Multiply

The Key to Living in God's Blessing

Vida CHURCH

The Cycle of God's Blessing
Be fruitful. Multiply.

The Giving Room
How to measure your generosity

The 90-Day Challenge
A step toward a more generous life

Inside

God's first word over humanity was a blessing. His next words showed us how to keep living in it.

01 **The Cycle of God's Blessing** 3
Be fruitful. Multiply. Two words, two kinds of growth.

02 **Our Mission: Amplify Jesus** 7
Why the advance of God's Kingdom is always fueled by generosity.

03 **Growing in the Grace of Giving** 11
Step into the Giving Room and measure your generosity.

04 **90-Day Multiplication Challenge** 14
A faith-filled pre-decision for the next three months.

05 **Resources to Fuel Your Generosity** 15
Videos, stories, teachings, and articles to go deeper.

06 **Where to Give** 16
Offerings, missions, and benevolence at Vida Church.

About this resource

This resource is drawn from Pastor Tim Mossholder's teaching on generosity at Vida Church Santa Maria.

► **Watch the "Multiply" messages**

Scan or click to watch on YouTube

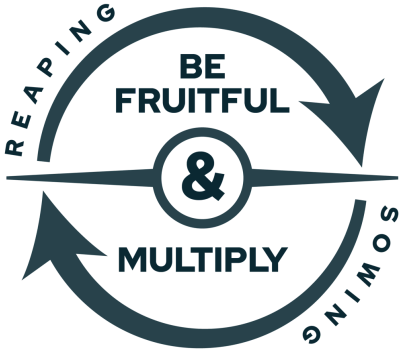
FIND US ONLINE
vcsm.org

SUPPORT THE WORK OF VIDA CHURCH
vcsm.org/give

01 CHAPTER ONE

The Cycle of God's Blessing

Multiply — the key to living in God's blessing



GENESIS 1:28

Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply."

God's first action after creating humanity was to bless them. What a beautiful act of love! And immediately after this blessing, God gave them guidelines on how to live in his blessing. This began with four simple words of instruction: ***Be fruitful and multiply.***

While the two ideas represented in this statement sound similar, we could mistakenly think God was saying the same thing twice. But "being fruitful" and "multiplying" are two very distinct ideas, each with its own Hebrew word with its own special meaning.

BE FRUITFUL =

para

To flourish, prosper, and experience qualitative growth.

This is God's blessing *inside* of us. He created all people with the capacity to thrive, giving us minds, bodies, emotions, relationships, and resources for our use, enabling us to flourish personally.

MULTIPLY =

rabah

To increase abundantly, to have quantitative growth.

This is God's blessing moving *outside* of us. All multiplication requires something to be given away before it will grow. A seed must be planted before it will produce new life.

This is the cycle of God's blessing! His intent for humanity is that we'd do both — *para* and *rabah* — becoming personally fruitful, then multiplying our fruitfulness into the world around us.

In the New Testament, these very same ideas of "being fruitful" and "multiplying" are restated as *sowing* and *reaping*. And God's promise is that when we sow generously, we will also reap generously.

> **LUKE 6:38**
>
> *For if you give, you will receive! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use to give — large or small — will be used to measure what is given back to you.*

And the Apostle Paul affirms the idea that sowing and reaping are meant to be an ongoing and continuous cycle.

> **2 CORINTHIANS 9:8–11**
>
> ***And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.*** *As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat.* ***In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous.*** *And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.*

THE CYCLE OF GOD'S BLESSING

God's provision to us (*para*) is something we can *always* anticipate so we can *always* multiply generously (*rabah*)! God's blessing will flow *to* us so it can flow *through* us. We are blessed to be a blessing.

> ***"The key to living in God's blessing is to cause others to experience his blessing!***

The challenge is that the enemy of our souls wants to interrupt this cycle of God's blessing. Hell is working overtime to block us from receiving God's blessing so we'll never pass it on to others. Jesus stated this reality so clearly.

