

**Title:** A GENEROUS CHURCH  
**Text:** ACTS 20:17-38

**Teacher:** TOM NELSON

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**The Open Hands of Generosity**

Our generous God  
A generous life  
A generous church

**An Emotional First Century Farewell (Acts 20:17-38)**

The local church at Ephesus

A truthful faith community

A generous faith community

**An Unwavering Commitment to Gospel Faithfulness**

- 1) Indwelling the Gospel of grace
  
- 2) Embracing God's design for generosity
  
- 3) Partnering together in common purpose

*"In all these things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)*

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## CONVERSATION STARTER

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- What are some activities that are better engaged in as a group than as an individual? Have you ever tried to accomplish something by yourself that required more than one person? Why did you try to do it by yourself?
- Read Acts 20:17-21 and 32-35. How did Paul's own example challenge the Ephesian leaders to be generous? What role does Paul give to work as part of a generous life? In what ways do you think Jesus' words that, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," are true?
- Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. Where does this text show God at work in the lives of the Macedonians? Why do you think it was important for the Macedonian churches to give themselves first to the Lord? How did the Macedonian churches serve as a testimony to the Corinthian church? What role does the Gospel play in the generosity of the Macedonian church?
- Read the excerpt below. Do you agree that giving is more than just meeting needs? Why or why not? How can giving together as a church community serve as a sign of reconciliation to the watching world? What do you think it means to give both to and through the local church? Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not?
- What are some ways you have seen Christ Community Church embodying this idea of a generous church? What are some ways you can begin to understand generosity communally, and not just individually? How might God be leading you to participate in the communal acts of generosity at CCC?

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### **EXCERPT FROM:** *More Blessed to Give: Biblical Reflection on Generosity*

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A generous church is a church that gives together. No one person can meet all the needs that people face today, but a community of people, like we find in the church, can go a long way towards meeting the diversity of needs we find in the world around us.

Within the early church we find examples of people with great wealth giving sacrificially and people suffering from persecution and poverty giving sacrificially. We see that giving is not just about money going to meet a need. The act of giving is often seen as a confirmation of the character of God being exhibited in the givers. The gifts can also serve as tangible signs of reconciliation within the context of broken relationships. For the Christians of the early church, the gifts were often seen as offerings to God, and no repayment was expected other than what their Heavenly Father would choose as a reward.

There are great benefits when it comes to giving to and through the local church, and they are not new to our day. The early church knew the importance of giving together. Money was not an untouchable subject because people were eager to give their financial resources to help others.