



BE-RICH

A 4-WEEK STUDY IN GENEROSITY

BE • RICH

Give • Serve • Love

A 4-WEEK STUDY IN GENEROSITY



WELCOME

First things first, thank you for choosing to be part of a Small Group.

Deciding to get in a circle with others is an investment in your own growth and a decision to prioritize community. It isn't always easy; it takes time, energy, dedication, prayer, and vulnerability, but it is just about the best thing you can do with your time and your life. We love what God does in people's lives when they get together in circles to discover who He is and who He has made us to be. Our prayer is that He will work in you and through you in this study to transform you and the world around you.

BE RICH

BE RICH is a Four-Week Small Group Series delving into the topic of generosity. This series is designed to follow and complement our Four-Week Sermon Series Be Rich. This series will allow you an opportunity to dive deeper into the material in our sermon series and process what you are experiencing together. Each lesson will focus on one aspect of generosity that we are exploring in our series.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

Each week's session is designed to guide your group through a Bible Study that will encourage you to understand God's word more deeply and apply it more fully. Every week as we study generosity together, we will engage with a passage or two of scripture and work to understand and apply it to our lives in ways that change us and the world around us.

Each lesson has the following elements:

TOPIC AND SCRIPTURE

Every lesson will be built around a central topic and a passage of scripture addressing that topic.

BOTTOM LINE

The **BOTTOM LINE** is designed to capture one main idea of each week's passage as a point of focus for each study.

LAST WEEK

We'll begin each discussion with a review of **LAST WEEK**. This section will center around a discussion of the **THIS WEEK** activity from the previous session (see below for details).

SUMMARY

Each week's study will start with a brief **SUMMARY** of the topic and ideas for the week to provide you and your group with context.

CONSIDER THIS

CONSIDER THIS begins with your own life experiences and is designed help you and your group begin to connect with the week's topic and create an interest in going deeper.

OPEN THE WORD

Every week you and your group will OPEN THE WORD together. This is the heart of every study. The main objective of this time together is to create familiarity with the passage(s) of scripture for the week by making observations about the text and making note of any questions that the passage raises. Sharing what you see and think together will increase your insight into the scripture and prepare you and your group to understand and apply the meaning of the passage together.

KNOW THE WORD

Each week's lesson is connected to the weekend sermon. KNOW THE WORD will help you and your group to explore the ideas from the sermon more deeply by focusing in on some central ideas from the scripture passage and providing points for discussion. Each week's sermons can be found at resources.lifepointchurch.us

LIVE THE WORD

God's word is not to be known in just an intellectual context; it is to be known experientially - it is to be lived. LIVE THE WORD is designed to challenge your group to think about how to apply what you have learned in meaningful ways to your everyday lives.

THIS WEEK

As part of this Small Group Study we want to move together towards taking steps of faith that will help us develop and cultivate a generous heart. Every week our study with close with "THIS WEEK," designed to help each group member engage with some opportunity that can help them grow in tangible ways. We are going to step out in faith together as a group to engage with God in activities that will allow Him to shape us.

LESSON TOPICS



WEEK 1 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE GIVE

Scripture – 1 Timothy 6:6-19

Bottom Line – Be a river not a reservoir



WEEK 2 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE SERVE

Scripture – Acts 6:1-7 and 7:54-60

Bottom Line – Serving leads to seeing



WEEK 3 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE LOVE

Scripture – John 13:1-10 and 31-38

Bottom Line – Things happen when we love - and we can always love



WEEK 4 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE ARE GRATEFUL

Scripture – Acts 10:34-48

Bottom Line – Giving gets us grateful

WEEK 1 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE GIVE

1 Timothy 6:6-19

BOTTOM LINE

Be a river not a reservoir

LAST WEEK

LAST WEEK you were challenged to “Bring the Hope of Surrender” to someone you know who is struggling. What did you do? How did it go?

SUMMARY

There are few things we admire more than generosity. Especially in others. When it comes to our own resources we are often tempted to hesitate. Risk and insecurity come part and parcel with generosity. We cannot be generous without risk, and so, we cannot engage generosity without confronting a certain degree of fear. As with every risk, we have a choice: we can engage the fear or retreat from it. If we engage, generosity will flow from our lives. If we retreat, we drift towards selfishness and risk stagnation.

CONSIDER THIS

What is the most special thing anyone has ever given you? Why were you given it and why is it so special to you?

OPEN THE WORD

Read the passage of scripture together and then take some time to observe the text. Identify words and ideas that repeat and things that stand out to you within the passage. Write down any questions the text may raise in your mind.

Background: This week’s passage is taken from Paul’s first letter to Timothy. The purpose of this letter is pastoral; Paul is writing to Timothy, his spiritual son, to advise him in leading the churches to which Paul has sent him. His instructions are both for Timothy as an individual and for the churches that Timothy was leading.

📖 1 Timothy 6:6-19 ESV

But godliness with contentment is great gain,⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,¹⁶ who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,¹⁹ thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Before moving on to the next session take 2-3 minutes to share some of your observations with each other.

