

GOD'S PROMISES ABOUT GENEROSITY

Good morning! We're on the third part of our series on "God's Awesome Promises to You". We started with his promise of the Holy Spirit. Then, last week, Bro. Brandon talked about God's promises for your future. Today, I'd like to tackle the subject of God's promises about generosity or his promises to you when you are a generous person.

But first, and I should have talked about this at the beginning of this series, there are three fundamental facts about the promises of God. The first one is this, God wants us to build our lives on His promises. God doesn't want you to live a life built on an unstable foundation. Number two, God makes two kinds of promises in Scripture. First, he makes unconditional promises, and then He makes conditional promises. The unconditional promises, there are no strings attached. No matter what you do, when God promises something unconditionally, it's going to happen. For instance, God has made an unconditional promise about the second coming of Jesus Christ. It's not going to be dependent on anything that you or I do. That's an unconditional promise, and we'll look at many of those.

God also makes conditional promises, and these promises are based on your obedience. God says, "If you do this, then I will do this." It's not automatic. These promises aren't automatically yours. You have to meet a requirement, or a circumstance or a condition. If you don't meet that requirement, then you forfeit the promise. In other words, there's a promise to every promise that's conditional. We'll look at what some of those conditions are.

Now, the third thing I want to say about God's promises, and there are about 8000 of them, although one scholar claimed as much as 30,000 exist, is that God makes promises to us for two different reasons. The first reason is to teach us to trust Him in difficult times. The Bible says in Isaiah 40:31, "Those who hope in the

Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." That's a great promise. A favorite verse of many of us. We all go through difficult times. It's during those times when we need God's promises to pull us through.

The second reason God gives us promises, is *to make us more like Him*. We've talked about this many times, that while you're on earth, God wants to make you like Jesus. One of the ways that He does that, is through the promises in this book. The Bible says in *2 Peter 1:4, "... by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature."* Look at that verse again, *"he has granted to us his precious and very great promises."* For what? *"so that through them (his precious and great promises) you may become partakers of the divine nature."* Now, it doesn't mean you'll become like little gods which Mormons teach or even Prosperity Gospel preachers teach. It just means you become like Jesus who is God himself.

In short, the more you trust in God's promises, the more it's going to change your life. You grow spiritually, you mature, and eventually, and hopefully, become more like Jesus. The reverse is true. If you don't trust God's promises, you can't become like Jesus. The Bible tells us that, God works in our lives through his promises.

Now, why does God make promises about being generous? Well, there's a couple of reasons. First, because God is generous, and He wants us to become like Him. God wants His children to take on his qualities. Everything we have in life, is because of the generosity and grace and giving of God.

Second reason God wants us to learn generosity is because giving is hard. The reason giving is hard, because it challenges our selfishness. "I don't want to give anything to anybody else. God, I wanted to spend it all on me," so it's hard. So, you see, God gives rewards for us learning to be like Him.

And so, let me give you seven rewards that God promises to me and promises to you, if we learn to be generous with our money. To be sure there's a lot more promises than that. But for the sake of time, let's look at seven different rewards that God promises to us, if we learn to be generous with our money. So, if you can please be generous with your time with me and lend me your ears. It's my promise that I won't waste your time.

1. **God promises good things will happen to you**, when you're generous. When you learn to give like God gives, God promises that good things will happen to you. **Psalm 112:5 says, " Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely."** Also, in **Proverbs 22:9, "The generous will themselves be blessed."** That's a promise of God.

If you want God's blessing in your life, and you want God's goodness in your life and you want good things to happen to you, the Bible says, giving, generosity, unlocks the key. God promises that good things will happen to me, when I'm generous.

2. **God promises your children will be a blessing if you learn how to give like God gives.** That's covered in **Psalm 37:26, "They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be a blessing."**

If you are a giving person, your children will be a blessing to others as well. It means they will become like you because you are setting an example to them. So, your being generous is passed on from generation to generation. And that surely is a great blessing, isn't it? Imagine your family line being known as a family of givers.

3. **God promises He will bless your work and your business, if you learned to be generous.** Not just your family, but also your business. Let me show you a couple of verses about this. **Proverbs 3:9 says this: "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops."** We honor God by giving Him

the first part of our income, that's called tithing. We'll talk about that later, but that's the premise. Here's the promise in verse 10, *"then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."*

Now, I doubt any of you have a barn to fill, or vats to fill with the finest wine. So, let's put this in a cultural context. In Bible times, almost everybody was a farmer. When you looked inside a person's barn and you looked inside their vats, that represented their business. It represented their investments, it represented their livelihood.

