

HOW YOU can experience God's GENEROSITY personally



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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

KEY WORDS: *generosity, generous, giver, widow of Zarephath, Cornelius, poverty.*

Summary: *Who is the most generous in all the universe? It is God. And He wants to pour out His generosity on to you and all who are also generous to others, especially the poor and needy –and especially if the poor themselves are generous. What scriptures tell us is the KEY to coming out of poverty.*

One of the greatest characteristics of God's character is HIS incredible generosity, maybe in ways some of us don't even realize. God is a giver by nature. When His people learn to give freely, we are stepping into more of His likeness.

Do you realize scripture tells us God loves to show his greatest generosity to those who are themselves super-generous with the very poor and needy, and especially when the poor themselves start to be super generous, as we'll show.

Would you like to personally experience God's generosity – to you directly, to you personally? That's what today's teaching is about. This is about HOW each of us can personally experience God's incredible generosity to us, in our lives directly. Try to really learn this message.

Many of you are missing out on this because you aren't fully aware of what GOD tells us is the KEY to prompt HIM to bless some people beyond limit – pressed down, shaken, pressed down even more and running over, as one verse says.

Don't miss this key to receiving God's personal massive blessings. *I'm preaching to myself as well in this teaching as I need the reminder too.*

Warm greetings dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. **I'm Philip Shields, host and founder of Light on the Rock Ministries**, who like you, am trying to learn to be more generous, with joy. Let me remind you to **REGISTER or SUBSCRIBE to LOTR.org**. We won't hassle you or keep

contacting you but it will be a better and easier experience for you if you all would register. Thanks to those many who have been doing so recently.

Scripture teaches that **our generosity invites God's greater generosity back to us**. Not as manipulation, *but as alignment with His heart*. Jesus tells us He wants us to become more like God in this area – and be a frequent giver, freely. **God's generosity becomes the pattern for our own lives.**

Matthew 10:8 – “Freely you have received; **freely give.**”

We'll look at scriptures on this – and then I will end with 3-4 stories of some who gave everything they had, and what happened.

What God shows us in **this teaching today applies to everyone** – **whether you're rich or poor**, it won't matter. We all can learn to be super generous, sometimes even giving up everything we have. Remember the rich young ruler who wanted to follow the Christ, but Jesus told him to sell everything he had and give it to the poor. The man could not do that. What would we have done if we were told the same thing? (**Luke 18:18-23**).

Remember Peter told Jesus that they - the 12 – had given up everything to follow him. Jesus promised them MUCH more, even in this life and in the next life, because of that (Mark 10:28-30).

Mark 10:28-30

Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."
29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall **not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life.**"

Why do we need to learn this, especially if you're so poor? Those of you who are SO poor – especially you, listen, because I truly believe this sermon **could show you a way out of your poverty over time if you would truly believe in faith and practice it.** If you practice this sermon, over time you could start to receive so much of God's generosity beyond your wildest dreams. *But you won't – IF you stay stuck in your poverty mentality where you've decided you have so little, so you have nothing you can share.*

I recommend you watch my video sermon **“the Least of these MY Brethren”** for more on this point of how God sees OUR generosity.

<https://www.lightontherock.org/index.php/sermons/message/who-is-the-least-of-these-my-brethren?highlight=WyJteSIsImJyZXRoemVullo=>

Let's let God speak to us in scripture. If you're not experiencing these responses, take a *look at how generous you are, or not. I'm speaking to all of you, including our three thousand very poor brethren* in East Africa.

Giving to the Needy Leads to Blessing and Protection

Psalm 41:1-3

***"Blessed** is the one who considers the poor!
YHVH delivers him in the day of trouble...
Yehovah protects him and keeps him alive...
Yehovah sustains him on his sickbed."*

Proverbs 11:25 -- **"The generous soul will be made rich**, and he who waters will himself be watered."

God LOVES it when we share. Do you want God to be pleased with you?

Hebrews 13:16

*"Do not forget to do **good and to share**, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."*

Proverbs 11:24-25

***"One gives freely, yet grows all the richer...
A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will himself be refreshed."***

Notice these words are from God. I hope you'll all start seeing how much more we can be blessed when we generously give to the super needy. *This takes FAITH on our part to believe these words of God*, when we share from what we have when we ourselves – at the time we're sharing – barely have enough even just for ourselves and our family. But if we do share, we have to also do it with a willing joyous heart, as I'll show as we go along, not begrudgingly.

Proverbs 28:27

***"Whoever gives to the poor will not lack,
but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse."***

Here's a shocking statement. Imagine having God feeling like He owes you!

Proverbs 19:17

“Whoever is generous to the poor LEND TO YHVH, and HE will repay him for his deed.”

In fact, you can read **Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25** how those who gave to the needy were seen by Jesus as giving to HIM. **“When you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it unto ME”, He said.** “Unto ME.” Would you like to give Jesus, the son of God, something? Reach out and bless and give to the very poor in Jesus’ name – and he takes that as being done to Him personally. Let the meaning of that sink in. Ponder it.

Check out my sermon “Least of these my brethren” too.

