

WEEK 4 - Generosity: Encouraging & Equipping Others

Canopy Guide // Fall Focus 2026

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use the questions below to kickstart a community-building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.

- Who is someone you appreciate for sharing their gifts in the service of the community?
- If you had to be one part of the human body (e.g., an eye, hand, finger, or ear), which would you be?

STUDY GUIDE

Surprisingly, sometimes generosity is helping someone else find a way to give back. At times, we get so focused on our own perspective that we miss seeing that someone else has a beautiful gift to give, but may lack the personal connections or know-how to go about sharing the good gifts they have. The most generous thing we can do may be to recognize their worth and invite them.

The Apostle Paul wrote letters to several churches, which now form books in our New Testament. In three of them, he wrote extensively to help Christians see that everyone who has been given new life by Jesus wants and needs to serve their Lord. Paul expressed this by using the example of the human body (*Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-26; Ephesians 4:7-16*). Each part of our bodies is important, and all are needed for a body to function at full capacity. As he pointed out, no part can look down on another, for each is needed. Those passages list several functions that church members would perform, and all are important in one way or another.

Paul did not intend that his listing should be exclusive, so there are variations and repetitions in them. But some needs in our churches today, which different people may perform or provide, and which may clearly be important and valued, were not even known in the first century of Christianity. The importance of what Paul was saying is not in a set list, but in seeing that every church, just like every human body, needs many diverse parts to do well.

It takes a generous perspective to see and envision the talents or abilities or gifts of other people and to aid in how those people can be encouraged and helped to use and develop their specific contributions. Sometimes, just an encouraging word is a generous help. Other times it may be allowing a novice the opportunity to learn by doing – meaning the opening for service is

provided, along with assistance (or training) and patient support with encouragement during the learning stages.

Just noticing and helping make contact or a connection may be a start. Only Andrew of Jesus' twelve Apostles knew there was a boy who could offer his lunch to Jesus when over 5000 people needed to be fed. Paying attention to the quiet or timid among us can be generous.

Are you generous enough to notice the person who could serve and grow in the Lord if given some help and encouragement? Do you appreciate others who serve faithfully and express support for them? Generosity sometimes is expansive and inclusive of the person who needs a place and way to serve. How can you help make space for them to share and contribute?

Scripture to Read:

- Ephesians 4:7-16

Discussion Questions: *(feel free to pick & choose the questions your group wants to tackle together)*

- How can we recognize the gifts others have?
- How can we respect different gifts from our own?
- Why do we sometimes celebrate and emphasize certain gifts while ignoring other gifts?

PRAYER

Open our eyes to the gifts and abilities and talents of our brothers and sisters. Help us to equip and build them up for service to you.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

- There are many online resources with tests to help you discern what your own spiritual gifts may be, which may in turn help you identify gifts in other people. One such resource is <https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/>. Take it if you choose and apply what works and is helpful (but as with all these types of things - don't stress over it if it doesn't seem to fit. You were made in the image of God, and that's often more complex than what appears in a survey box.)
- Here a bit of a deeper dive into the "gifts/graces" listed in Ephesians 4 and other references in NT- <https://bibleproject.com/classroom/ephesians/sessions/27>