

GIVE AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU — KINGDOM GENEROSITY

The Golden Rule – Luke 6:31

- Which is easier and why?

Jesus: “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Confucius: “What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men.” Analects 15:23

To be reciprocal or not to be reciprocal?

- Jesus sets out three cases in verses 32-34. How can you be sure that Jesus thought this sort of loving was fine, but also that it did not go far enough?
- Read the first part of verse 35. We know that ancient writers wrote a lot about friendship and there was an emphasis on reciprocal benefit. How does verse 35 modify this idea?
- “There is something frightening about a relationship in which the other party can take from us and never give back. Boundaries are good or else manipulative and chaotic people would abuse our goodwill, exhaust us and move on to abuse another person next.” Discuss.

Identity in Christ is the foundation of being generous — Luke 6:36

- What sort of behaviour does God the Father exhibit (as described in this verse)?
- Whenever we display similar behaviour we reveal that we are children of this Father. Discuss.

Is God reciprocal, after all — Luke 6:37-38

At first glance Jesus seems to be saying that we’ll be forgiven if we forgive, and such like.

It is rather teaching us that God’s generosity conditions us to be generous – especially generous with mercy. How’s that?

CS Lewis said something like this: a person who can admit no guilt, can accept no forgiveness.

When we receive God’s mercy deeply it involves a realisation that we do not deserve mercy — but we still got it. It’s undeserved mercy.

As a result we no longer feel superior to other people because we know we are no better than they are. They are no worse than we are.

So if we can be forgiven, so can they. And if we have been forgiven, how dare we refuse to forgive them? This is what Jesus was getting at in the story he told in Matthew 18:21-35.

That story also teaches us something quite serious: that our being able to forgive others really is the measure God will use with us.

- How can we ensure that we use generous measures in our attitudes and words and actions towards others?