

MULTIPLICATION VALUES SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

#5 GENEROSITY: Releasing Resources into the Harvest

Introduction:

God has an issue with our possessive pronouns. “Mine, my, ours, yours, his, hers” are common in our speech but from God’s perspective, a bit misleading. “My house...My money...My time...My kids....” these words come easily but think about them for a minute. God the creator is rightful owner of all things and we are not (Psalm 24:1). Instead, we are temporary managers of a few things that pass through our hands over a span of years. We hang onto these things as though we own them...like they are our ultimate possessions but ultimately they are pulled from our hands.

The virtue and value of generosity springs from the profound reality that the things we have are meant to be shared. The word “stewardship” carries this idea. Stewards are not owners, they are temporary managers of things that do not belong to them. The bible traces this idea from the garden of Eden where Adam and Eve were given charge to care for the garden to the parables of Jesus where he challenged people to invest their “ten talents” wisely while they can (Matthew 25:14-30).

Generosity is rooted in who God is (the owner of all things) and who we are (temporary stewards of a few things). It applies to individuals and to organizations...even the church...as we have opportunity to give of our resources toward what God is doing in the world. Parenting a new church is an expression of that value. When we give away people or money to help a new church start we are recognizing that the church is not “ours to possess” but ours to steward for a short time into the harvest God is seeking to bring in.

Text:

II Corinthians 8:1-15

Warm up:

Describe the person or event that most inspired you to be generous. What caught your attention most?

What are the ministries and mission efforts of your church that spark your desire to give of time, talent or treasure?

Parenting kids...or a new church...requires sacrifice and generosity. How might God be challenging your church to greater generosity through a church plant?

Dig In:

In II Corinthians 8 Paul describes a church that practiced a generous spirit. In vs. 1-7 what qualities does he identify in the generous church?

Paul wants them to “excel in the grace of giving” (vs.7). Why do you think puts generosity at the same level as faith and love?

In vs. 8-12 Paul describes the growth he wants to see in Corinth. How does that growth go beyond the amount that is given? What are the ultimate measures of generosity?

In vs. 13-15 Paul outlines a principle of equality. What is he saying about the meeting the needs in this situation? How does this principle apply in other situations where there is a temporary need for help?

Wrap Up:

How does this story from Corinth challenge you on an individual level...on the level of a congregation?

If your church is going to parent a new congregation, what “grace of giving” will you likely need to be open to growth in? How might God be preparing you?

Giving can be about time, talent and treasure. Where do you see the need around you? What opportunity does church planting create for giving? Are there other church plant opportunities that you could be giving to now?

Prayer:

Pray for a new openness to where God is working and how you can participate as a giver of time, talent or treasure.

Pray for the “sincerity of love” (vs.8) and the “willingness” (vs.12) in your life and the life of your congregation. Pray for a responsiveness to needs should they arise in a church plant.

Pray for wise use of all the resources given in ministry.

Ben Ingebretson, *Multiplication Moves 2012*