

CoreGroup Guide | Much Given. Much Expected. – Part 4

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Welcome

A key focus for our conversation this week is this question: *What makes a gift generous?* You can probably remember a really great gift that you have received. Or a time when you were eagerly anticipating a special present, but felt disappointed when you opened the surprise. In the scripture passage this week, Jesus and his disciples are at the temple observing donations of the people and Jesus comments on what gifts have more value.

Opening Prayer

Lord God, Thank you for the opportunity we have to gather and consider what you would have us learn about generosity. As we read Jesus' words and learn from his teaching, give us insights into how we can be more like you in our hearts. Use our conversation today to help us embrace a more generous mindset toward giving. Amen.

Ice Breaker

Describe an example of generosity that has impacted your personal perspective on giving.

The Head

Oprah's audacious audience gifts at the end of a show. A lottery winner who shares part of their fortune with a charity. A pro athlete buying their parents a new home and cars. A \$10,000 tip left at a breakfast restaurant. These examples of generosity come to mind based on recent memory, but let's read what Jesus highlighted to his disciples as generous 2,000 years ago.

Mark 12:41-44

41 Jesus sat across from the collection box for the temple treasury and observed how the crowd gave their money. Many rich people were throwing in lots of money. 42 One poor widow came forward and put in two small copper coins worth a penny. 43 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than everyone who's been putting in the treasury. 44 All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had, even what she needed to live on."

- Explain why the gifts of the rich people were less valued than the coins offered by the poor widow.
- Two extremes in giving are contrasted in this passage. What do you think Jesus would have said about an "average" giver, one who is neither rich nor poor?

Now consider this passage from Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth commenting on giving in the early church:

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

6 What I mean is this: the one who sows a small number of seeds will also reap a small crop, and the one who sows a generous amount of seeds will also reap a generous crop.

7 Everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They shouldn't give with hesitation or because of pressure. God loves a cheerful giver. 8 God has the power to provide you with more than enough of every kind of grace. That way, you will have everything you need always and in everything to provide more than enough from every kind of good work.

- What jumps out to you in this passage related to generosity and giving?
- How do Paul's words here compare and contrast with Jesus' comments in Mark's gospel?

The Heart

Jesus cuts to the heart of the issue of giving as he knows our motivations and inner attitudes. In the Mark passage, the widow's small offering is deemed more meaningful than the rich giving their spare change. There are many giving strategies. Here are just a few:

- **Percentage-based:** Someone who sticks to the 10% tithe described in the Old Testament or another clear cut number for their giving (for example, [Malachi 3:8-10](#)).
- **Spontaneous:** Someone who gives in response to a specific invitation or who feels particularly moved in the moment (for example, the Christmas Eve offering).
- **Reactionary:** Someone who gives when they have received some kind of financial "windfall" or in response to a particular cause or issue.
- Describe your preferred giving strategy. It may be similar or different from the options above.
- What happens at the heart-level when you give of your resources in this way?
- There are no "bad" offerings to God. But what motives for giving do you think are most honoring to God? Are there any motives that might be less pleasing to God?
- What motivates your desire to give to church?

The Hands

Generosity may feel counter-cultural, but it can be really healthy for us emotionally and spiritually. Giving is a core spiritual practice for the Christian faith and is rooted in both the Old and New Testaments. Based on the texts we have studied in this series, we are being challenged to examine our own giving practices and to examine our own attitudes and motives for giving to the church.

- What verse or part of this discussion impacts your attitude about giving the most?
- What step will you take individually, with your spouse/family, your friends, or your CoreGroup to examine your giving practice/commitment?
- How will you assess if you are "giving out of your spare change" like the rich people in Jerusalem, or giving the best of what you have like the poor woman?
- Is there something you are feeling called to give to the church in a way that requires your service or time rather than money?

Closing Prayer

Holy God, thank you for the expectation and the examples in the Bible of being a generous giver and the opportunity to discuss these ideas in our faith community. Remind us that our giving is a reflection of the abundance that you give to us. Help us reflect on this passage throughout this week as we consider how to use our resources to further your kingdom on earth. Amen.

Additional Resources

Week 4 Sermon notes/reflection in the Much Given, Much Expected Guide, pp. 30-33

From Pastor Charity

Finding Peace with Money: Practical Tools for Financial Wellbeing

Money can be a source of stress, confusion, or even shame. You may be unsure where to start, want a clearer picture of your finances, or simply hope to be more intentional with how you use your resources. Wherever you are, this group is for you.

[To learn more, click here: Finding Peace with Money](#)

All Saints Day Service: A Service of Remembering

Join me at the Clayton Site on Saturday, November 1 at 5:00pm as we remember those we love and lost. Childcare available for 0-5 years old.

[To learn more, click here: All Saints Day Service](#)