

Introduction: The Four Pillars of Grace

- Generosity is one of four pillars that position us to receive and allow God's grace to flow.
- Grace is a gift that we cannot earn or deserve. It's the forgiveness we receive through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.
- These pillars are **countercultural** and focus on eternity, not the here and now.

Point 1: The Principle of Giving and Receiving

- Generosity is a spiritual principle that leads to an increase, while withholding leads to poverty. Proverbs 11:24: "There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty."
- Generosity is a **conduit for grace**, a channel for God's blessings to flow into and out of our lives. Generosity means giving MORE than is required or justified or right, and it applies to more than just money.
- **God loves a cheerful giver.** Giving should be a joyful act, not a reluctant obligation. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully... for God loves a cheerful giver."

Point 2: Generosity as a Symbol of Our Heart's Focus

- Money is the "least" of things we can be generous with, yet it is a test of our faithfulness.
 - Luke 16:9-10: "Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon... He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much."
- Our generosity with earthly possessions reveals our heart's true master: God or money.
 - Matthew 6:19-21: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
- Laying up treasures in heaven through generosity is a way of using earthly resources for eternal gain.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:12-17 When we build God's church, we build something that will last.

Point 3: Generosity as Proof of Grace Received

- **Generosity does not earn forgiveness**, but it proves that we have understood and received it.
- **The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:23-35):**
 - A servant is forgiven an enormous debt (\$5-6 billion) by his master.
 - This same servant then refuses to forgive a fellow servant a small debt (\$1000s).
 - This lack of generosity shows he did not truly grasp the immense grace he had received.
- **The Example of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9):**
 - Zacchaeus, a wealthy tax collector, was shown grace by Jesus.
 - His response was immediate and extravagant generosity, giving away half his possessions and repaying fourfold what he had stolen.

- This act confirmed that "salvation has come to his house."

Point 4: Generosity in All Areas of Life

- Generosity extends beyond money to **time, forgiveness, and kindness.**
- The Macedonians were an example of this principle in action.
 - 2 Corinthians 8:1-2: Despite "deep poverty," they "abounded in the riches of their liberality."
- They gave "beyond their ability" because their joy in God's grace overflowed into radical generosity.

Conclusion & Life Applications

- Generosity is a sign that we have understood the immense grace God has given us.
- We can test our hearts by asking:
 - Am I generous with my money, giving more than is required?
 - Am I generous with my time and effort for others?
 - Am I quick to offer forgiveness and the benefit of the doubt?
- When we are generous, we are not earning a blessing but simply opening the channel for God's grace to flow more and more strongly in our lives.
- **Call to action:** Start a small group, share resources, and be generous with your time to help others. This is one way to put generosity into practice.

Scriptures Used in this talk:

Rom 3:10-23 - "There is none righteous, no, not one; ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

Pro 11:24-25 NKJV - "24 There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty. 25 The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself."

2Co 9:6-8 NKJV - "6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."

2Co 9:11 NKJV - "11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God."

Luk 16:9-13 NKJV - "9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. 10 "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 "And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? 13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either

he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.'"

Mat 6:19-21 NKJV - "19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Luk 12:33 NKJV - "33 "Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys."

1Co 3:12-17 NKJV - "12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

Mat 18:23-35 NKJV - "23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 27 "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' 29 "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 30 "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.'"

1Jo 2:2 NKJV - "2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

Luk 19:8-9 NKJV - "8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;"

2Co 8:1-7 NKJV - "1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. 6 So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. 7 But as you abound in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us--see that you abound in this grace also."

2Co 8:12 NKJV - "12 For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have."

2Co 9:10 NKJV - "10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,"

2Co 9:6-8 NKJV - "6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."