationships in our church?
- ...your relationships with those outside the faith?
- ...your relationships in the marketplace?



GENEROSITY

US

Paint the verbal picture of what could and should be. Inspire the group to see the potential outcome if these principles are applied. Imagine what the church, the community, families, maybe even the world, would be like if Christians everywhere embraced this week's idea (in this case, generosity).

From its inception, the radical and gospel-motivated generosity of Christians has set them apart from the world, and it should be the same today. We talk about wanting to be a faithful witness of God's character and His glory here in our region. And if so, one of the things people who peer into our lives should be able to say is, "Well, that's what their God is like." If we're a healthy church culture, that's truly believing God's grace to us, others will see this through our generosity, because we will reflect the nature of our God. If we are going to bear His name, we must bear His nature.

Prompt Phrases or Questions

- "What would happen in one week (the next ten days), if Christians around the world would foster this culture?"
- "Can you imagine if...?"
- "Picture our church...."
- "Imagine your marriage..."
- "Visualize your workplace if...."
- "Envision..."



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General Guidelines

- Roadmap: Know where you are going before you start the conversation.
- Be OK with silence. People are processing, digesting, and thinking through it.
- If people move into another area of the flow, use it to segue into the next portion of your discussion.
- You do not have to go through every question in the template, because these are only prompts to help you facilitate the discussions.
- Your Coach has been involved in the development of this template. If you have any questions, please contact them.