

Week 7 – Giving

February 14, 2021

Group Discussion Guide



(90 minutes needed)

Begin with 1 minute of silence, an opening question, and prayer (5-10 minutes)

As you begin this week, begin with one minute of silence to prepare your hearts and minds for the evening. *[Why silence? Our world is so busy, distracted, and bee-like, with technology filling in any gaps in between. With all that moving, it can be hard to hear others and hear the voice of God. As we gather together, let's press pause and enter into a moment of quiet so that we can hear what God is saying to us and through others.]*

Once your minute has finished, ask the group what they sense God has been inviting them into as a result of this series. What is one tangible next step in their faith journey God is calling them to?

After finishing the opening question, have a specified person in the group pray this prayer from Thomas Merton; be sure to also pray for your group time together.

My Lord God, we have no idea where we're going. We do not see the road ahead of us. We cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do we really know ourselves, and the fact that we think we're following Your will does not mean that we are actually doing so. But we believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And we hope that we have that desire in all that we are doing. We hope that we'll never do anything apart from that desire. And we know that if we do this, You will lead us by the right road, though we may know nothing about it. Therefore, we will trust You always, even though we may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. We will not fear, for You are always with us, and You will never leave us to face our perils alone. Amen.

Read this overview (1 minute)

Our culture tells us that the key to living a meaningful life is found in acquiring *more* – more money, more nice things, more toys for the kids, more experiences, more this, and more that. The only problem is that it's a lie. Both the teachings and the example of Jesus show us that life is not found in the accumulation of goods, but in giving ourselves away (our time, resources, influence, possessions, money, etc.).

One way we know this to be true is by just considering how much would be enough. Have you ever thought about that?

- How much is enough money? Put a dollar amount on it.
- How many nice things in your home until you're content? Put a number on it.
- How many places do you need to travel to feel fulfilled? Put a number on it.

We can't do it. You and I know intuitively that we'll never be satisfied with those things. Because while they're *good*, they're not *ultimate*.

The other way we know that life is found not in the accumulation of things, but rather in the giving of ourselves away is because of Jesus' resurrection. God vindicated both Jesus' life and teachings when He raised Jesus from the dead. Think about that. When God raised Jesus up, he was essentially saying, "This is my Son. Everything he said is true. Everything he did corresponds to what is actually real about life."

So, even when we are tempted to think that maybe we know best, when we look to Jesus we can know for sure whether or not it is congruent with reality.

This week, we'll be diving into accumulating's opposite: *Giving*.

Scripture + Debrief in small groups (30 minutes)

Split your group into triads to read the following Scriptures and debrief the sermon together.

- What new thoughts or insights about giving did you have as a result of this message?
- How did this message deepen your faith? How did it challenge you?
- How has God been generous to you lately? List 3-5 things.
- How did your family handle giving growing up? Did it come naturally? Or was giving not something your family practiced regularly? How do you want your family today to be viewed in this regard?
- **Read the story of the rich young ruler and Zaccheus together (Luke 18:18-30; Luke 19:1-10).** What stands out to you in these passages? Why do you think Luke places these two stories so closely together? What is the same between the rich young ruler and Zaccheus? What is different? What is God trying to teach us through these stories?
- When you think about being generous with your time, energy, resources, or money is there one of those that you find easier to give than another? Which one is harder to give for you? Which one is easier? Why?
- When was a time you gave something away recently? How did it make you feel?
- How can you practice giving in an intentional way this week?

Transition back to one large group for recap (10 minutes)

- What were some insights that came from your smaller group discussions? What stood out from your conversations?

Transition to an individual generosity audit (25 minutes)

[You'll want to have some writing utensils and some paper available for people to jot their thoughts down.]

Invite people in your group to reflect on the following questions:

- Over the last month, approximately what percentage of my time have I given to myself (including sleep, leisure, etc.)? What percentage of my time have I given away (work, serving, etc.)? What would it look like for me to increase that by 1%?
- Over the last month, what percentage of my money goes to me? What percentage of my money has gone to others? What would it look like for me to increase that by 1%?
- Over the last month, what percentage of my money have I tithed to God? What would it look like for me to increase that by 1%?

Transition back to one large group for recap (10 minutes)

- What were some insights that came from your individual generosity audit (your group can get as explicit here as they are comfortable with)? What stood out from your reflection time about your habits of giving?
- How do you plan on growing in generosity by 1%?
- How can we, as a group, help you with that?

Close with Prayer (5 minutes)

Finish your group session with prayer. You might want to ask someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Close your time together by praying. Thank God for all that He's already given you and spend time interceding for the requests that were shared.