

**Series** - Be Wise (21 of 22)  
**Topic** - Heartbeat of Grace (1 Corinthians 16)

**Date** - 17-11-2019  
**Speaker** - Pastor Ernie Song

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## WELCOME [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

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## WORSHIP [15 min]

You may select songs like

1. Lord, I Offer My Life
2. Worth It All

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## WORD [45 min]

### **Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand that there must be a cross in our giving; and
2. Learn to practice intentionality in our giving.

### **Sermon Summary**

The following are the key points of the sermon:

1. Part of maturing into the likeness of Christ is maturing in our giving and generosity.
2. Our giving and generosity must take reference from the cross, and not from others.
3. We must be intentional in our giving and our generosity so that many more will be blessed.

### **Sermon Recap (Full Summary)**

Pastor Ernie centred his sermon on the passage in 1 Corinthians 16, which exhorts the importance of Christian giving.

From verses 5 to 11, Pastor Ernie shared how Paul's heart for the Corinthian church was that of discipleship - that the members will grow from spiritual infants to spiritual adults, and in such way attain Christlikeness. Pastor Ernie also taught that our lifestyle patterns must be changed as we grow from spiritual infants to adults - from self-centredness, to becoming more other-centred.

From verses 1 to 4, we learn that the church in Jerusalem was facing a great famine, and the Apostle Paul had appealed to the Corinthian Church to contribute to this need

generously. Pastor Ernie shared that the Biblical principle here is that generosity is for the sake of others - if there is a need in the body of Christ, we must be generous to take ownership and meet such needs.

We then go to the book of Acts, chapter 2. We see how the outcomes of Pentecost are a greater desire for the things of God (vs 42), and radical generosity (vs 44-47). As Christians, generosity is always the consequence when a sinner experiences the undeserved mercies and grace of God. When we receive grace, we realize that everything we have belongs to God, who gave generously to us - so we are able to hold everything loosely for the purposes of God.

Pastor Ernie then shared that the opposite of generosity, is greed. Referring to passages in Matthew 6:19-24 and Luke 12:15, we see how greed can be a very deceiving, and insidious sin. Pastor Ernie also shared some signs which may diagnose greed in our hearts:

- 1) We don't think we are greedy, most likely because we unconsciously compare our spending habits to those around us in the same income bracket, to those in a higher income bracket, or against those in our social circle who are spending lavishly.
- 2) As Christians, we don't feel the need for accountability on how we spend our money, instead viewing it as a private matter.
- 3) We are incidentally, but not intentionally generous.

Pastor Ernie then went on to consider the question of how much of our income we should be tithing. Instead of giving from a manipulative and self-centred mindset to hope that God bless us back, we should give sacrificially. He also shared the following application points on giving:

- Our reference point for giving should not be others, but should be the cross.
- While we can give to causes outside the church, we should prioritize giving to areas of our church that are in need.
- We should be generous to non-believers, to display God's generosity. The church must be the first responders to society's areas of needs.

Pastor Ernie concluded his sermon with a call for us to give sacrificially, to the extent that it is worthy of a God who gave everything for us.

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### **Discussion Questions**

1. **What is the most generous thing someone has ever done for you? What was so memorable about it?** [15 min]

#### **Leader's Notes:**

*The purpose of this question is to give members some time to reflect on and draw from their own experiences of being the recipient of unmerited generosity, and discuss what stood out the most for them about such gestures. Such gestures can include the gift of money, time or resources. If time permits, members can also discuss acts of generosity and kindness which have made headlines and have been reported in the news recently. The take-away here is to recognize that the act of giving is counter-culture, because it*

*involves a forsaking of one's self-interest. In our culture where money is increasingly sought after, unchecked greed and materialism are prevalent- thus, pure acts of generosity, whether small or grand, shine through.*

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

The discussion highlights the profound effects that a generous act has on a society steeped in greed. If we turn the question on its head to ask, what has been the most generous act I have done for someone - what will be our response? Should we, who claim to follow Christ, not live a life marked by acts of generosity? We must again study God's Word on generosity, to discover His will. There are many biblical verses such as 1 John 3:17, Galatians 6:2, Luke 6:38, Proverbs 22:9 and Proverbs 28:27 that speak on God's will for us to be generous.