KNOW THE WORD

1. What stands out to you about what you have read and heard so far? What are one or two take-aways?
2. What dangers does Paul identify in verses 9 and 10? What does he say is the result of these things?
3. What is Timothy told to pursue in verses 11 and 12? (Identify each thing)
4. What do verses 17-19 tell us about how we are to understand and approach wealth?

LIVE THE WORD

1. To what degree are you currently content? What are the sources of discontent in your life? What can we learn from this passage about how to respond to our discontentment and how can we practically apply this?
2. Is Paul saying that being rich is evil in this passage? What is he specifically warning against (see verse 9 and 10)? Is there anything from your life experience that would confirm or refute Paul's warning?
3. According to this passage, what is a Christian understanding of wealth? How should we view our resources? How should we use them?

THIS WEEK

This week's lesson was titled *Things Happen When We Give*. When we give it changes the world around us, but it also changes the world within us. It is a paradox that when we give, we grow. God has given us three types of resources from which we can give: our time, our talent, and our treasure. As we give generously from each of these resources, we will grow in different ways.

This Week consider two things:

First, which of the three resources listed above (time, talent, or treasure) do you give most generously? Why is this? How does this connect to who you are? How have you grown as a result of this giving?

Second, which of the three resources do you have the most trouble giving generously? Why is this? What trips you up? Whichever this is, spend some time praying and asking that God would show you one small way that you could take a step towards generosity in this area. Please go small, this is about taking small steps of training that will allow us to take bigger steps later. Small acts of generosity can add up to big change (just like we saw this weekend in service). Think of just one small way that you can be generous with your time, talent, or treasure this week.

THIS WEEK SPECIAL - Our last lesson in this series is titled *Things Happen When We Are Grateful*; it will also take place around Thanksgiving. There is something about food and gratitude that go together. We would like to invite your group to consider planning a bit of an extended lesson for the final week of the series by sharing a Thanksgiving Meal together and sharing the things for which you are grateful. This doesn't have to be turkey and stuffing – pick any theme you want or no theme at all – the important thing is that you take time to be together and share a meal with each other.

WEEK 2 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE SERVE

Acts 6:1-7 and Acts 7:54-60

BOTTOM LINE

Serving leads to seeing

LAST WEEK

LAST WEEK you had the opportunity to focus taking one small step to becoming more generous with your time, talent, or treasure. What did you do? In what small way did you give? What did you experience? Do you see any next steps you might take to continue growing in this area of generosity?

SUMMARY

When we serve, we respond to something we see; we are made aware of a need and we take steps to help meet it. Serving comes from seeing, but it also leads to seeing. When we step out in faith to serve others, we see things. We see needs met, we see lives change, we see transformation. But there are things we don't or can't see taking place as well, at least not right away. We cannot see the spiritual changes that our serving produces in us or in others or how God is moving in and through our acts of service. There are also things that we will see – things we never expected – that we only see later as God reveals some of what He was doing through and in us. This week we'll see each of these dimensions of serving as we look again at the story of Stephen.

CONSIDER THIS

They say hindsight is 20/20. Think of something that you thought was a good idea at the time, that turned out to be not such a great idea in the end. What didn't you see? Think also of something that you thought wasn't so good that, looking back, turned out to be a huge blessing. What didn't you see?

OPEN THE WORD

Read the passages of scripture together and then take some time to observe the text. Identify words and ideas that repeat

and things that stand out to you within the passage. Write down any questions the text may raise in your mind. You may want to divide the two passages within your group.

Background: Our passages today cover the beginning and the end of Stephen's ministry. We see what brought him into ministry and how his ministry ended. In between, Stephen was brought into a dispute that he never looked for and wound up playing a role he never expected.

📖 *Acts 6:1-7 ESV*

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty." ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

📖 *Acts 7:54-60 ESV*

⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.

⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Before moving on to the next session take 2-3 minutes to share some of your observations with each other.

KNOW THE WORD

1. What stands out to you about what you have read and heard so far? What are one or two take-aways?
2. In Acts 6:1-7 what did Stephen see? How did he respond?
3. What does verse 7 tell us specifically was the result of this ministry of service? The cause and effect seem to have no clear connection, how can serving widows result in the effects described in verse 7?
4. In Acts 7:54-60 what specific things happen to Stephen? What did Stephen see? What did no one see at the time was beginning with Stephen's death?

LIVE THE WORD

1. Stephen was chosen for a ministry of service, not a ministry of preaching, but God had other plans. Have you ever stepped into a ministry opportunity expecting one thing and finding you were led in a completely different direction?
2. Stephen's ministry began with a need that he saw. What is one need that you currently see?
3. Stephen's ministry and death set off a chain of events that led to the transformation and ministry of Paul. When you look back on your own story of finding and following Jesus, were there events at work that led to you finding faith that you only can see now?

THIS WEEK

This week our lesson was titled *Things Happen When You Serve*. Serving leads to seeing; when we serve we see ourselves and others differently. Our hope is that you are engaging with your group or with your family in the Be Rich Serving Projects. Wherever you serve, pay attention to what you see.

This Week find some time to reflect on your serving

What you saw . . .