> **JOHN 10:10**
>
> *A thief has only one thing in mind — he wants to steal, slaughter, and destroy. But I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect — life in its fullness until you overflow!*

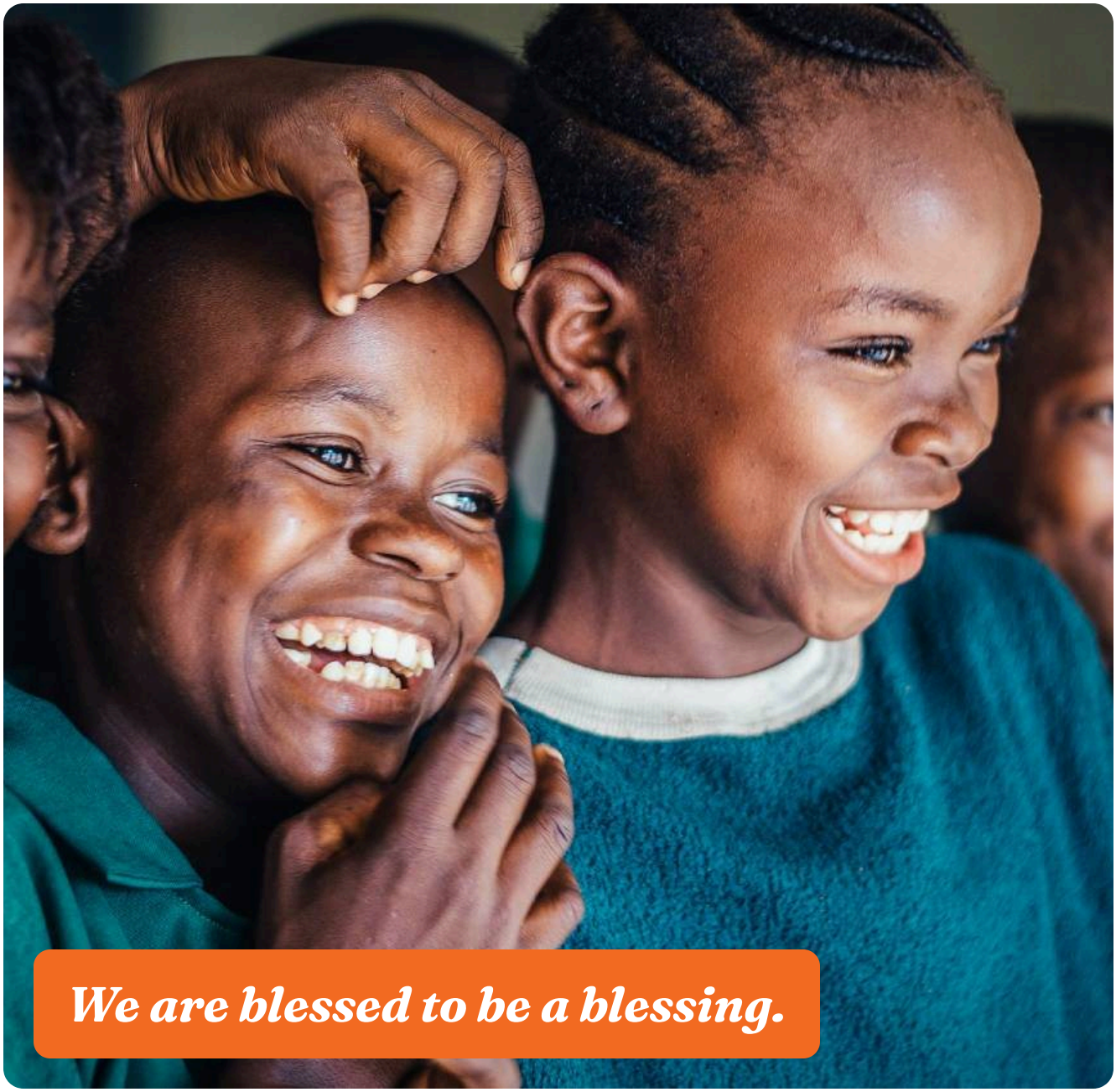
While Jesus' mission is to pour *para* on us, the devil is actively at work to interfere — or completely destroy — the abundant, fruitful life God has intended. And if the enemy succeeds, not only do we lose our blessing, but we'll never *rabah*, because we'll have none of God's blessing to sow into the lives of others.

The enemy's greatest deception is convincing us we need to grab hold of everything we can and keep all of it for ourselves. If we fall for this lie, because of either fear or greed, it will have the same result: we will stop multiplying. And what the devil never tells us (but Jesus does!) is this guarantees we'll lose the very thing we're trying so desperately to hold on to.

