**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**How do I live for God?**

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” ([Matthew 6:33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.33))

*Parents are constantly bombarded with information from their kids. One child might be describing something that happened to her at school, and another could be going on and on about a favorite video he just watched or created. Or they might just be demanding more snacks. Then, at times, those same kids simultaneously try to explain why they were fighting with each other and whose fault it was. In those moments, freshly armed with details, a parent can be left wondering,* “What do I do with all this information?”

*You may be feeling the same way. In society, we’re constantly bombarded with information and competing agendas. What should you do with all these facts and opinions? If you’re feeling that tension, this volume is for you! We’ll be looking at Scripture for answers as to how to assimilate this information as we ask the all-important question: How do I live for God?*

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| First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What did you learn about money from your parents? |

If talking about money makes you nervous, you wouldn’t have enjoyed being around Jesus. He was pretty straightforward and confrontational when discussing the issue. His focus on this topic shows us God is interested in our giving—not because He needs our resources—but because our giving indicates the condition of our heart.

Today we’ll be talking about giving generously. Christians should be radically generous with their time, talent, and treasure. We’ll look at what Jesus’ view of generosity was, see how giving blesses others, and discover the gospel motivation behind true generosity.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: How have you seen money be a distraction in someone’s relationship with God?



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| **QUESTION**How have you seen money be a distraction in someone’s relationship with God? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

In the Bible passage we’re going to read, Jesus sat with His disciples in the courtyard at the temple. Against one wall nearby was a row of offering collection boxes. Each had a trumpet-shaped receptacle made of metal on top. As people dropped coins into the collection boxes, the coins would rattle and clatter loudly down the mouth of the trumpet and attract a lot of attention.

For some, dropping coins into the boxes wasn’t so much about giving to God; it was more about their offering being heard by other people. As Jesus and His disciples watched, a poor widow paused at the collection box and took two copper mites—the smallest and least valuable coins of all—and dropped them into the box.

**Giving Generously Costs Us Something**

Read [Mark 12:41–44](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk12.41-44).

In this story, we read about a radical act of generosity—an offering so generous that even Jesus took notice! Jesus gathered His disciples to make sure they understood and appreciated what they had just witnessed. This widow’s true generosity moved the heart of Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**What does this story tell us about how Jesus viewed giving? |

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| **QUESTION**Think of the most generous person you know. What actions convince you they are generous? Share an example of how you have personally experienced their generosity if applicable. |

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| **QUESTION**In this biblical society, widows were sometimes marginalized, oppressed, and mistreated. Yet this woman gained the attention and approval of Jesus. What might this show us about how we should respond to those who are marginalized? |

Jesus dispelled many of our preconceptions about giving. Although large, the offerings of the wealthy cost them little. Their lives were relatively unaffected by their giving. While the widow gave less money than the wealthy, her gift was more generous because it cost her everything. Her offering was an amazing demonstration of her trust in God (cf. [2 Samuel 24:22–24](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Sa24.22-24)).

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| **QUESTION**What keeps us from being generous toward others? |

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| **QUESTION**We can also be generous with our time and talents in addition to our treasure. What might generosity of time or talent look like for you? |

**Giving Generously Starts in the Heart**

Jesus placed the emphasis more on the motivation of the giver, and less on the specific amount of their gift. The wealthy may have been more likely to make a show of their large offerings. They would be more likely to want to be seen, noticed, and valued for their contributions.

While the widow also gave in public, her heart’s desire was probably to avoid drawing attention to herself. There’s a big difference between doing good works to be seen by others versus doing them because you know the only One who matters has already seen you—and saved you ([Colossians 3:16–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Col3.16-17)).

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| **QUESTION**When we give, why does the motivation of our heart matter so much? |

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever had a wrong heart motivation for giving? Share an example if you’re willing. |

**Giving Generously Is an Act of Joy**

Read [2 Corinthians 9:6–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Co9.6-8).

This passage by the apostle Paul reinforces Jesus’ emphasis on the widow’s motive for giving. Paul was concerned not just with *what* we give, but *how* we give. He indicated that generosity and joy should go together. These instructions also come with a promise: When you’re generous toward God and others, God will bless you in return ([Luke 6:38](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk6.38)). God blesses the generous, so they can continue to give generously. That principle brings joy to the giver and to the receiver ([2 Corinthians 9:10–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Co9.10-12)).

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| **QUESTION**How does viewing our possessions as God’s resources, not our own, enable people to give more generously and joyfully? |

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| **QUESTION**This passage indicates God blesses givers so they may continue being generous to others. Can you share a time when you saw (or experienced) this principle in action? |

**Giving Generously Goes Beyond the Tithe**

Read [Malachi 3:8–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mal3.8-10); [Luke 11:42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk11.42).

To *tithe* means to consistently give 10 percent of our earnings. In the time of Malachi, these earnings would have often been agricultural produce or livestock. Some argue that the tithe is not applicable to Christians today. They believe the tithe was only an Old Testament standard. But from Jesus’ statement to His disciples in [Luke 11:42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk11.42), He was not abolishing the tithe. Instead He challenged the legalism behind tithing without loving. And what was Jesus suggesting for the New Testament standard by making the widow’s gift an example? To give generously. And that’s exactly what He did by choosing to die on the Cross!

