

We Value Growing Generosity and Selfless Service

Message 3 of 4 in the series: "Values"

A. Our values matter.

Values = principles, beliefs, and commitments held deeply in our hearts that motivate us to act one way or another. "Above all else, guard your heart, for **everything you do** flows from it." Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

Note: We invest our money and our time in the things we truly value. "Wherever your treasure is, **there the desires of your heart will also be.**" Matthew 6:21 (NLT)

B. We value growing generosity.

1. We value generosity because God is generous. "Let all that I am praise the Lord; **may I never forget the good things he does for me.** He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things."

Psalm 103:2-5a (NLT)

"Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!"

1 Chronicles 29:13b (NLT)

2. We value growing generosity because it is one of the ways the Holy Spirit is working in our lives to make us look a little more like Jesus every day. "And the Lord—who is the Spirit—**makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image...** Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I **want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.**" 2 Corinthians 3:18b & 8:7 (NLT)

"You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: **'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**"

Acts 20:35b (NLT)

3. It's important to evaluate our generosity from time to time.

- Giving for the first time: "Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And **don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. 'For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.'**" 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NLT) (*Proverbs 22:8*)
- Giving on a regular basis: "**And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others...** For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. **Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous.**" 2 Corinthians 9:8 & 10-11a (NLT)
- Budgeting an amount/percentage to give: "Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God's people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. **On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned.** Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once."

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (NLT)

"But **seek first** his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

- Giving 10% (tithing): "**Bring all the tithes into the storehouse** so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,' says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, 'I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! **Try it!** Put me to the test!" Malachi 3:10 (NLT)
- Giving above and beyond the tithe: "Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. **Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others.** By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life." 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Our motives always matter. “Watch out! **Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others**, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. **Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.**” Matthew 6:1-4 (NLT)

C. We value selfless service.

1. We value selfless service because Jesus showed us that real life is found in serving others – not being served. “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. **But among you it will be different.** Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:42b-45 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! It’s not about me. “Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. **Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.** Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:3-11 (NLT)

2. We serve where the Holy Spirit has gifted us. “In his grace, **God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.** So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.” Romans 12:6-8 (NLT)
3. We serve where people need help. “Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, **in order to provide for urgent needs** and not live unproductive lives.” Titus 3:14 (NIV)
4. We serve together because we are all necessary parts of Christ’s body, the Church. “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ...and **God has put each part just where he wants it.** How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you.’ The head can’t say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you.’ ...**All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.**” 1 Corinthians 12:12, 18b-21, & 27 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why do we sometimes tell ourselves and others that we value things that we seldom use (gym memberships, libraries, musical instruments, subscriptions to streaming services, etc.)? (Matthew 6:21)
2. Why do some people feel uncomfortable talking about supporting our church with our time and our money?
3. Discuss the following reasons we value growing generosity at Centerpoint:
 - We value generosity because God is generous. (John 3:16, Psalm 103:2-5, 1 Chronicles 29:13)
 - We value growing generosity because it is one of the ways the Holy Spirit is working in our lives to make us look a little more like Jesus every day. (Acts 20:35, 2 Corinthians 3:18 & 8:7)
4. Discuss the steps on the generosity ladder. How have you experienced God working in your life while taking these steps?
 - Giving for the first time (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Proverbs 22:8, Deuteronomy 16:17)
 - Giving on a regular basis (2 Corinthians 9:8 & 10-11)
 - Budgeting an amount/percentage to give (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Matthew 6:33)

- Giving 10% (tithing) (Malachi 3:10)
 - Giving above and beyond the tithe (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
5. Discuss the following statements regarding selfless service:
- We value selfless service because Jesus showed us that real life is found in serving others – not being served. (Mark 10:42-45, Philippians 2:3-11)
 - We serve where the Holy Spirit has gifted us. (Romans 12:6-8)
 - We serve where people need help. (Titus 3:14)
 - We serve together because we are all necessary parts of Christ's body, the Church. (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)
6. Why do our motives matter in giving and serving? (Matthew 6:1-4)