
SOLA FIDE

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Generosity

Have you ever struggled with giving? I mean giving generously. I personally struggled with this issue for a long time especially in my early 20's. During that time, I didn't have much money because I was a college student. I had barely enough to get by. But this was true for the majority of my church members as well because they were also in the same life stage as myself. However, I recognized that most of my church members

were more than willing to assist others even though they themselves were financially struggling; they bought meals, groceries and school supplies for those who weren't able to afford them. They did this consistently without complaint. I admired their sacrificial serving and wanted to be able to serve others like them. This was not easy though. There were moments when I was glad to give, there were moments I gave with a grumbling heart and then there were moments I didn't give. Through this process, I realized that I wanted to keep my possessions to myself and didn't want to give unless I was absolutely required to. And in this, I saw the ugliness of loving my possessions far more than serving my brothers and sisters in Christ who were in need. So, this got me thinking, what does God say about giving generously?

First, we are called to give to those who are in need by praying and encouraging other believers in words but also by meeting their necessities (James 2:15-16). Second, we are called to give generously. Christians are not only instructed to give, but to give generously. Proverbs 19:17 states, "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed." The point here is that we are not called to give stingily or the bare minimum but to give generously. Let us remember that our heart is where our treasure is.

This leads us to think about in what arenas we can give generously. There are three arenas where we can give generously: charity, fellow believers in need and unto God. The first is giving to charity. The reason why we give to the charity is because charity organizations concentrate





Christian Charities

1. Samaritan's Purse
(<https://www.samaritanspurse.org>)
2. Compassion International
(<https://www.compassion.com>)
3. World Vision
(<https://www.worldvision.org>)
4. Lutheran World Relief
(<https://www.worldrelief.org>)
5. Children's Hunger Fund
(<https://www.childrenshungerfund.org>)
6. The Salvation Army
(<https://www.salvationarmyusa.org>)
7. Operation Blessing
(<https://www.ob.org>)
8. Food For The Poor
(<https://www.foodforthe poor.org>)
9. Lifeline Christian Mission
(<https://www.lifeline.org>)
10. Advancing Native Missions
(<https://advancingnative missions.com>)

their funding to assist a specific cause. This is obviously far more effective than individually assisting a person without the proper resources and understanding. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Paul instructs the churches to prepare funds for the purpose of assisting the Jerusalem church. Although this passage focuses on funds for the church, the idea is the same. We send our resources to a collective fund to direct towards a specific cause. There are many charity organizations we can support (*see the sidebar*).

Second, we are to give generously to help fellow Christians. Romans 12:13 says, "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." Early Christians demonstrated sacrificial giving to other fellow believers who were lacking. As the believers traveled to different locations doing God's work, they were shown hospitality and welcomed into Christian homes, being provided with provision and support. Obviously, we cannot help every Christian we come across nor do we know who is in need of help, but we can start by helping the Christians who are part of our local community. The gospel compels us to show love to one another in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18).

Finally, we are to give unto God. This refers to giving offering and tithing unto God. Malachi 3:6-12 states that we are to give unto God without reservation. I recognize that in some Christian circle, tithing is not considered necessary, but I am not one of them – I believe that giving tithing is biblical, which perhaps can be talked about another time. The point is not to just give tithings and offerings, but give them generously. For tithing, we can give more than 10 percent. For regular offerings, we can give more than the bare minimum. The things that God provided us should be used for his glory, not just how we see fit, by returning back a portion to God.

Jesus Christ demonstrated a perfect example of generosity and selflessness, gladly giving himself to us first. Because he came and generously gave us a new life, we can also let generosity be evident in our daily lives as believers. Money is never a bad thing but the love of money is - "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Let us not hoard our possessions for our own glory and comfort, evidencing our love for money, but let us use it for the glory of God!

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