

Cultivate the Quality

One sure way to get some people to close not just their ears but also their minds and their mouths is to talk about giving. Yet we can't honestly talk about God and the message of the gospel without factoring it into the equation.

Giving is in God's very nature. In response to God's gifts to us, we give to others.

Our giving is an action, which is the natural result of a quality. That quality is generosity. Some churches seem to expect—even demand—giving, without first working to help instill the qualities that produce it.

Before we can expect the action, we need to cultivate the quality. It isn't easy, in an affluent, me-first, tight-fisted culture. But if we expect to show the world that we're somehow different, one quality we must display both individually and corporately is generosity.

Some of the following quotations might spark discussion in your class as you talk about what it takes to nurture generosity and giving in your church.

-“No one has ever become poor by giving.” *Anne Frank*

-“Many people are capable of doing a wise thing, more a cunning thing, but very few a generous thing.” *Alexander Pope*

-“What I gave, I have; what I spent, I had; what I kept, I lost.” *Old Epitaph*

-“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” *Winston Churchill*

-“He who cannot give anything away cannot feel anything either.” *Friedrich Nietzsche*

-“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.” *Maya Angelou*

-“The poor don’t know that their function in life is to exercise our generosity.”
Jean-Paul Sartre

-“Generosity is giving more than you can; pride is taking less than you need.”
Kahlil Gibran

-“Those who are not looking for happiness are the most likely to find it, because those who are searching forget that the surest way to be happy is to seek happiness for others.” *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

-“Do something for somebody every day for which you do not get paid.” *Albert Schweitzer*

-“True wealth is not measured in money or status or power. It is measured in the legacy we leave behind for those we love and those we inspire.” *Cesar Chavez*

-“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. . . For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
Jesus Christ (Matt 6:19-21)

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