



**Educate
+ Engage**



THE
GENEROUS
LIFE:



Our
Generous God

OVERVIEW

Launching into a series on stewardship requires that we start by taking a step back and acknowledging that we can be generous with God because He has first been generous to us.

Scripture Passage

Luke 16:10–13 ESV

One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

EDUCATE

Scripture gently reminds us that everything belongs to the Lord:

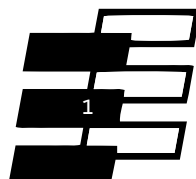
"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1).

"For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine" (Psalm 50:10–11).

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11:36).

Psalm 103 acknowledges God's generosity and His distinct nature. He is not dull or boring, nor is He bland. He works in particular ways and has established principles for Himself and for His people. Verse 7 records that He made His way known to Moses. His expectations are not a mystery, and obedience brings blessing. As Psalm 68:19 reads: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah."

God desires to bless us. He gives good gifts to those who ask Him (Matthew 7:9–11).



Lesson 1

Discussion Questions: What are some “daily benefits” that you recognize in your life? Why do you think we are quick to forget about the many benefits our generous God gives us?

In addition to understanding the ways of God, we should also be aware of the schemes of Satan. Think about our great, great, great, great, great . . . you get the idea . . . great, great, great grandparents, Adam and Eve. They lived in perfect conditions: a perfect world in perfect balance. They had no need to worry about thorns, thistles, dangerous animals, or melting polar icecaps. Nor were they troubled by political tumult, drugs, alcohol, immorality, theft, sickness, or disease. They lived in paradise. Even more wonderful than their flawless surroundings, they walked and talked with God every day, in the cool of the day. What a way to spend a day; what a blessed life they lived!

Surely Adam and Eve realized how blessed they were. The generosity of God was evident in everything about their lives until one day, one question from one voice made Adam and Eve think they weren't really that blessed. The tempter caused them to view God as a withholder instead of the generous God He is. Rather than rejoicing in the fact that God had been supplying all their needs, they were now focused on the one thing He had restricted. For all their lives up to that point, they believed that God was generous and that they were blessed. But in one moment of listening to and believing deception from an outside source, they put their blessed life and future family on a path plagued by sin and its effects.

Discussion Questions: Has the devil or even social media ever made you wonder if God was really generous and you were really blessed? How did you respond to those questions?

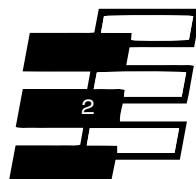
Don't ever let anyone tell you that you aren't blessed. Don't ever let any lie creep into your life that tells you God doesn't love you, that God is withholding something good from you, and that you don't have everything you need to be happy. Rest assured that God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19).

God is generous. God blesses. God cares for you.

Discussion Question: Other than lies from the enemy, what other traps do we fall into that cause us to overlook the generosity of God?

Closing

We are blessed by a loving God who “daily loads us with benefits.” When trials and cares of life distract us, causing us to lose sight of His generosity, we need to pause to reflect, take inventory of our blessings, and gratefully acknowledge His goodness toward us.



Lesson 1

May we take inspiration from the insightful words of Moses in Deuteronomy 28 written near the end of his life. We would be wise to take heed to the admonition to obey God, carefully following His commands. Those who do so will find blessing after blessing in life.

Have students read Deuteronomy 28:1–14.

May we also take inspiration from the life of Louisa Stead. It was another beautiful day in South Africa. Louisa and her husband took their little girl Lily to the beach for a picnic. It was one of those perfect days on Long Island Sound in 1882, not a cloud in the sky, not a care in their soul. But while they sat with their perfect picnic basket on that perfect day, they heard a scream. They looked around and saw a little boy flailing in the water. Louisa's husband jumped up and ran into the water to rescue him. But he couldn't. The little boy pulled the grown man under and both of them drowned while Louisa and Lily watched helplessly from the shore.

His death left Lily fatherless and Louisa penniless. They couldn't support themselves. There were times they had no food, no money, but they were still blessed simply because they still had faith in God to provide. And as only God could provide, at just the right time, without Louisa or Lily saying a word to a single soul about their empty cupboards, people brought groceries and left them on their doorstep. And Louisa and Lily went to bed with bellies full of food and hearts full of faith.

On one of those nights after God gave her and her daughter more food to give them more strength for another day, Louisa Stead sat down at her desk and wrote the words to the beloved hymn "'Tis So Sweet." Although she suffered, God still blessed her and her daughter and generously provided for them because God is good even when life is not.

Discussion Questions: What other stories remind you of God's generosity in others' lives? What about in your own?

ENGAGE

A life of generosity begins with understanding that God is generous. Before we talk about stewardship or sacrifice or giving, we must view our finances and personal situations through the lens of that truth. As we close in prayer today, let's be thankful and remind ourselves just how good God has been to each one of us.