<https://www.lightontherock.org/index.php/sermons/message/who-is-the-least-of-these-my-brethren?highlight=WyJteSIslmJyZXRocmVullo=>

Matthew 25:34-40

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world: 35 for ***I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.***'

37 **"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to ME.' (read v.40 again)**

So I want to cover as the title says – **how EACH of us can experience God’s abundant generosity more in our lives than we are**, and how to have that happen, no matter how poor you are, or how rich you are. This will take FAITH on your part – but if you believe, you’ll see God blessing YOUR generosity in the coming weeks and months and years.

Here's the crux of this sermon: When we're generous to others – especially if we gave more than we thought we could, to share with those even more needy than us – we will start to see GOD’S generosity being poured out abundantly to us, in time.

I believe many of us are STUCK in poverty because we feel we are too poor to share anything with others. *We don't even have enough for ourselves*, “so how can I share with others,” we reason, but hang on and hear the whole sermon. I'm even preaching this to the poorest people I know – our brethren in Kenya and Tanzania.

NONE of the 3,000 brothers and sisters in Christ I work with over there even have tap water. Can you imagine having no running water. NONE of them owns a car, or has fridge or stove, or flush toilets. NONE. Many earn just \$1 or \$2 a day – IF they have work at all, but must still pay their rent, buy food, pay for schooling and transportation too and medical needs. So it's hard for them to even buy a Bible, or a water filter.

Several have DIED from drinking contaminated water. We're trying to buy water filters for as many as we can. They cost about \$19 each, but buying hundreds of them really adds up fast. Can you help us save some lives over there, and help them with these water filters and even some Bibles? I also want to help them get started on income-earning projects the whole congregation can be involved in. But it takes money to buy seed, fertilizer, or starter chicks and hens, or goats.

And THANK those of YOU who have been sending in some funds to “donate@lightontherock.org” as you are truly blessing some incredibly poor brethren. Please continue doing it from time to time. Help me help them. You've just heard all the promises God gives to bless YOU immensely if you will bless them, and other needy people, *Jesus said, “You did it unto ME...”*

In 2 Cor. 8 and 9, Apostle Paul was reminding the Corinthians they had assured him that they would have a nice gift of food and funds to give the starving saints in Jerusalem, but all of a sudden, the Corinthians excused themselves saying “Things came up unexpectedly, and now we can't”. So he talked to them about the really poor brethren in Macedonia and what they did.

So in 2 Cor. 8 and 9 Paul reminds them that much poorer people in Macedonia (Philippians) even **gave BEYOND their ability (2 Cor. 8:1-5)**. The Corinthians were having second thoughts about giving at all, it seems.

God doesn't just look at what we DO, at your gift of generosity – but **also examines our HEART and attitude behind our action**. Are you begrudging your giving and your promises – or are you doing so with a cheerful heart? God wants to know how we really feel about parting with our money to help others.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each person should do as he has decided in his HEART, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

This tells us God doesn't just look at the gift; He looks at the *heart* behind it. Do you give begrudgingly – or with great joy that you can help someone else?

I'm teaching even the super-poor Tanzanians and Kenyans, that when one of their brethren gets sick, or in a bad traffic accident, they all should help with the hospital bill as much as they can. And some did!

Our poorest people on welfare in America are far richer than the people I serve in Kenya and Tanzania. Our welfare recipients in America have running water, have a fridge and stove and most own a car and get government financial assistance for food and medical needs – and more!

But our Kenyan brethren don't get any of that over there. But I'm still urging them to give what they have to help those even more needy – and commit it all to God, remind Him of His promises to bless those who are generous. But it has to be done in strong FAITH, not fear or doubt. And I'm asking all of you hearing this: consider helping me be able to better help such poor people too. And thanks to the few who already do! We are a 501 (c)3.

Luke 6:38

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over... For with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (If we're generous, so will God be.)

God multiplies what we sow. Not always in money—sometimes in joy, peace, relationships, opportunities, spiritual growth or better jobs, income too.

When we had a rash of needs in Kenya/Tanzania, I prayed that God would supernaturally bless a handful of people who stepped up and sent us the help we needed for the Feast of Tabernacles and for hospital expenses, for new hymnals we needed to print and for a YOUTH CAMP. **God regards all that as those people LENDING TO GOD Himself. He WILL bless them.**

Proverbs 19:17

“He who has pity on the poor lends to God, and He will repay what he has given.”

Imagine that—**God Himself feels he owes YOU money** when you help the needy. Some of the best examples of God's responses are when some gave everything up to God. God changes not. This will also work today.

*I suggest you check out another one of my sermon also on "**Our Opportunity to help the poor.**" It covers some different material.*

<https://www.lightontherock.org/index.php/sermons/message/our-opportunity-to-help-the-poor-it-s-an-honor?highlight=WyJvcHBvcnR1bmlloeSJd>

OPEN your hands of generosity and they will be filled. A closed hand cannot receive. Don't have a closed hand.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT The ULTIMATE examples of how God BLESSED those who gave so much, even all they had

1. The widow of Zarephath who gave her last oil and flour.

Read this story that involves Elijah the prophet in 1 Kings 17 carefully. In verses 1-7, Elijah proclaims a drought until he gives the word to stop it. God sent him to a brook for water, and ravens to bring him meat and bread twice a day. Then the brook dried up so God told him to go to Zarephath near Sidon – which was in the heart of queen Jezebel's country (1 Kings 16:31). Imagine being sent there! The last place they'd expect to find Elijah.