What God is saying here, is if you learn to be generous. God says, "I will bless your business. I will bless your work. I will bless your career. I will bless your investments. I will bless how you make a living." A verse that goes right along with that, is **Proverbs 11:25** that says, *"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."* Be generous and God will make you prosperous. Let me give you a fourth promise.

4. **God promises that if you learn to give like He does, you'll be happier.** Now, everybody knows this, except people with a stingy heart. You know this already. We quote it often. In **Acts 20:35**, Paul says, *"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* Do you know that the word "blessed" in this verse also means "happy". That's why the Amplified Version of the Bible says, **"It is more blessed (makes one happier and more to be envied) to give than to receive."** I mean, when you give sincerely, it not only makes the other person happy, but you yourself become happy. Try it!

I remember the story of Lea, the wife of Lawrence who used to play drums for us during the pre-pandemic days. Lea said that one morning, a friend of hers came to visit her. They chatted and then she learned that her friend actually needed something to feed her children that day.

Lea remembered the fish she bought for her family. She was planning to cook something special for her own family that night. But she took pity on her friend, so she gave the fish away. Of course, her friend was so happy with the blessing. And Lea, too, felt blessed that she was able to be a blessing to someone. In short, she felt happy, too. Then, later that afternoon, another friend came. She was carrying a basket. As soon as she entered Lea's house, she opened the basket and told Lea, "Lea, do you want some fish? I have two extra fish. You can have them." Imagine the surprise of Lea. She became happier because of that. It's more blessed to give than to receive. I wonder what kind of blessing her friend received as well.

All right, number five.

5. **God promises that if you learn to give like He gives, and if you learn to be generous, you will end up with more.** This is part of the economy of God. Now, we don't give to get. I don't give to get a blessing. I actually give to be a blessing, but the truth is you can't out-give God.

In **Luke 6:38, Jesus says, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."**

What's that talking about? Well, let's say if you're getting grain, and people are pouring grain in your sack. You've paid for a whole sack, and what do you do to get your money's worth? You're going to shake it like this. Then you're going to press it down, so you can get the maximum amount of grain into that sack.

Jesus is basically saying, "God wants to give you so much. You have to press it down. You have to shake it together to make more room, because God wants to give you more than your sack can hold."

Then He summarizes it. Jesus summarizes it this way. *"The way you give to others, is the way God will give to you."*

God is waiting for me and you to be generous. He wants me to prime the pump. Why? Because He wants me to learn to be like Him. I can't be like Christ without giving. God so loved the world that He gave.

Now, you've heard me say this many times. You've heard it from others. "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving." You spell love, G-I-V-E. God so loved the world that he gave. If we're going to be loving, then we've got to learn to be giving. We've got to learn to be generous. He says, "Give, and it'll be given to you, and the way you give to others is the way God will give to you." That's a promise. He says, "If you're generous, God will give you more than you can handle."

Let me show you some other verses about this. Proverbs 11:24 says this: *"One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty."*

Then, Proverbs 19:17 says this --and if you're a businessman, you need to star and circle this verse. *"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done."* He's saying that giving is an investment. That when you try to give it away, God says, "I'm going to pay you back."

One of the translations of this verse says, *"When you help the poor you are lending to the Lord—and he pays wonderful interest on your loan!"* (TLB) It's like loaning to the Lord. You're not really giving that money away, because God says, "I'm going to pay you back with interest." Giving is an investment.

6. *God promises that if you learn to give like God tells you to give, God promises to meet all you needs.* Now, that just sounds too good to believe. It just sounds too good to be true, but over and over in Scripture, God says, "If you'll put me first in your money, and if you'll learn to be generous and not tight-fisted, I will meet all your needs."

In **Philippians 4:19**, Paul says this: *“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”*

Jesus is saying, “I will make sure you get everything you need.” Now, notice He didn't say, “I'll give you all your greed.” He says, “I'll give you everything you need.” There are some things I think I need, that I really don't need. They are wants. Or greed. God says, “All of your needs will be met.” It's not like, “Well, I need a Rolls-Royce,” That's not a need. He said, “I will give you everything you need, if you learn to be generous.”

Let me give you a couple more. **Proverbs 28:27** says this: *“Those who give to the poor will lack nothing...”* If you want to lack nothing in your life, emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally, then you need to learn how to give to the poor. You can do that through the church. We help the poor all the time. We have come up with projects designed to help the poor. We have mission trips to the Philippines. This year, however, we didn't have a trip because of the pandemic but we gave anyway to help the poor. And some of you became part of that. Because our giving to the Philippines will continue in the place of our physical presence.

