



First Things First
Sermon Discussion Guide
February 25, 2018

Ice Breaker: What does biblical generosity look like? What does radical generosity look like?

Open in prayer:

Read Malachi 3:8-12

- What are some examples of radical generosity in the Bible?
- Has someone ever been radically generous towards you? How did you receive it?
- Have you ever been radically generous? How did you feel?
- How is biblical generosity related to joy, freedom, idolatry, and blessings?
- Sometimes churches discuss money from one of two perspectives: **poverty gospel or prosperity gospel**. What are the traits of each? What are there downfalls?
- What is a provisional gospel?

The Big Idea: The issue of generosity is an important part of a life that puts God first. How we handle money reveals the spiritual condition of our heart. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

1. Spiritual maturity occurs as we put God first in our lives.

The word "consecrate" means "set apart."

Exodus 13:1-2 - "The Lord said to Moses, "Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal."

Moses says in Exodus 13 that the first belongs to God. This biblical principle has never changed. We grow spiritually as we put God first in our lives.

- In what ways is Jesus God's tithe? How did God place his faith in us? (**Romans 5:8**)
- What is the principle of "firsts." Who or what is first place in your life?



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- Why is the way we start the first part of our day important? What are some “first part of the day” practices that you have?
- Discuss what it looks like to put God first in our time, finances, heart.

Matthew 6:33 - “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Psalms 116:12 - “What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me?”

2. The principle of first fruits runs throughout scripture.

Exodus 23:19 - “Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God.”

Proverbs 3:9-10 - “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”

3. The beginning of biblical generosity is the tithe.

Leviticus 27:30 - “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.”

It is set apart to the Lord. Look at what Moses says... **“It belongs to the Lord.”**

- How is tithing a Kingdom principle?
- Who were some of the first people in the Bible to tithe?

Matthew 23:23 - “You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”

- What is Jesus warning of in Matt 23:23?
- Pastor Loren said, “One of the reasons God blesses tithing is because it takes faith.” How does tithing take faith? What is God’s response to our faith?



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Hebrews 11:6 - "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

This is something about tithing many people never understood. Yes tithing is 10% of what God puts in your hand. **But which 10%?**

- How does tithing impact our understanding of God and ability to provide?

John Piper: We must fight covetousness almost every day. And God has appointed an antidote: giving. He tests us again and again: what do we desire most—the advancement of his name or 10% more security and comfort and fun?

Read Malachi 3:8-12 - "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse —your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 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 there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe, " says the Lord Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty."

- How do we steal from God?
- Verse 10 says, "bring". Why is our giving posture important in tithing?
- What is the "storehouse"? Why does God specify this in giving?

God can provide for your needs before you even know you have a need.

2 Corinthians 9:8 - "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."

In Exodus 13:14-15 there is an instruction.

"In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh



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stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed the firstborn of both people and animals in Egypt. This is why I sacrifice to the Lord..."