- 2. Read through Acts chapter 2 and Luke 19:1-10. What parallels can you draw from both the accounts of the early church in Acts, and Zacchaeus' conversion? How did their conversions lead to radical generosity?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:**

*This is a reflect/relate question. By going deep into the accounts of the early Acts church, and tax collector Zacchaeus, we observe the clearest outcomes of a true conversion: a greater desire for the things of God, and radical generosity. The principle here is that generosity is always the consequence when a sinner experiences the grace of Christ.*

*As a group, it may also be helpful to re-capitulate on God's Word on generosity and, on tithing. Leaders can quickly run through the Biblical reasons to tithe found in John Piper's letter "Toward the Tithes and beyond" (<https://bit.ly/2O37PW8>):*

- a. *Honouring an Old Testament Principle (Numbers 18:20-21);*
- b. *Honouring the Creator as Owner of all (Psalm 24:1);*
- c. *The antidote to covetousness (Hebrews 13:5);*
- d. *Governing ever-expanding spending (2 Corinthians 9:6-8);*
- e. *God's way of bringing about good deeds (2 Corinthians 9:11);*
- f. *God's way of providing for you (Malachi 3:10);*
- g. *Proving and strengthening our faith (Hebrews 13:5).*

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

*Both biblical accounts reflect how the grace of God transforms a Christian's attitude towards wealth. Our salvation is not through moral achievement or performance - but through unmerited grace. We worship a God whose nature is to give, freely and without measure, to the whole world. ("For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" John 3:16) Jesus is God's love gift to the world - He who did not withhold His life and blood to save us, but gave His all.*

- 3. Is the area of tithes and offerings a struggle for you? What are some reasons holding you back? How can you be more intentional in increasing your generosity?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:**

*This is a response question. The question offers an opportunity for members to open up on their personal struggles with greed, and the possible root issues (greed affects everyone!). Members can also mutually hold each other accountable for the stewardship of their finances, and more importantly, to encourage one another not to*

hoard God’s blessings, but to be generous in meeting the needs of the church, of Kingdom organizations in the fields, and of the poor and needy in our community. Members can refer to the sermon insert, for a framework of how to plan for their tithes and offerings.

Where appropriate, Leaders may also wish to consider addressing in a pastoral manner members who are not tithing by drawing attention and discussing the following common objections to tithing and the corresponding Biblical responses (see the resource <https://bit.ly/2Os3oD5>):

<b>Objection</b>	<b>Biblical Response</b>
<i>Tithing is legalistic</i>	<i>Tithing is obedience, not legalism – see 1 Corinthians 10:11</i>
<i>We don’t have to give exactly 10%</i>	<i>See Malachi 3:10 which indicates God’s command to “bring the <u>whole</u> tithe...”</i>
<i>I will start tithing when I make more</i>	<i>He who is faithful with little will be faithful with much- see Luke 16:10</i>
<i>Why should we follow Old Testament teaching on tithing when we do not need to follow ceremonial laws on animal sacrifice and diet (e.g. not eating shrimp)?</i>	<i>The system of animal sacrifice was repealed according to Hebrews chapter 8. The tithe was repeated by Jesus in Matthew 23:23.</i>
<i>We live in the era of grace, not law</i>	<i>See Matthew 5:17 which indicates that Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it!</i>

**Transition (Wrapping Up, Vision Casting To Cell & Closing The Discussion)**

Many are contented with giving 10% of our income to the church. However, the Bible teaches us to give above and beyond. In essence, along our journey as disciples, our giving should increase, not remain stagnant. This means that for those who are not in the habit of tithing, to start tithing; and for those who are already tithing regularly, to consider giving more. As we meditate on who God is and on His character, let us be challenged to be like our heavenly Father and model his generosity.

**WORKS** [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. That we will be generous people unto the Lord, unto the church and unto the poor and needy in society and beyond.
2. For The Cell Outreach
  - For the non-Christian friends that will be coming for the Cell Outreach to be open to the invitation
  - For the programs that will be run that day.
  - For everyone that is involved in the running of the cell outreach.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 1. Consider giving to help our Missions Department meet its 2019 Faith Goal.

There is still a shortage of \$356, 436. A lack will have impact on how much the church can do in the nations. Consider helping to meet this need.

### 2. Songs of Love (A Mandarin Christmas Celebration)

Sat, 7 Dec | 11am | Worship Centre

Light breakfast will be served at 10am (Admission by ticket only)

Special Guest: Esther Choe

#### **Church Vision**

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

#### **Mission**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.