

Week 4: Defined by Generosity

Participant Handout

*Some give freely, yet grow all the richer;
others withhold what is due, and only suffer want.
A generous person will be enriched,
and one who gives water will get water. (Proverbs 11:24-25)*

Key Insights

1. God designed us to be generous.
2. There are two “voices” that war against our God-given impulse toward generosity: fear and self-gratification. As we put our faith in Jesus Christ and grow spiritually, we silence these voices and become more and more generous.
3. As we realize that our lives are not our own, we are willing to give more generously and make sacrifices because we know our security is in God. As this change takes place within us, we discover real joy.
4. A central theological foundation for generosity is this: *Life is a gift, and everything belongs to God.*
5. From the earliest biblical times, the primary way people worshipped God was building an altar and offering the fruit of their labors upon it to God. In Old Testament times, a gift offered to God was called the *first fruits* or the *tithe*, and it equaled one-tenth of one’s flocks or crops or income.
6. Most Christians agree that the tithe is still a good guideline for our lives today, and one that is pleasing to God.
7. We who are blessed with more than enough to meet our needs should consider giving beyond the tithe.
8. The Lord is pleased when we give freely with grateful hearts. When offered in pure, selfless love, our offerings bless the Lord.
9. Our generosity to God and others not only blesses God and other people; it also changes us, filling our lives with joy.

10. We do not give to God so that we can get something in return. Yet when we give to God and to others, the blessings just seem to come back to us.

Taking It to Heart This Week

- What do you hope people will say your defining characteristics were when you are gone?
- What percentage of your income are you currently giving to God? What adjustments might you make in order to take a step closer to (or beyond) tithing?
- Over the next week, read the “Epilogue: Overcoming Fear” in *Enough* (pp. 95–103). Are there areas in your life being shaped by fear? If so, make a point to practice the three keys to overcoming fear (pp. 96–102 in *Enough*) in those areas.