

The Paradox of Generosity

You are probably familiar with the verse from Acts 20:35 - *"In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

And, perhaps you've heard this from Matthew 16:25-26 where Jesus said, *"For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"*

The Bible is full of paradoxes such as these. What is a paradox? It is a statement that seems self-contradictory but is true.

In the book, [The Paradox of Generosity](#), authors Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson explain how living generously is a paradox. They examine the relationship between well-being (happiness, bodily health, purpose in living, avoidance of depression, and interest in personal growth) and generous behavior (financial giving; volunteering time and talent; relational and neighborly generosity; giving blood, donating organs, estate generosity). They find that, *"Those who give their resources away, receive back in turn. In offering our time, money, and energy in service of others' well-being, we enhance our own well-being as well. In letting go of some of what we own for the good of others, we better secure our own lives, too. This paradox of generosity is a sociological fact, confirmed by evidence drawn from quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews."*

So, by giving we are receiving and by losing we are gaining. How do we do this? We do this by practicing generosity daily through intentional decisions in every aspect of our lives.

As we journey towards and through Lent, perhaps you'll ponder the greatest act of generosity of all - God's gift to us of Jesus Christ, for Christ to die so that we might live.

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