

ENGAGE SERIES

DATE: SUNDAY, 07TH OF FEBRUARY 2021 | ENGAGE: PART 3

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 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.

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 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.

PROVERBS 3:9-10

Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

PROVERBS 19:17

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.

PROVERBS 21:20

The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down.

START TALKING

1. Was there anything in Sunday's message that challenged you about "You Can't Outgive God"?
2. Have you been touched by generosity recently? Share an example about how you've been impacted by the generosity (big or small) of another person.

START THINKING

1. Read Proverbs 19:17. Does being kind to the poor go beyond pity? Do you think we should be motivated by the promise of a reward, or is there something else that should be motivating our giving to the poor?
2. Read Proverbs 3:9-10. This verse speaks of the power of bringing our 'firstfruits' (or 'tithe') to the Lord and His response to that. How has the principle of tithing impacted your life? What have you learned about it that has strengthened your relationship with God?

START SHARING

1. Have you like the Sea of Galilee (inflow and outflow) or like the Dead Sea (no outflow)? If you're currently like the Dead Sea, what will you do to become more like the Sea of Galilee? And if you're like the Sea of Galilee, what will you do to increase your outflow? In other words, what do you need to do to become a more generous person?
2. Steve said it's important to have a plan for our giving beyond just handing out a few coins to people who are begging. How do you decide on which charitable organisations or causes to give to? Have you ever asked God for His guidance on what to do in this regard?

START PRAYING

You're the best person to reach out and Father, we are so grateful for Your grace, poured out on our lives - the love and sacrifice of Jesus and the empowering of the Holy Spirit daily. We want to be people who Your grace flows through to bless and refresh the lives of many others. May we turn the dial on generosity in our hearts, not because somebody twisted our arms or because we feel manipulated or compelled to, but because we look at You, the generous God who blesses us in so many ways. Amen!

START DOING

One of the simplest forms of generosity is an invitation. This week, invite a friend to join your group for the Gifted series.

NOTE TO LEADERS:

Our GIFTED series starts on Sunday, the 14th of February. Here is some important information:

1. Our prayer meeting and leaders' training takes place this evening (Tuesday) at 18h00 and 18h30, respectively.
2. Steve will be running a training session on Sunday, the 14th of February at 18h00 covering "Tips for Hosting a LifeGroup Online". Please keep an eye out for an email this week with the Zoom link.
3. The GIFTED mid-week videos will be live-streamed on Wednesday and Thursday evenings at 19h00. The videos will also be available for download on our website from this Wednesday.
4. Hard copies of the GIFTED workbook and leader's guides are available for collection from the office during the week or from the church building this Sunday between 08h00 & 10h45
5. All the content for the gifted series is also available online at www.cityhillhurch.co.za/gifted

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday was the final week in our Engage series, and we explored our value of "you can't outgive God".

There is a really interesting metaphor from the geography of the two major bodies of water that form the border of Israel. If you look at the map below, you can see the top body of water is called The Sea of Galilee and then further down is the Dead Sea.



Both these bodies are fed by the river Jordan, and they are both bodies of water. But that where the similarity ends. There are actually some major differences between them:

1. The Sea of Galilee is bustling with towns and life in and around it. There are loads of different fish species within this lake, and millions of cranes and pelicans migrate across Israel to this point. And up to 25 different species of raptors can be found around the Sea of Galilee.
2. The dead sea, on the other hand, is 434m below sea level. It has 9.6 times the salts and mineral content that the ocean does, and as a result, no plants and animals can live in this body of water. (Hence its name, the Dead Sea).

So how can two bodies of water, fed by the same source - the Jordan River, be so different? The answer is in the "outflow". The Sea of Galilee is fed by the Jordan River (it has inflow), but it also has a river flowing out of it (outflow). The Dead Sea only receives water (inflow). No water flows out of the Dead Sea (outflow).

This is an amazing metaphor for what our lives are meant to be like. All of us receive "inflow" into our lives from God: His grace (more than we could ever use over a lifetime) and the love of Jesus. The sacrifice of Christ also flows into our lives (He trades places with us at the cross) - what an inflow of love! He takes our sin so that we can receive His forgiveness. He took our rejection so that His acceptance could flow into our lives. He took on our death so that His love could flow. He took on our orphanhood so that we could receive His adoption. He took on our poverty so that we could

receive His riches.

Furthermore, we have the empowering of the Holy Spirit flowing into our lives daily. Not to forget His word... Friendships, family, being part of a local church. The sun, the rain, all of the beauty of creation around us. We receive the gift of purpose that flows into our life. Laughter, joy and peace, kindness... and of course, many physical blessings, food, shelter, clothing, other kinds of finance etc.

Now here is the question: Are we the Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea when it comes to outflow?

One would think that holding on to and hoarding everything that God gives would enable us to live this large and more fruitful kind of life. But the opposite is true. Like the Dead Sea, if there is no outflow from our lives of grace, love, kindness, joy, peace, laughter and financial giving; we become like the Dead Sea. The mineral content goes up, and eventually, there is no life there.

On the contrary, when we understand that you can't outgive God - that His flow into our lives will always exceed the flow out of our lives - we begin to be generous with friendships, kindness, forgiveness and appreciation. Generous with invitations and countless other ways. When we are generous with our outflow, we remain healthy and life-giving in our spirituality. If we fail to understand that and shrink back into a poverty and hoarding type mindset, we completely miss the grace of God flowing into our lives.

Any kind of outflow from our lives requires faith, but you don't need a whole lot more faith than just looking at the inflow. When we consider all that God has done for us over an entire lifetime, by faith, we can say to God that we are choosing to open more of an outflow from our lives. We want to be conduits for His grace and generosity.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 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.

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 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 9:6-11

When we have spoken about finances before we have talked about the idea that the Bible has got kind of four key principles in how to steward God's grace in terms of finances flowing into our lives:

1. Bringing the Tithe

The tithe is the first 10th of everything that God gives us, and as an act of faith, we bring it back to Him while trusting that He will take care of the 90% we have left by growing it and increasing it.

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

A couple of principles related to the tithe:

- We bring it to the storehouse where we are being spiritually fed.
- We honour God with the first fruits.

2. Giving

The Bible speaks about the principle of generosity (giving). This is over and above the tithe.

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done. Proverbs 19:17. This verse is saying that when we give to the poor, it is like God took out a loan for that amount and He will repay the giver. It is not the poor person who will repay it is God himself because He so loves this idea of giving.

If we want to be generous in our giving (outflow), it is better to be planned in our giving rather than handing out coins here and there.

3. Saving

Saving is biblical because it enables us to provide for the future, and to continue being generous!

The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down.
Proverbs 21:20

4. Spending Wisely

When it comes to spending wisely, we should not just be driven by every impulse, but instead, go before God and ask how we can live wisely within our means. How can we live within our means so that we can continue to be generous?

The God of heaven has got everything that we need, and He is the inflow into our lives, so we should be free to focus on bringing our tithes, saving, and giving and stewarding wisely.

God, on the other hand, looks at our lives and sees us living by the principles He has guided us to in His Word, and He blesses us in unusual and unique ways. Most of them way beyond what we thought, and different to what we ever expected because God is creative and He is generous. We cannot outgive God.