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Sunday Morning 04-10-2016

Second part of our series called Advancing Deliberately: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting and Start Growing. This message centers on the secrets of generous Christians.

<http://bible.com/events/17941>

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The motto for generosity in Jesus' time advised people to give only to those who can give you something in return. Most people only gave with strings attached. "If I give you this, then you owe me."

Jesus injected a new motto for his followers. "Give to those in need, especially those who can do nothing for you."

Matthew 6:1-5 NLT

"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.

Luke 14:12-14 NLT

Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."

While Christianity had none of the conventional strengths required to start a movement, its appeal and influence can be traced to an unexpected source: generosity.

Citation: How to Be Rich: It's Not What You Have. It's What You Do with What You Have, by Andy Stanley

Luke 10:25-37 NLT

One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!" The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take

care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

Sermon in a Sentence:

Don't question who your neighbor is; simply be the generous neighbor others need.

More Secrets of Generous Christians

1. Generosity comes easily when we recognize everything belongs to King Jesus.
2. Generosity grows in the garden of gratitude.
3. Generosity generates greater generosity.
4. Generosity brings new resources.
5. No matter how much I have, I have enough to help someone.

World Wealth Calculator

Where do you rank in the world?

<http://www.leastof.org/worldwealthcalculator>

A NEW POINT OF VIEW:

Our culture teaches us to give to those in need. While we appear generous, many people give with mixed motives. Some give to feel better about themselves. Others give to build a better reputation. There are people who give so that others will owe them something to be collected later. They give with expectations. Jesus teaches his followers to give to those in need with no strings attached. He expects us to give to people who will never repay us simply because that's the example he set for us.

Here's a simple plan to launch your generous lifestyle.

1. Give yourself to Jesus. Recognize that he's your King. This is easy to do when you love him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
2. Remind yourself that everything you have belongs to him. The surest way to do that is to give 10% of your income to Jesus through the church.
3. Set up an emergency fund. Start with a goal of \$1000 and work up to enough to cover three to six months' expenses. The surest way to do this is to put aside 10% of your income in savings.
4. Get out of debt. Stop spending more than you bring home. Start paying off the loans and credit cards. It may take a long time, but the freedom is worth the effort.
5. Find ways to give your time, talents and treasures to those in need. Volunteer at Good Samaritan Rescue Mission. Bring in canned goods for the Salvation Army food pantry. Bring baby clothes to the Baby Love Shower for Salvation Army. Invite people to worship with you.