

The Spirituality of Giving: How Generosity Forms the Soul S1E2

Rhythms of Generosity

Deuteronomy 14:22-29

22 You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. 23 And before the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. **24** And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, **25** then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the LORD your God chooses **26** and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. **27** And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

28 At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. 29 And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

Big idea: Under the Mosaic covenant, God made generosity a way of life: setting apart a portion, bringing gifts in worship, and making room for those in need.

Where we are in the series

- **Last week:** Giving before the Mosaic covenant—Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham
- **This week:** Giving under the Mosaic covenant—a regular practice for God's people.
- **Next week:** Giving under the New Covenant—what Jesus and the apostles teach the church.

Understanding Giving: Generosity should have a rhythm we can count on and a readiness to respond when need appears.

- **Tithes:** A tenth set apart for God, used in worship and to provide for Levites and others.
 - **Tithes were rhythmic: Avoid emotional pressure valve giving”**
 - **Vs. 22** You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year.

- **Vs. 28** At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns.
- **Tithes had distinct purposes:**
 - **Form trust and reverence:** Setting aside a tenth year by year taught Israel to recognize God as its provider. Deuteronomy 14:23 states this purpose directly.
 - **Celebrate before God:** Deuteronomy 14 describes households bringing the tithe to the place of worship, eating together, and rejoicing in his provision.
 - **Support the Levites and priests:** The Levites received tithes for their service and gave a portion to the priests.
 - **Malachi 3:10:** The tithe was brought into the storehouse so there would be **food** in God's house.
 - **Feed people in need:** The tithe of every third year provided for Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows in local towns.
- **Offerings:** Gifts and sacrifices brought to God; some were required, while others were freely given.
 - **Varied:** firstfruits at harvest, gifts at annual festivals, regular sacrifices offered on behalf of the community, and other offerings when a particular occasion called for them.
 - A freewill offering is a gift given to God because the giver chooses to give. **Jesus willingly gave himself for us** (John 10:17–18; Hebrews 10:10).
- **Alms or gleanings:** provision for people in need. *Gleaning* specifically meant leaving part of the harvest for the poor and foreigners to gather.
 - **Alms:**
 - **Matthew 6: 2-4** Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
 - **Gleanings:** Leviticus 19:9–10, Deuteronomy 24:19–22, Ruth 2:2–12

Let giving be a habit, and let compassion interrupt the schedule.

Practical Takeaways:

1. Decide what portion of your income you will give regularly to the work of the local church.
2. Set apart another portion of your income to present as freewill offerings to causes you feel called to.
3. Be prepared to help those in need when an opportunity of generosity arises.

Next week: Does the New Covenant command a tithe, and how are followers of Jesus called to give?

- Does God still promise to reward faithful and cheerful givers?

Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. How can regular giving grow our trust in God?
2. What does rejoicing with the tithe teach us about generosity?
3. Why does the local church need members who give regularly?
4. How can we prepare ourselves to make room to help people in need?
5. Which comes more naturally to you: planned giving or spontaneous generosity?