

Abundance: Week #4 Group Discussion

Multiplication



This week, we talked about multiplication. God can bring a great harvest out of a gift sown from a generous heart. **The question we need to ask ourselves now is not, “how do I reap a harvest?” but “am I generous?”** Take some time to discuss the following questions as a group:

1. The opposite of generosity is selfishness. As any parent knows, children are born knowing how to be selfish. Generosity is something that must be learned and cultivated. What is one of the first memories you have of overcoming your selfish nature to act generously toward someone else?
2. We often find it easier to be generous in some areas than in others (time, talent, money, praise/criticism, judgment, a listening ear, etc.). What areas do you find it easiest to be generous and what areas are the most difficult?
3. There are five types of giving mentioned in Scripture – none, not enough, a tithe, an offering, and an extravagant offering. Notice that a tithe is not giving, but rather obedience - a repayment of what God claims as His own. An offering, given above and beyond a tithe, is where generosity begins, but to truly reflect God’s generosity, we must learn to be extravagant givers. Have you ever given or received an extravagant gift? Describe what that felt like?
4. Take a look at three very different stories of extravagant giving:

1 Chronicles 29:1-5 - ¹ And David the king said to all the assembly, “Solomon my son, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the work is great, for the palace will not be for man but for the Lord God. ² So I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able, the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, besides great quantities of onyx and stones for setting, antimony, colored stones, all sorts of precious stones and marble. ³ Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided for the holy house, I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it to the house of my God: ⁴ 3,000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7,000 talents of refined silver, for overlaying the walls of the house, ⁵ and for all the work to be done by craftsmen, gold for the things of gold and silver for the things of silver. Who then will offer willingly, consecrating himself today to the Lord?”

Luke 21:1-4 - ¹ Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, ² and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. ³ And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. ⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

In the first example, David contributed over \$21 billion (today's value) to the building of the temple. In the second example, a widow gave between \$2-3. God isn't impressed by numbers, but He loves an extravagant giver. Here's one more example...

John 12:1-8 - ¹ Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. ³ Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

In this account, we see Mary, anointing Jesus with oil worth almost a year's wages (a denarius was equal a day's wage). And here we see the contrast between generosity (Mary) and selfishness (Judas). Contrast this story with that of the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-31, whom Jesus told to sell everything he had and give it to the poor. Why do you think Jesus responded differently in each of these scenarios?

5. Mary gave an extravagant gift, but she herself had just received something extravagant: the life of her brother Lazarus raised from the dead. Generosity is born out of gratefulness. A thankful heart that sees and receives all things as an extravagant gift from God is quick to give extravagantly back to God and to others. Why is it so hard to see the things we have (especially our paychecks, our talents, our jobs, and even our families) as extravagant gifts from God?
6. The most extravagant gift we can ever give (to God or to others) is ourselves. Take a moment to think about a talent, gift, or ability that you have. Now

consider how you might be able to give yourself in this area to bless a person, organization, or church in an extravagant way. For example, if you're a doctor, how could you give your services in an extravagant way? If you're an accountant, could you give your time and services to bless someone else in an extravagant way? If you're a stay-at-home mom, is there something extravagant you can do for your kids that would impact their lives for years to come? Talk about how you can be extravagant this week, not only with your finances, but with your time and talents as well.

PRAY:

Take some time to pray for each other in your group. Begin with thankfulness to an extravagant God. Then, boldly ask God to challenge you in extravagant generosity this week. 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:

Luke 16:10-11 - ¹⁰ "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?"

As you walk this road toward abundant living, a key step involved is to become a good steward of the gifts God has given you. Take a moment to evaluate your stewardship using the activity below.

<i>Rank yourself in each category on a scale of 1-10 (1 being worst and 10 being best):</i>	
Area	Score
Getting (and staying) out of debt	
Living within your means	
Having a budget/tracking expenses	
Praying about significant purchases	
Being accountable to your spending (e.g. to your spouse)	
Being diligent and faithful at work	
TOTAL (out of 80):	

What steps can you take this week to improve your stewardship score? If you need help with this, talk to one of the Revolution staff, who can help point you in the right direction, so you can start living the abundant life God wants for you.