

“Tangible Trust” Week 1: *Practices that Build Trust*

Divine Generosity

What is Divine Generosity?

The scripture speaks over and over again about the powerful influence that money has in our lives. Fortunately, God gives us tools to put that influence in its rightful place and help us live free of the anxiety-inducing grip our finances can have on us. Divine Generosity is one of those tools. Simply put, Divine Generosity is a unique heart-posture towards giving to others that is focused on authenticity and obedience. This looks like regularly praying about how and where God wants us to give and then taking the risk to obey those directions, even when they make us uncomfortable.

This also looks like being honest in our prayers and conversations about where we struggle being generous. This honesty, however messy, allows us to connect with our whole selves to those around us and to our Creator. But when we withhold our less impressive thoughts and feelings, we withhold our hearts from God, and he takes that even more seriously than any amount of money we do or do not give. So it is vital to remember that we are *all* in progress when it comes to practicing generosity - it is actually that process that makes it divine.

Praying Authentically

The first step in practicing Divine Generosity is to pray for His direction. Lets begin with some reflection so we have an idea of what we want to pray for.

Reflection

On a sheet of paper, write out your responses to these questions. Try not to judge your thoughts as they come, and don't worry about "fixing" any of it just yet, this is a time for you to observe. So just answer honestly.

1. **What was your relationship like with money growing up?** Did you have a lot, a little, or somewhere in between? Is it something you thought about? Did you notice what you didn't have or what others did? Did you help support your family early on?
2. **What is your relationship with money like now?** Are you comfortable talking about it? Is it something you think about often? Are you happy with your income? What kinds of decisions does it influence in your day-to-day life?
3. **Where have you experienced generosity in your life?** How did it make you feel? Did it come with expectations or strings attached? What were you able to do with that support?
4. **What does money "promise" you?** We often have subconscious expectations of how we think money will help us in life. We can fall into the idea that "if I just had enough money *then* I would..." What do you want money to do for you? Some common promises money makes are:

Comfort	Safety	Security	Power	Pleasure	Adventure
Status	Respect	Control	Freedom	Leisure	Low anxiety

Prayer

Now that you have done some reflection, you hopefully have an idea of what role money plays in your life. Use this context to begin your prayer. Thank God for the places He has shown up throughout your life, and ask Him about the moments that you feel like He didn't. Share with him where you want to grow in this area, and what is still hard for you to let go of. Ask Him for help in those places. Then ask Him to show you where He wants you to begin practicing generosity. Remember that God wants this *for* you, not *from* you. So He may ask for something small or maybe He'll have you jump off the deep end - but whatever it is, it isn't about being perfect or impressive, but simply authentic and obedient.

Practicing Generosity

While each person will have a unique expression of Divine Generosity, here are a couple ways to get started:

- **Tithing** - This is the ancient practice of giving the first 10% of your income back to God through your church. If 10% is a big jump at the moment, you can start smaller and work your way up as you feel prompted to.
- **Transaction Donations** - When a cashier asks you to donate or round up your dollar for a special fund, just say yes! This is a great way to “choose” generosity on a daily basis.
- **Sponsor a Child for VCKids Camp** - This summer, we want to make our kids camp free for everyone. This is a great opportunity to jump in on something awesome God is doing in our church community.
- **Sponsor a Non-Profit** - Find an organization that is going after something or someone you're passionate about and begin a regular donation. It is important to note that this is not in place of your tithe, but an opportunity to go above and beyond.