> **MATTHEW 16:24–26**
>
> *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.* ***If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.*** *And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?"*

Hold it = lose it. **Give it = save it.**

This counterintuitive truth is key to understanding the cycle of God's blessing. It's why Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). When I receive, I'm blessed with God's *para*. But it's as I give that *more blessing* is released. When I choose to multiply, I'm activating the cycle of God's blessing. God's *para* flows *through me* to others, then *back to me* as I begin to reap what I've been sowing.



02 CHAPTER TWO

Our Mission: Amplify Jesus

Did you notice in Matthew 16:24–26 that Jesus doesn't say, "If you give up your life, you will save it"? He says, "If you give up your life ***for my sake***, you will save it." It's all about amplifying Jesus — making his name and his cause known far and wide!

The advance of God's Kingdom is always fueled by generosity. This happens whenever someone steps up and multiplies, sowing out of the resource God has provided. Whether we give of our time, talent, or treasure for God, we are extending the glory of the name and cause of Jesus. These gifts, like gospel-seeds, spring to new life by the power of God, causing those who are far from God to become friends of God. And Jesus promises to bless this kind of multiplication!

> **MARK 10:29–30**
>
> *Jesus replied, "I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property,* ***for my sake and for the Good News,*** *will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property — along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life."*

OUR MISSION: AMPLIFY JESUS

There are many ways we can amplify Jesus that have little or no impact on our bank accounts. ***Anything Jesus has given to us we can give away***, multiplying it into the lives of others:

Love

This is the primary way we're called to multiply the gospel into the world.

John 13:34–35 · Matthew 22:39 · Matthew 5:44

Forgiveness

Letting go of the pain others have inflicted, and of those who have sinned against me.

Luke 6:37–38

Spiritual Gifts

Special ways we're empowered by the Holy Spirit to encourage and build up others in their faith.

Romans 12:6–8 · 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 · Ephesians 4:11–13

Serving

Good deeds done to bless others.

Galatians 6:7–10 · Ephesians 2:10

> *"The advance of God's Kingdom is always fueled by generosity.*

But amplifying Jesus and advancing the Kingdom of God in sustained ways will always include financial generosity. There's no way around it! If churches are to be planted and sustained, missionaries sent around the world, and ministries launched that care for the most needy, it will require consistent, faith-filled, financial generosity being given by God's people.

In 2 Corinthians 8–9, the Apostle Paul talks extensively about the importance of financial generosity. In these chapters he provides a number of compelling reasons we should be generous — here are three of them:

Three reasons to be generous

1 **So that we'll look more like Jesus**

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

"You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich."

2 **Both the physical and spiritual results are powerful**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:12

"So two good things will result from this ministry of giving — the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God."

3 **God's blessing is promised to us**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6

"Remember this — a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop."

For these reasons and more, Paul gives this impassioned call:

> 2 CORINTHIANS 8:7
>
> *Since you excel in so many ways — in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us — I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.*

Joel and Veronica Arreola, our missionaries in Playa del Carmen, Mexico

> *Decide now! Pray about it. Ask the Lord what he wants you to give, then cheerfully commit to giving it.*

But Paul is practical as well, and in these chapters he shares three things that should mark our financial giving.

Three marks of our financial giving

1

Start by giving your whole life to God

Paul provides the example of how generous the followers of Jesus from Macedonia were, then says, "They even did more than we had hoped, for their ***first action*** was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do" (2 Corinthians 8:5). We're to start here, surrendering every part of our lives to Jesus.

2

Do the math and figure out what you have to give

"Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have" (2 Corinthians 8:12). Some people think, "When I have more money, or get out of debt, then I'll start giving." But we're taught here to simply "give according to what we have" today! So we need to do the math, figure out our starting place, and begin giving eagerly right now.

