

Abundance: Week #3 Group Discussion

Firstfruits



Abundant life flows from an abundant heart and an obedient heart. But it not only matters how we give and that we give, but it also matters what we give. God wants to be first in your life, which is exactly why we need to think of Him first as we steward the gifts He's given us. Take some time to discuss the following questions as a group:

1. Take a moment to read Genesis 4:1-7:

^{4:1} Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." ² And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶ The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

God accepted Abel's offering, because he gave his firstfruits. If you have started tithing by faith, how does this principle affect when and how you tithe? How does giving first (before your own needs are met) stretch your faith?

2. What fears or concerns do you wrestle with when thinking about the principle of first? Why is it sometimes easier to believe by faith that we are saved than it is to believe by faith that God will bless us and take care of us?
3. Every time we get paid, there is inevitably an act of worship that follows. This is what is meant in Matthew 6:21, when it says, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The first place we give our treasure reveals something about what is "first" in our lives (this is why a true tithe is from our gross income, lest the fear of the IRS take precedence over the fear of God.) What kinds of financial things are most likely to compete for "first place" in your heart?
4. Proverbs 11:24 says, "One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want." In what ways have you seen this principle at work in your own life or in the life of someone else?

- The principle of firstfruits applies to more than just our finances. Discuss what it would look like to give God the firstfruits of your talents. What other ways can you think of in which to apply this principle?

PRAY:

Take some time to pray for each other in your group. Thank God for his generosity toward you. Thank Him for putting you first in so many ways. Then, commit to giving Him the first of your treasure, your talent, and everything else from now on. Finally, think about the prayer requests and life circumstances of each person as you pray and ask God for generous hearts in the midst of each need.

TO DO AT HOME:

Review the chart you made in week #1 (a copy of the exercise is listed below). What comes first? If giving to God isn't first on your list, ask God to help you and then make a plan to move God's portion to the top of the list.

Where Is My Money Going?	
<i>List your top five categories (by amount) of discretionary spending (e.g. eating out, entertainment, ministry giving, travel, recreation, etc.):</i>	
CATEGORY	AVERAGE MONTHLY SPENDING

Scripture: Take time to look up the following passages. What stands out to you as you read these verses? What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you through them?

Exodus 13:1, Matthew 16:25, Proverbs 3:9-10, Romans 11:16

Journal: Take some time to journal about the following:

I find it easy to trust God about _____ . Why are these things easy?

Sometimes I struggle to trust God about _____ . Why are these things hard?