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| **QUESTION**Malachi mentioned offerings, giving above and beyond our tithe. What are some ways people might choose to give beyond the tithe? |

**Reflect**

**I Give Generously**

Jesus unflinchingly addressed the issue of money because He wants us to understand the link between our finances and our heart. If you want to see where your heart is, look for where significant portions of your money are going. If you value having the latest and greatest tech gadget, your dollars might go to technology companies. If you love nothing better than being out in the woods, you probably spend money on hunting or camping equipment. If you’re in a romantic relationship, you don’t think anything about spending on your beloved. You reflexively assign value to the things you treasure.

We serve a truly generous God, whose love for us is so great that “He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” ([John 3:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.16)). Our value was determined by the high price God was willing to pay for us—the very life of His own Son.

God’s extreme generosity toward us should prompt us to give generously back to Him and to others. If your heart is truly aligned with His, your giving will reflect a growing love for the people He loves and a deepening alignment with what He values.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**Some people spend their money in the pursuit of significance while others hold onto it in the pursuit of security. Which of these are you more tempted by? |

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| **QUESTION**How should Jesus’ death on the Cross settle our issues of both significance and security? |

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| **QUESTION**Are you currently tithing? If not, what’s stopping you from taking a step of faith? If so, what step could you take toward giving above the tithe? |

**Activate**

The Bible tells us to not just be hearers of the Word, but to be doers too ([James 1:22](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jas1.22)). When it comes to giving generously, this applies to our time and talent as well as our money. Inspired by the widow in today’s Bible story, we should be ready to give more in each of these areas in response to what Jesus has given for us.

**Challenge**

Pray and ask the Lord what a generous gift looks like for you. Is it five dollars, a hundred dollars, or even more? Set aside an amount of cash in a designated place in your purse or wallet. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you toward the person or ministry who needs your generous gift this week.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to listen with the personal devotions.

**Did You Know?**

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| *The Greek lepton, the copper coin that has also been called the widow’s mite, was the smallest form of currency in first-century Israel. Its estimated value is about one-third of a penny. The lepton continued to be a part of official Greek currency, serving continuously as the smallest denomination through the modern age until the euro cent replaced it in 2001. However, with the modern currency change, the common term for a single euro cent in Greece remains the lepton.* |

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: Give Generously**

Read [Mark 12:41–44](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk12.41-44).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What do you sense God is saying to you about giving generously? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: Give with Eternity in Mind**

Read [Matthew 6:19–21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.19-21).

In this passage, Jesus teaches us that the location of our treasure reveals our heart’s deepest desires. If our heart has a desire for status, then we may be “generous” with our money in buying new clothes, cars, or electronics. If our heart craves pleasure most, then we may overspend on vacations and experiences. But when our heart finds its deepest joy in Jesus, we are free to give money toward God’s mission and His purposes.

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| **QUESTION**How have you seen people use money in their attempt to fulfill their heart’s deepest desires? |

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| **QUESTION**What’s an example of how you’re learning to direct your generosity toward God and away from earthly temporary matters? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: Give Privately, Not Publicly**

Read [Matthew 6:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.1-4).

These words of Jesus show not only His deep knowledge of human nature, but also His boundless compassion for us. He knew we would be tempted to make generosity about us rather than about Him. So He encouraged His followers to give in secret.

When you give without others’ recognition, you can be assured you’ve given with the right motivation. Furthermore, the passage reminds us that there is a greater reward when we wait to receive it from our Heavenly Father, rather than from others.

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think people sometimes draw attention to themselves when they give? |

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| **QUESTION**The passage indicates the giver benefits when he or she gives in private. How might this bring greater glory to God as well? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: Giving Demonstrates Trust**

Read [1 Timothy 6:17–19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Ti6.17-19).

This passage is from a letter the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, giving the young leader instructions to pass on. Paul told Timothy to teach the people they shouldn’t be attached to their stuff. Instead, they should leverage their resources to further God’s work by blessing those around them. Paul pointed out that God gives us everything anyway—which leads to the concept of stewardship. Stewardship acknowledges that everything good we have comes from God.

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| **QUESTION**How is generosity a demonstration of your trust in God? |

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| **QUESTION**How does stewardship—recognizing everything you have comes from God—change your perspective about giving? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: Give Regularly**

Read [Malachi 3:8–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mal3.8-12).

This passage includes the rare challenge for us to put God to a test. He wants us to trust Him with our tithe and give regularly as we receive income. While what we get back from Him when we tithe should never be our motive, God promises blessing when we are generous. Tithing begins with your local church. Then considergiving offerings above and beyond as someone who is grateful for all God has done.

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| **QUESTION**How does this passage say people have cheated God? |

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| **QUESTION**If you’re honest, could God say you have cheated Him according to this passage? |

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| **QUESTION**How has your attitude changed over this past week regarding generously giving your money, time, and talents for God? Pray and ask God to show you the next steps He desires from you. |