3

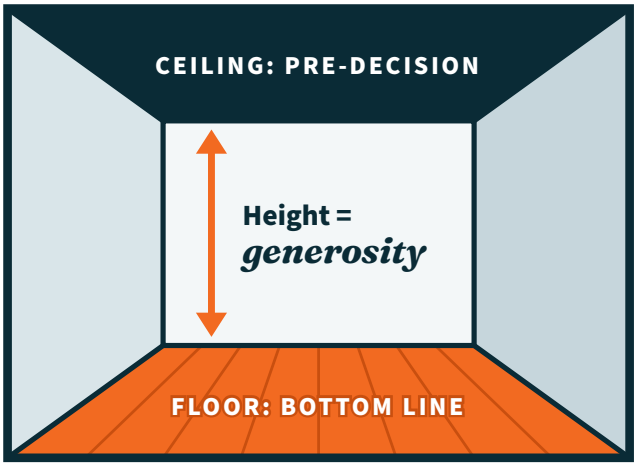
Pre-decide what you'll give

This is so important! Don't wait to decide *if* you'll give, or *how much* you'll give, only when a giving opportunity pops up. If you do that, it's likely you won't have anything left to give from your resource. Paul says this, "You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. 'For God loves a person who gives cheerfully'" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Decide now! Pray about it. Ask the Lord what he wants you to give, then cheerfully commit to giving it.

03 CHAPTER THREE

Growing in the Grace of Giving

How can we grow in this "grace of giving" so that we're becoming truly generous? In order to grow, we have to find a way to measure our generosity. To do that, let's enter the ***Giving Room***.



The Giving Room isn't imaginary — because we all have one. It's where we determine how much (if anything) we'll multiply from the resource God has given us.

By measuring the height of our Giving Room we can find out how we're doing as multipliers — not compared to others, but based on how generous we've chosen to be with what we have. To do this, we need to understand what makes up the floor and the ceiling of our Giving Room.

THE FLOOR

My bottom line.

How much comes in, and how much goes out? What I'm left with is the bottom-line number from which I can be generous. This idea is based on 2 Corinthians 8:12, "Give according to what you have, not what you don't have."

THE CEILING

What I've pre-decided to give.

This is the amount, or the percentage of my bottom line, that I've decided to give *before* it's time to give. Rather than waiting until a giving opportunity presents itself, and only then checking to see if I have anything left to contribute, this is making a plan ahead of time. Just as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:7, "You must each decide in your heart how much to give."

We can measure and track the growth of our generosity by determining the difference between the floor and ceiling of our Giving Room.

And from a story about Jesus and a poor widow, we learn that *God measures our generosity the same way!*

> **MARK 12:41–44**
>
> *Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus (bottom line), but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."*

Much to the disciples' surprise, they discovered it's not the ***amount*** of generosity that impresses God. It's the ***height***! So, how can we grow the height of our Giving Room?

THE FLOOR

First, lower the floor.

There are three ways we can "dig out" the floor to create more space.

1. **Increase Income**
   This can seem impossible, but with God all things are possible! There are so many different ways God can direct additional resource to us — through employment opportunities, unexpected gifts, investments finally paying off, and more. Let's pray for this kind of blessing, not just for our benefit, but for the benefit of others.

2. **Reduce Expenses**
   Any expenses we cut will create more room for generosity. Are there expenditures we can either reduce or eliminate altogether? Eating out? Entertainment? Impulse purchases? The idea isn't to develop a poverty mindset, but to create more room for generosity.

3. **Kill Debt**
   There's no greater burden to our bottom line than debt! It crushes so many people's finances and steals away the opportunity to be generous. "Owe nothing to anyone — except for your obligation to love one another" (Romans 13:8).

THE CEILING

Second, raise the roof!

There are many ways we can stretch our faith, trusting God to meet our needs, even as we give more than we ever have before. Here are three roof-raising ideas.

1. **Prayer**
   This is often so overlooked when it comes to our resource. But have you surrendered all your finances to Jesus, then asked him what he wants you to give?

2. **Study**
   The Bible has much to say about money, finances, and generosity. Plus there are many resources to help you explore these topics even further (several are listed in this guide). What if you were to take a season to grow your understanding of God's plan for your finances, then begin to dream about how much you could amplify Jesus in your lifetime?

3. **Accountability**
   Who do you trust well enough to sit down with your budget and ask the hard questions about your finances? Is the floor or ceiling of my Giving Room out of alignment with my faith? Am I spending too much on myself? What steps could I take to become more generous than ever before? Maybe you could do this with some close friends or a Christian financial adviser who shares your values.

Lower the floor + raise the roof = a taller Giving Room.

04 CHAPTER FOUR

90-Day Multiplication Challenge

After gaining a greater understanding of God's plan to bless us *and* bless others through us, do you believe God is calling you to increase how you're multiplying financially? What might this look like? For some it can feel overwhelming to imagine what "generosity" could look like a year or two from now. So, how about starting with the next 90 days? Why not make a pre-decision right now to multiply over the next three months?

