

Week 2

What Motivates Generosity?

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The church in every era must embrace God's call to be counter-cultural—to allow him to radically transform our values rather than being conformed to the values of our culture (Romans 12:2). In 21st century America, we will either allow God to transform us into generous stewards, or we will be conformed to our culture's affluent individualism and materialism.

At the heart of this matter is the question of identity. Do I see myself as an autonomous owner—or as God's steward? Standing against this autonomous ownership consensus is the biblical view—that God is the owner of all that we have, that he entrusts wealth and possessions to us to manage in ways that advance his interests.

But there is more. God not only rewards individual Christians in the next life for being good stewards. He also entrusts steward-minded churches with more opportunity and spiritual power in this life.

We have experienced this correlation in Xenos time and time again. God has granted us additional power for growth when we have embraced his call to generous stewardship.

Now we face another challenge in our service to God. He wants to grant us greater power and increased fruit in South Linden, on OSU campus and among adults.

Will we embrace this challenge as a church and continue to allow him to transform us—or will we allow ourselves to be conformed by our materialistic culture and forfeit this opportunity?

For discussion:

Read 1 Tim. 6:6-11; 17-19

From the text, list the dangers of wealth:

From the text, what is the appropriate response?

If we handle wealth properly, what will be the outcome? Read Titus 3:14 and note the outcome of generosity.

Read 2 Cor. 9:7. Who do you know that is a "cheerful giver?" What makes them that way? What could you do to move toward becoming a cheerful giver?

Prayer Points:

- Ask God to clearly reveal the dangers of wealth in your life
- Ask God to reveal to you what your life could be like as you adopt his view of wealth. To be free from the love of money.
- Praise God for examples of people you know who are cheerful givers.
- Pray that God would show you what a sacrificial gift would be for you. Don't expect an answer this week, but keep asking.