

Pastor Curtis Johnson once said, "Stewardship is simply the opportunity to be generous." As a church that seeks to live like Jesus, we need to look no further than our final core value to bring that truth to life: "Grateful People Are Giving People." When we begin to cultivate a sense of gratitude and stewardship in our lives, we are more inclined to be generous with our time, talents, and resources.

Core Value 6: Grateful People Are Giving People

We see a church filled with people who give regularly, proportionately, generously, and cheerfully to the work of the Lord through our church. Rooted in the biblical principle of grace-giving, we give out of response to what Jesus has given to us through His death and resurrection. We believe that sacrificial giving is a mark of a mature disciple of Jesus, who gave everything for us. We consider the words of Paul, who said to the Corinthian church, "But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in the love, we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

SESSION 6

Grateful People Are Giving People

But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

—2 CORINTHIANS 8:7



LUKE 8:1-3

Read Aloud in Your Group

¹ After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; ³ Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.



JOHN 12:1-12

Read Aloud in Your Group

¹ Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." ⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he

used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." ⁹ Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹ for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him. ¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.



FOR DISCUSSION

Grateful People Are Giving People

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION: What is a memorable experience of giving or receiving a gift that left a lasting impact on you?

1. Luke 8:1–3 narrates the account of women who supported Jesus and His disciples out of their means. What stands out to you about the actions of these women, and how can their example inspire us to be more generous in our lives?
2. How does this passage challenge our perspectives on generosity, especially in terms of giving from our resources and financial means?
3. In John 12:1–12, we see Mary anointing Jesus' feet with expensive perfume. What do you think motivated Mary to use such costly perfume to anoint Jesus? How can her example inspire us to be more generous in our own lives?
4. What are some potential challenges or obstacles that may hinder us from being more generous, and how can we overcome them?
5. What does the phrase "Grateful People are Giving People" mean to you personally, and how does it relate to your understanding of gratitude and generosity?
6. Share a specific example of a time when you felt genuinely grateful. How did that feeling inspire you to be more giving towards others?
7. How does gratitude shift our focus from what we lack to what we already have? How does this perspective foster a willingness to give to others?

GROUP EXERCISE:

Christian faith is rooted in gratitude for who God is and what He has done. While anyone can sing songs, it isn't worship until it is rooted in gratitude. While anyone can serve others, it isn't God honoring until it is done out of gratitude. And while anyone can give money, it isn't pleasing to the Lord unless it is done out of gratitude.

A simple (and sometimes silly) game you can play with your kids is the Grateful Game. You list everything you can think of that you are grateful for that begins with the letter "A". When one person can think of nothing else, you move on to "B" and so on. You can keep score (based on who can't come up with a new thing they are grateful for) or simply play for fun.

Play the Grateful Game and see what happens as you get through all 26 letters. It will feel silly, maybe even ridiculous, but the aim is for you to realize how much you truly do have to be grateful for. At the very least, use this game with your kids and grandkids to help cultivate in them a grateful (and giving) heart!





CORE VALUE IN ACTION

Grateful People Are Giving People

My wife and I just celebrated our 39th wedding anniversary. I tell you this to say that I started giving to our local church shortly after we were married. Back then, and being young, I had no plan to give to church because we were just starting out. Yet, my wife, who was taught the Biblical principles of giving as she grew up, encouraged me to join her in giving as we made our first budget and home together.

All these years later, we have continued giving to our church home. We start each new year with an agreed amount to give to the general fund. Throughout the year, we give toward that amount while being introduced to other opportunities (bicycles for Asia, a missionary or two, etc.) which we refer to as our “over and above” support.

Just over a decade ago, my wife and I experienced some serious medical issues. She was thrown from a horse, and then I was diagnosed with cancer. Both of our recoveries were hard and long, yet the community of Calvary was at our side. You came to our bedside at the hospital, you wrote cards and notes, you prayed for our healing, you brought dinners, and you stepped alongside our sons. Through thick and thin, we felt and experienced God’s blessing in our lives; and that’s likely where an attitude of gratefulness began.

Those critical days are behind us, yet we left them with a lasting gratefulness to our Lord and our church community.

While I learned to give through my wife’s encouragement so many years ago, I (we) are grateful for the wonderful blessings we receive as we continue to give with a grateful and cheerful heart.

Curtis & Sheryl Lynn