MY PRE-DECISION

☐ ***I am making a faith-filled pre-decision to increase the height of my generosity for the next 90 days.***

NEXT STEPS

1. **Do the math.** What is your total income from all sources? Subtract all your expenses, then record your bottom line here:

   MY BOTTOM LINE $ _____

2. **Pre-decide what you'll give.** This may be a particular dollar amount, or a percentage of your bottom line. Record your pre-decision here:

   MY PRE-DECISION $ _____

3. **Pray, study, and become accountable along the way.** Journal what you're discovering as you're leaning into a new and generous way of living.

4. **What did you experience?** At the end of 90 days, what are your takeaways? What were the most challenging things you contended with? What new testimony do you have? Are there individual people or projects that were impacted by your generosity? Where have you personally experienced the increase of God's blessing? Moving forward, how will you continue to stretch the height of your Giving Room?

05 CHAPTER FIVE

Resources to Fuel Your Generosity

Here you'll find a super helpful array of videos, stories, teachings, books, and articles that will help grow both your heart and your mind toward God's great call to excel at the grace of giving.

MEDIA

ilikegiving.com/films
I Like Giving — short films and stories →

gospelpatrons.org/media
Gospel Patrons — films and stories →

generousgiving.org/videos
Generous Giving — videos →

generousgiving.org/generosity-resources
Generous Giving — books and resources →

ncfgiving.com/resources
National Christian Foundation — resource library →

TEACHING

"Multiply" messages
Pastor Tim Mossholder, Vida Church — YouTube →

"Resurrecting Generosity" Podcast
vcsm.org/podcasts/res-gen →

"Beyond Tithing" — an article by Pastor Tim Mossholder
PDF download at vcsm.org →

Financial Peace University
ramseysolutions.com/money/financial-peace →

Questions?

Drop us a note with any questions about generosity or how you can contribute to the mission of Vida Church.

vcsm.org/contact

WHERE TO GIVE

Generosity changes lives!

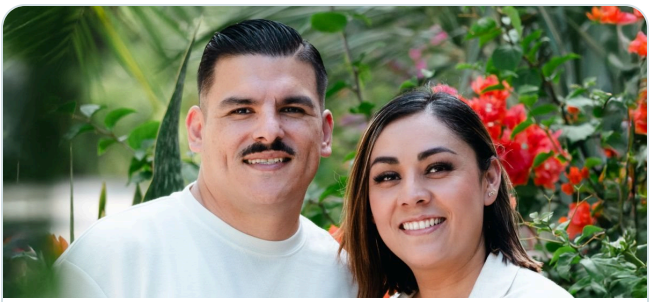
Generosity not only changes our lives, but it opens doors to new life for everyone our gifts reach. Choose where your gift goes at **vcsm.org/give**.

SCAN TO GIVE

Offerings

This is where to start! Tithes and offerings support the core mission of Vida Church. They not only meet regular needs, but allow us to advance God's work in our community and around the world.

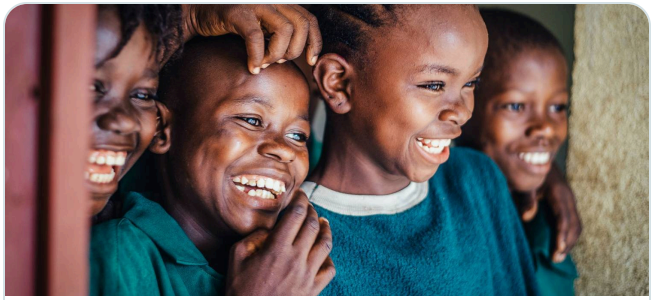
Give now →



Mexico Missions

Supports Joel and Veronica Arreola, our missionaries to southern Mexico, who pastor the Casa de Fe church in Playa del Carmen and serve with Foursquare throughout Mexico and Latin America.

Give now →



Foursquare Missions

Every dollar goes to Foursquare's Global Missions Fund, enabling ministry growth in 156 nations and territories around the world.

Give now →

Benevolence

Provides resources to meet emergency needs of people in our church and community, so we can serve others in practical ways in the name and love of Jesus.

Give now →

Vida CHURCH

Your generosity helps bring life to Santa Maria and beyond!

vcsm.org · info@vcsm.org · (805) 922-8445
709 N. Curryer St., Santa Maria, CA 93458

Watch the short "Giving" video