

*The Generous Life: Message 4*

***Sermon Outline:*** *Honouring God*

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| **Topic:** | Honouring God |
| **Main Point:** | We can honour God through the act of giving |
| **Intended Response:** | Give of our time, talents and treasure. |

**Introduction**

The idea of honouring God simply means to say thanks and show respect. One of the clearest ways we can do that the Bible says is to honour God through acts of giving. Jesus teaches in Luke 12:15-21 that living generously is a way we can honour God.

One day, everything we have here on Earth will eventually end up in the hands of someone else. The only thing that is truly secure and of significant, lasting value, is the kingdom of God. And the safest thing we can do with our time, talents, and treasure, is to honour God with them.

1. Contributing what we have is an act of worship

* It’s not the size of the gift that matters but the state of our heart.
* Not all gifts need to be the same.
* Giving helps provide for the needs of the church and of others

**Point One:** Contribute what you can

1. Honouring God with our time and our abilities.

* Contribute and don’t just consume
* We all have spheres of influence
* Serving God is a joy

**Point Two:** Contribute what you can

1. Considering time, talents, and treasure

* Season appropriate giving
* Giving too much
* Every season is giving season

**Point Three:** Contribute what you can

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| **Teaching Illustrations and props:**  This sermon uses three illustrations: depositing money in a bank, children growing up and being given more responsibilities, and the four weather seasons. You could use props to when talking through each one, ask people to help out them out, or show images on your presentation screen.  ***More*** *resources for this sermon, including PowerPoint slides are available at* [www.SArmy.org.au](http://www.SArmy.org.au) |

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***Sermon:*** *Honouring God*

