

# GENEROSITY AND GREED

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*"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so." (3:27)*

**INTRODUCTION**—Generosity is not tied to a person's net worth, nor to the face value of his gift. It is not just the rich who can be generous and benevolent. Likewise the wealthy are not the only ones who can hoard what they have. These qualities are in no way tied to what a person **has** but what he **is** (22:9)! *"It is not what you would do with a million, if a million should ere be your lot. But what you are doing at present, with the dollar and a quarter you got."* (Author unknown).

## I. GREED

### A. Characteristics of Greed.

1. Insatiable Desires (27:20). Like Sheol, the monster that can never swallow enough humans to satisfy its appetite, the *"eyes of man"* are never satisfied (cf. Ecclesiastes 1:8; 5:10). That which he wants, but cannot have, makes him miserable and he despises it (21:25-26).
2. Miserly (23:6-8). His generosity is a front (23:7). His heart is not in his gift to you, but in the cost to himself. If one's generosity is selfish, it is a sham. Generosity does not keep records of good done.
3. Self-Defeating (11:16-17,24; 15:27). In its attempt to fill itself by gaining and returning things, it empties itself of the inward qualities which truly satisfy (13:7). Any evil done to fill oneself with the spoils of others is self-destructive (1:10-19; esp. v.19).

## II. GENEROSITY

- A. Caring for the Needy (14:21,31; 28:27; 11:24-26). The great benefit of possessions is not in **having** them but in **using** them! Where we have opportunity we have responsibility (3:27).
- B. Don't Put Off Helping the Needy (3:28). By doing so you may make his need greater.
- C. Honoring the Lord (14:31; cf. 3:9-10). God is honored by our consideration and generosity for the poor. He also takes it as a personal insult when we do nothing (22:22-23).
- D. Blessings of Liberality (28:27). Among those blessings is the satisfaction he receives from giving (11:17) and because of his liberality he receives the generosity of others (11:24-25).
- E. God's Response to our Generosity (22:9). He becomes indebted to us for being the channel of His blessings to the poor (19:17). He also responds to our lack of generosity by turning the same 'deaf ear' to us that we turned to the poor (21:13).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Why isn't generosity based on the amount of the gift? What is it based on?*
- 2) *Why is the greedy man never filled (27:20)?*
- 3) *How will a miser treat you? If he does happen to do anything for you, what is his mind likely on (23:6-8)?*

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- 4) *Even though a paradox—why is it true that one can make himself rich yet have nothing, and one can make himself poor even with great riches (13:7; 11:24)?*
  - 5) *What is the extent of our responsibility to help the needy (3:27)?*
  - 6) *Why can't the needy wait until tomorrow for your help (3:28)?*
  - 7) *In what sense do we “honor the Lord” when showing mercy to the needy (14:31)?*
  - 8) *Jesus said “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). What greater blessings does the giver experience than the recipient?*
  - 9) *Why does God indebt Himself to us for helping the poor (19:17)?*
  - 10) *To what extent must our generosity and benevolence go (25:21-22)?*