

GIVING FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Small Group Leader's Guide – Lesson Four



BEFORE THE LESSON:

- Each member should be asked to read chapters 7-8 in the book and complete the questions in the participant's guide. (As you complete the questions yourself, be prepared to share your own notes, to help the group open up to discussion.)
- Pray for your leadership of this group. Pray for the members who will attend your group.
- Remember that this topic deals with finances and financial choices. Make it clear to the group that we will not be discussing personal finances, but rather reviewing scripture to understand God's perspective on the gifts we give.
- This study is probably unlike any study of financial giving you and your group has experienced. Expect to find clarity, freedom, and a new perspective on gifts!
- The focus is on what the Bible actually reveals about giving.

PRAYER TIME:

- Pray for an open heart to truth from God's Word
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth and bring understanding
 - Pray for each member to learn something from this study that will transform their perspective and actions
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INTRODUCTION:

- Review Acceptable Gift Truths:
 - #1: The amount matters
 - #2: You determine the amount
 - #3: You give according to your ability
- If you gave a financial gift, or any kind of gift this week, how did this study change your perspective?
- What stood out to you this week?

NOTES:

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➊ DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 7: THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The main truth we want to understand in this session is: The heart makes the gift count.

Look up and read Acts 5:1-10

- Were they required to give all the money they received for the land? (No – In verse 4 we see Peter told them it was their money, they had control to give whatever they wanted)
- What was the problem with the gift Ananias and Sapphira gave that cost them their lives? (It was their heart condition! They lied to God. They brought a portion of the money, but they conspired together to tell the Apostles that it was the entire amount they received for the property – Verse 8.)

Look up Matthew 5:23-24

- Why do you suppose Jesus didn't tell him to go ahead and offer his gift then go make things right with his brother?
- What other areas of our lives might God be interested in being right with Him to make our gifts acceptable to Him? (Attitudes, speech, habits, thoughts...)

Look up and read Proverbs 21:3

- What does God really desire more than our offerings?

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➊ DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 7: THE HEART OF THE MATTER (continued)

Look up and read Matthew 23:23

- Were these people giving? (Yes, tithing according to the law)
- What did Jesus say they were neglecting? (An acceptable lifestyle or character)
- Did Jesus excuse them from giving if they corrected their lives? (No – He clearly says do both!)

So is it a right heart or right amount that matters most to God? (It's both! Not either, or! God desires our hearts and lives to be clean and pure before Him, so that our gifts are acceptable to Him.)

We cannot speak about the heart without thinking in some part about motives.
What are some motives people have for giving to the Lord? As you think of some, consider are they good or bad?

Look up and Read 2 Corinthians 9:6

- What happens when you give generously?
- Is that a negative motive for giving?
- What are your thoughts about the “give to get” story of Papa?

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➊ DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 7: THE HEART OF THE MATTER (continued)

What do we do if our heart is not in the right place to give an acceptable gift?

- Do we just not give?
- What do these verses say about getting our hearts right? 1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13

Consider David – He had sinned against the Lord. In Psalm 51 he prayed for God to cleanse his heart and life. (vv 1-4, 10) But also notice what was then possible because his heart had been cleansed.

- According to verse 13 what was possible after cleansing? (His witness. He could not be an example and lead others to God)
- According to verse 14 what was possible after cleansing? (His Worship. David could sing of God's righteousness)
- According to verse 19 what was possible after cleansing? (His Offering. David's sacrifices were now acceptable/pleasing to God)

Can you see your giving in light of your relationship with God rather than that of "Christian duty"?

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➊ DISCUSSION – BRINGING IT HOME

In this study we have learned that in giving gifts that please the heart of God...

- **The amount matters**
- **We determine the amount**
- **We give according to our ability**
- **The heart makes the gift acceptable**
- One Last Discussion Question:
 - What one truth will you take away from this 4 week study that has most impacted you? How will you apply it to your life?
- Consider giving your copy of *Plastic Donuts* away to someone who would be blessed by the message

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