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| **Introduction:** | Welcome to our Sunday service everyone. Today we are concluding our series called ‘The Generous Life’.  Over the past four weeks we have looked at godly principles for handling our finances well and how to develop a heart attitude that celebrates giving. We’ve considered how our giving can enable ministry to happen, and today we are going to be talking about honouring God with our income.  If you are a visitor with us here today, please don’t feel any expectation or obligation to give.  When we receive the Holy Spirit, the Bible says God gives us a new heart (Ezek 36:26-7). This means we are given a new perspective on life and what really matters. We see this evident in a new found desire to grow into the character of God. And one of the defining characteristics of God is that He is a giver. That is what we are intended to grow into and reflect: God’s generous heart.  Giving is part of our worship towards God. Jesus teaches in Luke 12 that living generously is a way we can honour God. The idea of honouring God simply means to say thanks and show respect. And the Bible says one of the clearest ways we can honour God through acts of giving.  *Yet many Christians struggle with giving. Why is that? Why do we struggle to give?* |
| **Relevance** | We know that,   * Jesus said the kingdom of God is the only thing that will last (Lk 12:33), * Generosity reflects God’s nature – God is a giver (Jn 3:16), * We are instructed in Scripture to help others:   *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*  (Phil 2:3-4)   * It is good for us to give – when we give we will be blessed:   *Honour the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.* (Proverbs 3:9)   * Giving helps us grow in faith and grow in our trust towards God   *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.* (Mal 3:10)  Still, many Christians struggle to give. Perhaps it’s because they feel like they won’t have a enough left over – there’s not enough to give. They wrestle on the inside because they feel they should be giving but they are not.  It could be fear that’s causing it, fear is one of the top reasons people don’t give. It could be stress or worry. At the end of the day, all giving must be done in faith and with trust in God. |
| **Transition** | Jesus said,  *“… life does not consist in an abundance of possessions” (Lk 12:15).*  It’s funny, as humans we tend to feel more secure when we have an abundant of possessions, when we have money – it can make us feel in control and safe.  But Jesus flipped on its head the idea of having earthly goods – money, wealth, possessions – as *a form of security*. In Matthew 6:19-20 he says:  *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust* ***destroy****, and where thieves break in and* ***steal****. “But store up for yourselves* ***treasures in heaven****, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal”.*  What we think brings us security – our treasured possessions, our money –are actually not secure. One day, everything we have here on Earth will eventually fade away or end up in the hands of someone else.  ***Illustration:*** Can you imagine walking into a bank, only to discover there’s no security? No safety screens, no cameras, no security guards, no vaults. Now picture this: at the front of the bank are tellers but there’s no screen between you and them, they’re just standing there.  You give them your money, they write on a piece of scrap paper with a pencil how much you gave them, then they take your money just throw it in a corner. In this corner there’s coins, notes, deeds to people’s houses, jewellery but there’s a sign written in crayon, “hands off please”.  Would you bank there? No! Of course not! Why not – **because it’s not secure**.  In the same way this bank is not secure, so is a life that is only focused on amassing wealth and hording possessions.  The only thing that is truly secure and of significant, lasting value, is the kingdom of God. And the safest thing we can do with our time, talents, and treasure, is to honour God with them. |
| **Transition** | So how do we do that? Well, we all can honour God by contributing **what** we can… |
| **Call to Action** | |
| **Point 1**  Contribute **what** you can | The New Testament is full of examples of people contributing **what** they could:  A widow put in two copper coins…   * *And He sat down opposite the offering box, and began observing how the people were putting money into the offering box; and many rich people were putting in large sums.* ***A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent****. Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on*”   (Mk 12:41-44).   * It’s not the size of the gift that matters but the state of our heart.   Women financially supported the ministry of Jesus…   * *He continued according to plan, travelled to town after town, village after village, preaching God’s kingdom, spreading the Message. The Twelve were with him. There were also some women in their company who had been healed of various evil afflictions and illnesses: Mary, the one called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out; Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s manager; and Susanna—****along with many others who used their considerable means to provide for the company****.*   (Lk 8:1-3 MSG)   * Not everyone will have a public ministry. At that time, women couldn’t preach but they could give.   The early church shared their resources with one another…   * ***…All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need****.*   (Acts 2:42-6)   * Not all gifts need to be the same. Some gave money from the sale of land, others gave possessions, others gave of their time.   What we give, enables ministry…   * *Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica,* ***you sent me aid more than once when I was in need*** (Phil 4:15-6). * Giving is how we help provide for the need of the church and others.   Giving is also throughout the Old Testament:  Proverbs 3:9-10…  ***Honour*** *the LORD with* ***your wealth and from the first of all your produce;*** *So your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine.*  There are different ways we can give financially:   * Tithe   This to give God the first part of your earnings – 10%. This is a good place to start – just remember the other side of the coin is to have a plan for the rest of 90%.   * Offering   This is any amount of money the Holy Spirit leads you to give   * Self-Denial Appeal   Which can be giving one week’s salary for mission   * Many other opportunities:   The Red Shield appeal, one off offering, mission workers, child sponsorship programs.  Contributing what we have is an act of worship: it’s a way of honouring God. It doesn’t matter if you have a little or a lot, you can chose to honour God by being generous with what He has given you. |
| **Point 1.** | Contribute **what** you can |
| **Transition** | We can also honour God by contributing where we can |
| **Point 2**  Contribute **where** you can | We just mentioned different ways we can give of our finance, but money is not always the best gift. Money cannot solve every problem. It’s about developing a generous lifestyle. We can honour God with our time and our abilities.  The benefit of honouring God through acts of giving, be it time, abilities or financially, is that it transforms us into people who contribute and not just consume.  In a healthy team, church, or family everyone pitches in and helps out.  *Illustration: It’s like when a baby is born into a family – you know for the first few years they are going to consume. And that’s great at the start. But over time, as the child grows and becomes more able and responsible we expect them to contribute: clean their room, make their lunches, set out their school uniforms. Churches where congregations consume more than they give are very unhealthy. Adults in nappies is not a good look. Babies consume, adults contribute.*  We all have spheres of influence: places of connection. Family, friends, work, sports clubs, schools, kinder groups, community groups, church – these are great places for us to contribute our time and abilities:  *“We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you”* (2 Cor 10:13)  *You may want to contribute some of your time visiting people…*   * Some people just need someone to listen to them and care for them – that requires time. * Other people need us to pray for them – again, you can’t buy that or throw money at it – it requires us to use our time and get personally involved in the act of praying.   *You may like to contribute here at church*…   * You could volunteer some time in one of our programs or on our worship team, or Sunday service, or pastoral care team. * There is a great blessing of being involved at a local church.   *You may like to contribute in your local community, helping others…*   * In our previous sermon, we listened to the testimonies of student lawyers helping refugees with their immigration paperwork, * Or what about Just Brass – a work birthed out of a local corps that is now helping kids across Australia connect with the Corps and develop self-esteem, belonging, and learning, all in the name of Jesus.   *You may like to get involved in one of our social programs…*   * If you have a heart for the lost, for the poor, for social work – God can use your talents to help others. If you get energised by helping others – then help others!   Contributing where you are, can be as simple as taking someone out for a coffee to encourage them, or as sophisticated as using your degree or career to help others in their professional careers. Serving God is a joy.  You can always ask where you can contribute – we’d love you to be involved. |
| **Point 2.** | Contribute where you can |
| **Transition** | And finally we can honour God by contributing when we can… |
| **Point 3**  Contribute **when** you can | ***There is a season for appropriate giving***  We all face financial challenges. There are seasons we go through when we are not able to give of our finance, but we can give of our time. There are seasons in life when life is very busy – you may be working extra, or studying for exams, or have family visiting, in those seasons you may be time poor, but you can give financially.  If you are going through financial difficulties at the moment, or are so full up with work you don’t have time to spare or if you are going through a season like that at the moment, as a church, please hear me – we are here for you. We would love to support and help you.  The apostle Paul makes it clear in 2 Cor 9 that no one should be forced to give:  *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* (2 Cor 9:7)  This should be freeing for us here today. Fear, manipulation, false urgency, pressure – these are not things we should feel when it comes to giving.  ***Can you give too much?***  Paul says in this Scripture “…each of you should give” (2 Cor 9:7). But can we ever give too much? The answer is … yes. If we give too much time: we burn out. If we give too much from our talents and abilities we can end up feeling like slaves instead of a servant or end up being taken for granted.  If we give too much of our treasure, or finance, but don’t have a plan, we may end up in debt or not have enough left over to live on.  The solution is not to stop giving, but to give with wisdom:   * We should give of our time, but also protect our Sabbath day, * We should give of our talents, but also stay refreshed, * We should give of treasure, but let’s have a plan for the remaining 90%.   Wisdom keeps us safe, healthy, going. The solution is not stopping giving but sustaining our giving through wisdom.  ***Every season is giving season***  Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that there are different seasons in life.  Yet, throughout all these seasons there are some constants: prayer, worship, forgiveness, following after Jesus … and giving.  There are constants in our spiritual life and giving is one of them.  *If we think about weather – though the seasons change and have some specific features to them like rain, or snow, or hot temperatures – there are some constant elements.*  *The sun will still shine in winter – even though not as hot. Clouds still form in summer even though it doesn’t rain much. The moon still comes out at night in autumn … the point is, even though seasons are different, there are things that are common and constant in each one.*  *And for believers – giving should be a constant in every season of our lives.*  The Corinthian church, though it was poor, still gave…  *Now, friends, I want to report on the surprising and generous ways in which God is working in the churches in Macedonia province. Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. The trial exposed their true colours:*  *They were incredibly happy, though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts. I was there and saw it for myself. They gave offerings of whatever they could—far more than they could afford!—pleading for the privilege of helping out in the relief of poor Christians.* (2 Cor 8:1-4MSG)  I like to remind myself that I need to give, not only according to the season, but according to the reason: God gave 100% to us. 100% of His Son. God is giving to us every day.  The air we breathe, the ground we walk on, the very fact we are here right now – are all gifts from God. Because of this, I need to challenge myself to live every day with a generous heart.  In all seasons, we should maintain the heart attitude of generosity. |
| **Point 3.** | Contribute **when** you can |
| **Transition** | As we close today,what is God asking of you today? What is he asking of me? |
| **Conclusion** | We are called to be kingdom minded:  *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves”* (Phil 2:3).  And God never asks to do something he himself hasn’t done:  *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich”* (2 Cor 8:9).  When we contribute our time, talents and treasure to the kingdom of God, more people can hear and be transformed by the gospel in action. And we too receive a blessing. |
| **Prayer** | Father God,  As we start this new journey together, I’d like to pray against fear – Jesus said it is one of the main reason people don’t give and we don’t want to bound up by fear but trust in you God and give freely.  Father, we pray and ask in the name of Jesus that you would bless us all with a grace to give. That you would remove fear, worry, and anxiety far from us, and in its place bless us with faith to trust you with our finances, time, and gifts.  As we honour you Lord, help us give our time to those in need. Direct us where to use our gifts and talents to help others. Lead us in how much you have us give and how much you would have us keep.  Empower with the Holy Spirit Father today, Lord. We ask this in Jesus name – Amen. |

