

Align Week 4 – **God's Value For Generosity**

Bethany Church Long Beach

Intro: What part of the message did you find the most challenging?

Opening Questions:

- Pretend you received a phone call today from a distant relative notifying you that you received an inheritance of a large sum of money. What would you do with that money? Who would you like to bless with some of the money?
- What keeps you from giving generously, without inheriting any money?

Read Proverbs 11:24-25:

1. Our lives are meant to be a conduit of God's generosity as we share what we have received. Yet too often we live like a dead end, hoarding and withholding "our" stuff. God's Word describes how the one who scatters will be watered and the one who withholds will be without.

How have you experienced the principle of generosity and being watered? How have you experienced the principle of withholding and being without?

2. Financial partnership with God brings incredible blessing. God is searching for followers who generously and wisely use possessions. To these He pours out more blessings so they might continue to bless others.

Describe a person you know who is regularly generous. How does this person reflect an "attitude of gratitude" that gives them a heavenly perspective that blesses others?

3. Read Malachi 3:6-8. Generous giving begins with tithing. In one of the most remarkable challenges of Scripture, God calls us to put Him to the test with our tithes and offerings. Although it often feels like a test for us to give tithes and offerings, God turns the equation upside-down and makes it His test.

Why do you think God asks us to put Him to the test? What is He trying to tell us about Himself? What is He trying to tell us about ourselves?

4. Giving is like driving on the highway. Tithing is the on-ramp that starts us on the freeway of generous joy. Sadly, many churchgoers are sitting at the bottom of the on-ramp asking how slow they can go. They are more concerned about the amount when God is concerned about the heart.

Why do we have a tendency to focus on the rules of giving rather than the heart of giving? When did you first start tithing? When have you experienced the joy of generous giving?

5. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Generous giving is a personal decision. If you want to reap in abundance, you have to sow abundantly. Yet often we hope to sow sparingly and reap abundantly. We want the greatest return for the least amount of effort.

Where are you tempted to sow sparingly with the hope of reaping bountifully? How does this truth reach beyond finances and apply to relationships and spiritual maturity? Consider a specific area of desired growth, whether financial, spiritual, or relational. What would it look like for you to sow bountifully in that area?

6. Sometimes we give out of an obligation. But God isn't forcing us under compulsion or guilt to give. He doesn't need something from you. He wants something for you.

What can make us feel like God is a landlord demanding payment? Based on Scripture, what is God's heart towards us regarding giving?

7. We were reminded throughout the message that being generous isn't just about giving money, but our time and our love.

What are some ways you are currently being generous with your time? How are you serving others regularly?

8. Throughout Scripture we find people's lives being interrupted by God's divine intervention.

Describe a time where you allowed yourself to be interrupted by the needs of someone around you? Were you reluctant at first to stop? Why?

Finally... Take the following personal giving questionnaire sometime this week. Pray over the results and ask God to help you be more generous with your resources, time and love.

Personal Giving Questionnaire

My giving is in alignment with the stewardship principles in God's Word.

A) Rarely B) Sometimes C) Most of the time D) Always

Systematic Giving: I am giving on a regular basis (weekly/monthly).

A) Rarely B) Sometimes C) Most of the time D) Always

Strategic Giving: I prayerfully direct my giving to those needs/ministries that align with God's heart (evangelism, discipleship, mercy).

A) Rarely B) Sometimes C) Most of the time D) Always

Spontaneous Giving: I reserve a portion of my monthly giving for "spontaneous" giving opportunities.

A) Rarely B) Sometimes C) Most of the time D) Always

Sacrificial Giving: As God directs, I give in a manner that requires me to sacrifice financially on a personal level.

A) Rarely B) Sometimes C) Most of the time D) Always