

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“Bigger.Smaller.Deeper – Generosity”

Matthew 6:21; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-11; Philippians 4:10-13



JASON'S MAIN POINTS:

Jesus doesn't want your money, he wants your heart and your money is the quickest way to your heart.

Give sacrificially. What will I give up?

Give cheerfully. God will be glorified!

Give proportionately. What is my responsibility?

Generosity is born from contentment.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS:

You're never going to be great until you serve others. The visible demonstration of our love for God and others is found in service.

Ministry in the church is not done by the pastor and paid staff—it is done by the saints in the seats. The pastor and staff have the job of equipping the saints to do their mission.

READ: Deuteronomy 8:18; Matthew 6:21; 19:16-26;
Mark 12:41-42; Acts 4:32-35; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5;
9:6-11; Philippians 4:10-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think it is so hard for pastors and people to talk about money in the church?
2. Jason mentioned the “blessings of generosity.” What are some of those blessings? (Have someone at your table be a scribe and jot them down as the group enumerates them.) How many of these blessings are you enjoying because of your generosity? Turn the sheet in when you're done tonight.
3. The crux of the whole dialog about giving comes down to what Jesus said in Matthew 6:20-21—*“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* What does this say about all the “extras” we have in life (2nd homes, boats, RVs, etc.) How do we square that with what Jesus is driving at? How is the way you view and treat your wealth (or its lack) an indicator of how much of your heart Jesus has?
4. Jason said, *“We have all the money we need to fulfill our Bigger, Smaller, Deeper vision. Now here's the bad news: right now it's still in our pockets.”* Now read Acts 4:32-35. Now consider this statement by Baptist pastor Clarence Jordan: *“The early church did not give until it hurt. They gave until it was gone!”* How does that impact you? Do you think Jordan was right? Why would the early church give like this? What ravished their hearts?
5. Jason quoted C. S. Lewis as having said, *“If our giving habits do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say that they are too small. There ought to be things we ant to do but cannot do because our giving expenditures exclude them.”* This is a hard statement, but do you think Lewis was right? How does this affect you and your view of giving? What are you willing to give up in order to clear up more margin for giving?
6. Paul described the churches of Macedonia as having an *“abundance of joy and extreme poverty that overflowed in a wealth of generosity...They gave beyond their means, giving themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to his purposes.”*
 - Are there contradictions of terms in this description? How do you reconcile these apparent contradictions?
 - Have you ever felt a hilarious joy when giving beyond what your mind said you should give? From where did that joy come? Describe it for your group.
 - Many Christians are currently underwater financially (you might even be one). What do you think the scriptures we're looking at tonight would be saying to them? Would you encourage someone to give before paying the electric bill? Why or why not? What's at stake here?
7. Paul went on in describing the Macedonian churches and said that *“whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”* Many modern Christians take this to mean that God is like a divine slot machine—put your coins in, pull the lever, and he'll give you more than you put in. But is that the intention of this verse?
 - From 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, what does God provide by way of bounty to the sower?
 - Why is God trying to bless you with resources?
 - How are we all called to give? What's the practical difference between giving equally, or giving proportionally?
 - What was Jesus' point when he said that the widow, who put in a fraction of a cent at the temple offering chest, gave more money than all the rich people that day? (Read about it in Mark 12:41-42). What might that say about how God wants you to give?
8. What role does contentment play in your giving? What is the source of that contentment? How do you know when you are really content?
9. And the ultimate question: Are you pleased with what you give to the Lord through your church? Moreover, is Jesus please with your generosity? What do you think you can do about it?

NOTE: *If you need help with stewarding your finances more effectively, send us a note:*

*care@illuminatecommunity.com
(We'll keep it confidential)*