*The Generous Life: Message 4*

***Scriptures:*** *Honouring God*

**Jer 36:26-7**

Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

**Lk 12:33**

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

**Jn 3:16**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**Phil 2:3-4**

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

**Proverbs 3:9**

Honour the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

**Mal 3:10**

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

**Lk 12:15**

Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.

**Matt 6:19-20**

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.

**Mk 12:41-44**

And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.

**Lk 8:1-3 MSG**

He continued according to plan, travelled to town after town, village after village, preaching God’s kingdom, spreading the Message. The Twelve were with him. There were also some women in their company who had been healed of various evil afflictions and illnesses: Mary, the one called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out; Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s manager; and Susanna—along with many others who used their considerable means to provide for the company.

**Acts 2:42-6**

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

**Phil 4:15-6**

Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

**Prov 3:9-10**

Honour the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

**2 Cor 10:13**

We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.

**Psalm 92:13**

Planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God.

**2 Cor 9:7**

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

**2 Cor 8:1-4 MSG**

Now, friends, I want to report on the surprising and generous ways in which God is working in the churches in Macedonia province. Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. The trial exposed their true colours:

They were incredibly happy, though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts. I was there and saw it for myself. They gave offerings of whatever they could—far more than they could afford!—pleading for the privilege of helping out in the relief of poor Christians.

**Phil 2:3**

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.

**2 Cor 8:9**

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.