When you give to the poor, God will reward you. You see, God has compassion toward the poor and he will bless your life if you give to the poor. And you know why it's better to give to the poor? Because you cannot expect them to give you anything in return. Who will give you in return then? God!

Now, the attitude in giving is important, too. **2 Corinthians 9:7-8** says, *“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.”* In other words, nobody could tell you what to give. What's generous for you, is your decision based on how much income you have. He says, “You should decide, what you've decided in your heart to give.”

Then also, never give reluctantly or under pressure, because God loves the person who gives cheerfully. God doesn't want stingy givers. God doesn't want grouchy givers. God wants people who give cheerfully. "Cheerful" in Greek is *hilaros*. Where we get the word "hilarious". If I give, it should be that I enjoy it.

People often you'll hear say, "Well, I'll give till it hurts." No, don't give if you're not happy about it. God will not be happy if you're giving just because you're under pressure. Is it better not to give then? That's up to you. But you'll be missing out on God's blessings. And remember the verse, "*One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.*" It's a principle you can't ignore. Giving is an attitude of the heart then. And like any attitude, you have control over it.

Ok, I gave you the premise. Here's the promise. "*And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*" Do you see how many times the word "all" appears in that verse?

God says, "I am guaranteeing, I will meet all your needs." Do you believe that verse? Let's go to one more promise.

7. *God says that if you learn to give like He gives, He will multiply what you give Him.* He'll take what you give Him, and He will multiply it and make it go even further. Now, there're so many examples of this in Scripture, that I don't even know which one to choose from.

I could tell you about the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Where He took a few loaves, and a bread and fish, one boy's lunch and He fed 5,000 people with it. He took it, He broke it. He blessed it and He multiplied it. Throughout the Bible, God does this principle of multiplication, the miracle of multiplication many, many times.

He takes a little, and whatever you give God, He turns into a lot. Whatever you need more of, give it to God. Let me say that again. Whatever you need more of, give it to God. You need more time? Give your time to God. Put Him first in your time. You need more money? Give your money to God. Put Him first in your money. You need more energy? Give your energy to God, and He will multiply it. You'll have more energy.

You know, throughout the Bible, God compares giving and generosity to planting seeds. Let me show you a couple of verses about it.

2 Corinthians 9:10-11 says this: *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed...*” What do you do with your store of seed? You plant the seed. *“and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.”* There's a great harvest from your generosity. *“And,”* here's the rest of the promise, *“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.”*

Now, you might want to write this down. *Giving is not a debt I owe. It's a seed I sow.* Giving is not a debt I owe. It's a seed I sow, and I sow it in faith. God doesn't need your money. He doesn't need my money. Then why does God want to teach me giving? To teach me to trust Him, and to become more like Him, to become more generous. Giving is not a debt I owe, it's a seed I sow.

Now, when you plant a seed, do you get one seed back? No, you get a whole plant, with a lot of fruit. In those fruits, there's a multiplication of seed. No one has ever planted one seed, and got back one seed. If I take a kernel of corn, and I plant that corn in the ground. I don't get one kernel of corn back. I get a stock with three or four ears of corn, with literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of kernels on that corn.

This is the principle of multiplication. He says that when you give to people, if you take your money and use it to help others,

God says, "I'll multiply it, so that when it comes back, it's multiplied." You don't get one seed back when you plant it, you get a hundred or a thousand seeds out of that one blessing.

Now, here's the important part that I want you to get. God says, "You can plant... I'm giving you just like I give a farmer seed to plant. I'm giving money for you to use for good." Money is a tool. Money is neither good nor bad. It's just a tool, and you should use money for good rather than bad. Any money I just spend on myself, it's gone. Any money I use for good, is actually building an investment and it's multiplying in heaven. When you plant a seed, you reap a harvest.

Now, God lets you decide the size of your harvest. It just all depends on how much seed you plant. Here's what the Bible says. **2 Corinthians 9:6, "Remember this..."** Okay, now, anytime the Bible says, "Remember this," God wants you to remember it. **"Remember this, whoever sows sparingly, will also reap sparingly. Whoever sows generously, will also reap generously."**

That means God says, "You get to decide." I get to decide how much God blesses my life. How do I decide how much God blesses my life? By my giving. If I sow just a few seeds, then I'm going to reap a small harvest. If I sow a lot of seeds, if I give a lot away, then I'm going to reap generously. The size of the harvest, is determined by the size of sowing.

God leaves it up to you. If you have little faith, then you get a little result. If you have a lot of faith, you get a lot of results. If you sow extravagantly, you get an extravagant result back. Now, in planting seed and waiting for the harvest, the harvest is never immediate.