The miraculous blessings from God involved a presumably pagan woman who may have had little or no knowledge of Elijah's God. They were also badly hit by the drought and were down to their last cup of flour and oil. Read the story of the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:8-16 carefully.

1 Kings 17:8-16

Then the word of Yehovah came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to **Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon**, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." 11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

12 So she said, "As Yehovah your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I

am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

(Just imagine: that's all she had. Enough flour and oil for one more loaf and that was it. She said there was nothing more, so they would just die after that.)

13 And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it FIRST, and bring it to ME; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Yehovah God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day Yehovah sends rain on the earth.'"

15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of Yehovah which He spoke by Elijah."

Imagine any minister of God telling a hungry, dying widow to give HIM her last morsel – and not first feed herself and her son. But she does it. She gave up her last bit of food to him. And look how God blessed her. For the duration of the remainder of the drought, she had oil and flour that didn't run out.

What would YOU or I have done?

2. The Boy With the Five Loaves and fish – John 6:1–13

I'm sure you know this story very well but I recommend you read it again afterwards, or even pause the sermon and read it first. Jesus had been preaching until late in the afternoon, and it was too late for everyone to get home for dinner, so he told his disciples to feed them. HOW? Where could they find so much bread? Or the money to pay for it?

In that whole crowd Andrew found one boy with five loaves of bread and two small fish, that he had brought for himself and presumably his mom and dad. IN this case Yeshua/Jesus was the one who took everything that boy had.

What did Jesus do with it? He blessed the food in prayer to God, and when everyone opened their eyes miraculously there was more than enough bread and fish for the 5,000 men plus the women and children and food left over. It says they all, including the boy, **"ate as much as they wanted"** (John 6:11). Not just two small fish, but as much fish and fresh barley bread

as they wanted. So even the boy received more than he gave - and got to see many others get fed because of his generosity.

Would YOU have given up all your food, not knowing what would happen next? But even now, almost 2,000 years later, we're learning about his generosity.

3. The widow's mite

Mark 12:41-44

"Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury **and saw** how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her *poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.*"

I'm sure Jesus instructed some angels to bless that woman.

4. **The MACEDONIANS' generosity** – giving *beyond* their ability. This is referring to the churches **in Philippi and Thessalonica** in particular who gave more than they really could to help the starving saints in Jerusalem. Read all of 2 Cor. 8 and 9 on your own.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 Holman Bible

"We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia: 2 during a severe testing by affliction, their abundance **of joy and their DEEP POVERTY overflowed into the wealth of their GENEROSITY.**

3 I testify that, on their own, *according to their ability and beyond their ability*, 4 they begged us insistently for the *privilege* of sharing in the ministry to the saints, 5 and not just as we had hoped. Instead, **they gave themselves especially to the Lord, then to us by God's will.**"

Notice – out of their deep poverty they still found ways to give BEYOND their ability to give of their generosity. And notice that they gave themselves to God FIRST, then to actual assistance. That's our model today. Commit to God first.

I even tell the very, very poor Kenyans and Tanzanians in East Africa, that when someone is very sick and confined to a hospital with big hospital bills, if they can all try to help that poor family, even if for only a very few dollars, or even just 100 shillings (78 cents), God sees the heart! I keep telling them,

though I truly try to help them all with LOTR money from our 3-4 donors – I can't always even do that. THEY have to step up, they have find the means somehow. (Actually, any of you who are poor, I suggest you study this sermon by hearing it twice! Really get the points in this message.)

5. Cornelius – Acts 10:1–4

This Roman captain in the army, a centurion, gave **alms and prayers which** “came up for a memorial before God.” God noticed, and God responded by bringing the gospel to his household. *God notices your generosity too.*

God notices generosity. God responds to generosity.

Acts 10:1-4

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, 2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, **who gave alms generously** to the people, and prayed to God always. 3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius!”

4 And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, “What is it, lord?” **So he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.”**

GOD NOTICED his generosity and responded to his generosity! He notices your gracious generosity as well. I assure you of that.

Make your generosity be your way of life, not just a moment of time.

We serve a generous God. He wants us to be generous like He is. When we do, Scripture promises:

- The generous soul will be made rich (Proverbs 11:25).
- He will give back to us, overflowing and “running over” (Luke 6:38)
- He is recording it all for your rewards in the resurrection.

**Generosity opens the door for God's abundance to you.
OPEN that door to your own life to receive God's abundance.**

**A closed hand cannot receive. Don't have a closed hand.
An open hand can both give and be filled.**

EXPERIENCE God's generosity to you by being known as a very generous person to others. Closing prayer.