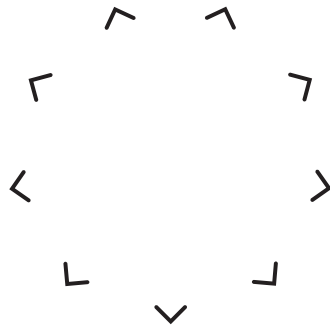


A Four-Session Companion
Guide to Help You Experience
the Joy of Giving



The Generosity Practice

From John Mark Comer
and Practicing the Way



The Generosity Practice

**A Four-Session Companion Guide to
Help You Experience the Joy of Giving**



WaterBrook

John Mark Comer and Practicing the Way

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Getting Started

Welcome

There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.

—Acts 20v35

Few of Jesus' teachings are more radical, counterintuitive, and disorienting to our cultural assumptions than what Jesus has to say about money and generosity. We hear constantly the Western formula of "more money = more happiness." But Jesus boldly claims that happiness is found not in the accumulation of wealth but in a deeply relational life of giving and love.

We could not be more excited for you to go on this four-session journey of generosity. From a distance, generosity can sound like a hard practice; and it is, at first. But it quickly becomes one of the most joyful of all the practices of Jesus.

Our prayer for the coming weeks is that you begin to discover the great joy Jesus is referring to—not just the good feelings that come from practicing generosity but, ultimately, the joy that comes from participating in the inner life of God himself, the most generous being in all the universe.

May God bless you—richly—as you practice Jesus' way of joyful generosity.

—John Mark Comer and *Practicing the Way*

How to Use This Guide

A few things you need to know

This Practice is designed to be done in community, whether with a few friends around a table, within your small group, in a larger class format, or with your entire church.

The Practice is four sessions long, with an optional bonus session if you want to go further. We recommend meeting together every week or every other week.

You will all need a copy of this Companion Guide. You can purchase a print or ebook version from your preferred book retailer. We recommend the print version so you can stay away from your devices during the practices, as well as take notes during each session. But we realize that digital works better for some.

Each session should take about one to two hours, depending on how long you give for discussion. See the sample session on the following page.

Are you a group host or facilitator? Read the appendix in the back of this Guide or view our training resources on practicetheway.org to find information and tips on running this Practice.

Sample Session

Here is what a typical session could look like.

Welcome

Welcome the group and open in prayer.

Introduction (2–3 min.)

Watch the introduction to the session, and pause the video when indicated for your first discussion.

Discussion 01: Practice reflection in triads (15–20 min.)

Process your previous week's practice in smaller groups of three to five people with the questions in the Guide.

Teaching (20 min.)

Watch the teaching portion of the video.

Discussion 02: Group conversation (15–30 min.)

Pause the video when indicated for a group-wide conversation.

Testimony and tutorial (5–10 min.)

Watch the rest of the video.

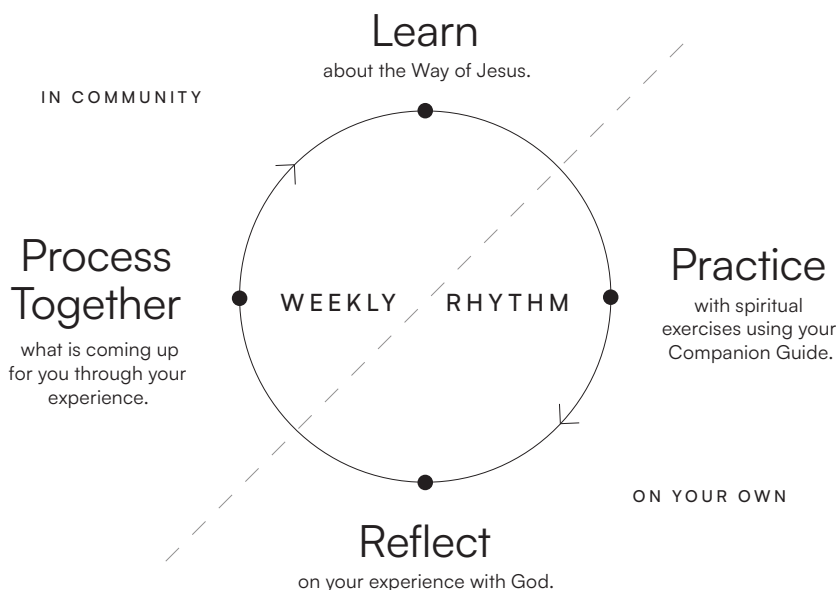
Prayer to close

Close by praying the liturgy in the Guide or however you choose.

Our Practices are designed to work in a variety of group sizes and environments. For that reason, your gatherings may include additional elements like meals or worship time or may follow a structure slightly different from this sample. Please adapt as you see fit.

The Weekly Rhythm

The four sessions of this Practice are designed to follow a four-part rhythm that is based on our model of spiritual formation.



- 01 **Learn:** Gather together as a community for an interactive experience of learning about the Way of Jesus through teaching, storytelling, and discussion. Bring your Guide to the session and follow along.
- 02 **Practice:** On your own, before the next session, go and “put it into practice,”* as Jesus himself said. We will provide weekly spiritual disciplines and spiritual exercises, as well as recommended resources to go deeper.
- 03 **Reflect:** Reflection is key to spiritual formation. After your practice and before the next session, set aside 10–15 minutes to reflect on

* Luke 8v21.

your experience. Reflection questions are included in this Guide at the end of each session.