I want you to get this, because a lot of people don't understand this. The harvest is never immediate. Seeds take time to grow. You plant in one season, in the planting season, and you harvest in another season, maybe six months later. It's not instant. This is true in your generosity and your giving.

It's not like I give something to somebody else, or give something to God today and this afternoon, God makes up for it. God is not a slot machine, where you put in the coin and pull the 100 bandit, and all of a sudden, thousands of coins come out.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 says this: “*Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.*” This is simply saying, if you give something away, it will return to you after some time, not immediately.

You see, there's always a time delay, between sowing and reaping. Between planting and harvesting, between giving and receiving. But there could be exceptions, like what happened to Lea earlier. That's God's decision. In general, why is there always a delay? Because God wants you to trust him. Are you going to do the right thing? If you saw immediate results every time you gave, there'd be no faith needed. It's like a jackpot.

Let me just pause here and share my testimony. To tell you honestly, I didn't plan to tell you this. I didn't want to tell you this. My wife didn't want to tell you this. But while I was writing this sermon and I reached this point, I mean, after my statement “It's like a jackpot”, the Lord just convicted me of something. Because I hit a jackpot. Ok, here goes.

As many of you know, we drive a 2020 Subaru Ascent Limited. I should say, we drove it because we sold it last Thursday. Why did we sell it? Because it was a gas-guzzler, the ride was stiff and the engine was noisy. I would fill it up and it's gone in 60 seconds. And when I drove it, I felt every bump and imperfections on the road. So, I told Anabel, “Let's get something that is fuel-efficient and rides more comfortably.” I had something in mind, but first, I need to get rid of the Subaru. Problem is, it was on lease. Breaking the lease would mean a penalty. I would be paying a lot because it wasn't even halfway through the 3-year lease. I prayed about it and God gave me an idea.

I called Subaru financing and asked how much the buy-out amount was. They said, \$33,271.41. Where will I get that amount? I got another idea. I went to KBB.com and calculated the trade-in value. And what was it? \$36,171. I couldn't believe my eyes. Now, on KBB.com, you could get an instant cash offer from dealers if you enter your information. I did. After about an hour, Koons Toyota in Tyson's called me and said they were going to send someone the next day because they want to buy my car. They offered only \$33000 but I told them I wanted the trade-in value. So, the next day, the guy came, and offered me \$33000 but I stood my ground. He upped it to \$34000. No way, Jose, I said. Then, \$35000, then \$35500. Till finally, feeling tired, he said \$36,000. I took pity on him, and I said, "It's a deal."

The long and short of it is that we earned almost \$3,000 from this transaction. In my excitement, the next day, I put over a thousand dollar down payment for a replacement vehicle, which is a hybrid and rides very very comfortably. This time, it's a loan and not a lease. And I got a really low interest rate and that's another story. Did I tell you the finance guy who handled the transaction is a Christian and used to be a missionary to the Philippines?

Now, in my excitement, I forgot something very, very important. My tithe. Until I wrote this sermon and came to my "jackpot" statement. I was deeply convicted. And so immediately I went online and sent my tithe to the church. And now I feel blessed. I'm happy.

God has a way of pricking your conscience if you are forgetting something or kind of getting immersed in yourself. God wants us to put him first in our money. God wants to receive the glory. I believe now, he wanted me to share this story to prick you as well. Just kidding. He wanted me to share so you'll see how he takes care of our needs. He is faithful. Always. Remember that.

Now, let's review these seven promises of God. The premise is this.

If I put God first in my money, first by tithing 10 percent back to Him, and I start learning to be generous with my money with others, investing it in good things, and helping people come to Christ, helping people grow. Then I can count on God to do these seven things. **God promises that if you learn to be generous, good things will happen to me and He'll bless me.**

Number two, my children will be a blessing. And my grandchildren and down my family line.

Number three. He will bless my work and my business. He will make it profitable.

Number four, I will be happier. God says, "It's a promise. You will be happier, when you learn to be generous."

Number five, I will end up with more. You can't out-give God.

Number six, God will meet all my needs.

Number seven, God will multiply whatever I give to Him, like the seed.

So really it just comes down to this. Do I believe these promises? You see, you only actually believe the part of the Bible that you actually do. If you say, "Well, I believe the Bible," but God's given you all these promises, and you're not tithing or you're not being generous, you don't really believe the promises of God.

Finally, the best reason we can think of why we should give is that God gave his own Son to us because he loves us. John 3:16 says, "*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.*" We cannot outgive God. He already gave the best he could ever give to us.