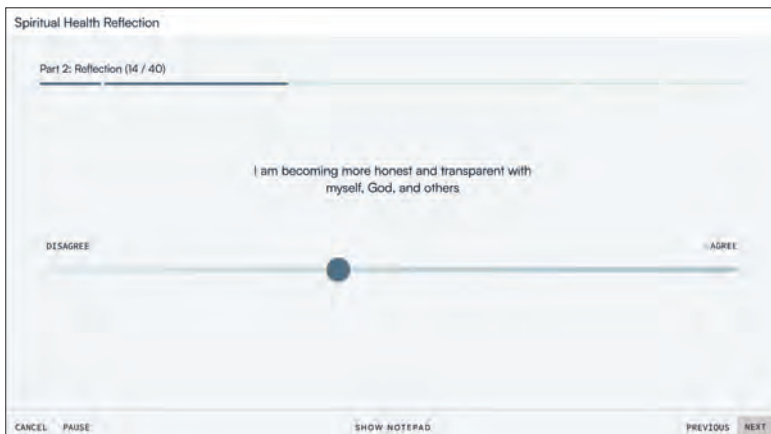
- 04 **Process together:** When you come back together, begin by sharing your reflections with your group. This moment is crucial, because we need each other to process our lives before God and make sense of our stories. If you are meeting in a larger group, you will need to break into smaller subgroups for this conversation so everyone has a chance to share.

The Spiritual Health Reflection

One final note: Before you begin Session 01, please set aside 20–30 minutes and take the Spiritual Health Reflection. This is a self-assessment we developed in partnership with pastors and leading experts in spiritual formation. It's designed to help you reflect on the health of your soul in order to better name Jesus' invitations to you as you follow the Way.

You can come back to the Spiritual Health Reflection as often as you'd like (we recommend one to two times a year) to chart your growth and continue to move forward on your spiritual journey.

To access the Spiritual Health Reflection, visit practicingtheway.org/reflection and create an account. Answer the prompt questions slowly and prayerfully.



The screenshot displays the 'Spiritual Health Reflection' interface. At the top, it shows 'Part 2: Reflection (14 / 40)' with a progress bar. The central text reads: 'I am becoming more honest and transparent with myself, God, and others'. Below this is a horizontal slider with 'DISAGREE' on the left and 'AGREE' on the right, with a blue dot indicating the current level of agreement. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'CANCEL', 'PAUSE', 'SHOW NOTEPAD', 'PREVIOUS', and 'NEXT'.

SESSION 01

There Is More Joy
in Giving
Than Receiving

Overview

Jesus' call to generosity is rooted in his vision of God and our place in God's world. In Jesus' teaching on "healthy" versus "unhealthy" eyes,* we are introduced to two strikingly different worldviews—or ways of seeing the world.

Those with an abundance mindset see God as being their Father-provider and the world as teeming with provision and blessing; everything we have is a gift, and there's plenty for all. They live with gratitude toward God and generosity toward neighbor.

Inside this worldview, the radical teachings of Jesus on money and generosity ("Do not worry about tomorrow"; "Freely you have received; freely give"; "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."**) make perfect sense. And we are free to live generously and at peace.

But those with a scarcity mindset see the world as a bleak and godless place of danger; wealth is a zero-sum game; survival of the fittest is the top priority. In this way of "seeing" the world, Jesus' sayings on money sound ludicrous. And we are enslaved to fear and greed.

The practice of generosity is the pathway out—a spiritual discipline by which we index our hearts away from a scarcity mindset to the abundance mindset of Jesus.

* Matthew 6v22–23.

** Matthew 6v34, Matthew 10v8, Luke 12v15.

Opening questions

When instructed, pause the video for a few minutes to discuss in small groups:

- 01 What brought you to this Practice? What are you hoping to see God do in your life through it?

- 02 How were money and generosity handled in your family growing up?

- 03 What is your primary feeling about money? Fear? Desire for more? Shame? Ambivalence?

- 04 How do you see generosity as a part of your apprenticeship to Jesus?

Teaching

Scripture

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

—Matthew 6v19–24

Session summary

- Jesus was right: Happiness is found in the opposite place than where we are often told. There is more happiness in living simply and generously than in acquiring money and possessions.
- A key task of our apprenticeship to Jesus is discovering the joy of living a generous life.
- There are two ways of looking at the world:
 - An abundance mindset
 - A scarcity mindset
- Generosity is a practice by which we index our hearts from a scarcity mentality to the abundance mentality of Jesus.

Discussion questions

Now it's time for conversation about the teaching. Circle up in triads (groups of three), and discuss the following questions:

- 01 Whether you were the giver or recipient, share about a time when you experienced the joy of generosity.

- 02 What fears or desires keep you from being generous? (It could be a scarcity mindset, a need for “security,” greed, or something else.)

- 03 How would your life be different if you were free of the fear of not having enough?

- 04 What is one act of generosity you can do this week that would counter the fear you may carry?