- What needs did you see in the project as a whole? In the individuals you were serving?
- What did you see in yourself? What was/is God stirring in you through this experience?

What you couldn't see . . .

- Pray about what you couldn't/can't see. Pray for spiritual transformation in those you served and in yourself.

What you will see . . .

- Pray for what God might do through your service that you might never see.
- Think about the chain of events that led you to this service project. Why did you choose this project? What led you to this decision?

WEEK 3 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE LOVE

John 13:1-10 and 31-38

BOTTOM LINE

Things happen when we love – and we can always love.

LAST WEEK

Share together what you were able to see when you served. What did you see in others? What did you see in yourself? What connections did you make to things from your past that led you to that act of service?

SUMMARY

The thing about love is that we may never really catch a glimpse of how far it travels. While great acts of love and sacrifice have been well-documented, most of us live in the seemingly mundane, day-to-day routine of life. But these “mundane” and “routine” acts of love carry every bit as much weight – sometimes more.

In one of the last moments before his arrest, Jesus chose a mundane and ordinary act of love to show his disciples what real love truly looks like. Jesus then taught his friends that the world will know they are his disciples by the way they love one another, perhaps especially in the routine, mundane, everyday way that he loved them. We will see what that means for our own lives.

CONSIDER THIS

Who are some people who show you love in simple, ordinary, consistent everyday ways? What are some specific things that they do? What does it mean to you?

OPEN THE WORD

Read the passage of scripture together and then take some time to observe the text. Identify words and ideas that repeat and things that stand out to you within the passage. Write down any questions the text may raise in your mind.

Background: In this passage Jesus is preparing himself and his disciples for his departure. His words and actions are incredibly purposeful. Today we will look at both his actions and his words to his disciples about those actions. You may want to divide these passages between the members of your group.

John 13:1-10

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."

John 13:31-38

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved

you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” ³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

Before moving on to the next session take 2-3 minutes to share some of your observations with each other.

KNOW THE WORD

1. What stands out to you about what you have read and heard so far? What are one or two take-aways?
2. What do you think the disciples’ reaction would have been to Jesus’ actions in verse 3 and his words in verse 33? Do you see a connection?
3. What images may have come to mind for the disciples with Jesus’ use of the phrase, “just as I have loved you”? How does this connect to what happened at dinner? How does it connect to verse 1?
4. Read John 13:6-10 and 36-38. How does Peter respond to Jesus’ words and actions? What do his responses have in common? How does Jesus respond to Peter in each case?

LIVE THE WORD

1. What is more impactful: single extravagant acts of love or the cumulative effect of numerous small acts of love? Can you think of examples of both in your life? If you had to choose only one, which would it be and why?
2. What is the connection between Jesus’ actions in the beginning of this chapter and his words at the end? How could this possibly influence the world?
3. What can we learn from Peter’s reactions to Jesus’ actions and words? What connection do you see between Jesus and Peter’s interactions in this chapter and in chapter 21 verses 15-19?

4. Is there a difference between loving in the mundane, day-to-day routines and loving extravagantly?

THIS WEEK

Things happen when we love, especially when we love consistently in the small day-to-day things. This is the extravagant love of Jesus. We always have an opportunity to love extravagantly by loving in the mundane and the routine.

This week focus on two things:

First, be intentional about discovering the acts of love that are already woven into your day-to-day routines. Be intentional about connecting with Jesus in these things. Consider finding one new way ordinary way to show love to your family, friends, or co-workers. Try to find one specific small act of love that you can weave into your day-to-day routine.

Second, Jesus followed His actions with words. As you look for small acts of love, consider finding simple ways to show love through encouragement as well. Find a small way each day to encourage someone in your day-to-day activities.

Come back next week ready to share what you experience.

THIS WEEK SPECIAL - Make sure that you and your group are ready for your Thanksgiving Meal together next week. Again, it doesn't have to be fancy or involved, the important thing is to take some time to share a meal and be thankful together.

WEEK 4 – THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE'RE GRATEFUL

2 Corinthians 9:5-15

BOTTOM LINE

Giving gets us grateful

LAST WEEK

Open your group time by sharing one thing that each of you is thankful for that happened today. Open with a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

Discuss what you learned and experienced this past week as you engaged with God's Spirit in the areas of gratitude and generosity.

SUMMARY

When we think of generosity, our thoughts are naturally directed towards tangible things. We give of our resources, of our skills and abilities, of our time and energy. There is a less quantifiable product of generosity, however - gratitude. Generosity gives us gratitude. What is perhaps most interesting is that generosity produces gratitude not only in those who receive, but in those who give as well; for when we give generously, we give from God's abundance to us and we encounter His great goodness to us.

CONSIDER THIS

Where/What/Who are the places and people that cause you to feel the safest and the most relaxed? What is it about them? What are the things that these places/things/people bring to your life?

OPEN THE WORD

Read the passage of scripture together and then take some time to observe the text. Identify words and ideas that repeat and things that stand out to you within the passage. Write down any questions the text may raise in your mind.

Background: In this section of Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul is laying out his plans to come and collect a gift that the Corinthian Church had put together for the Church in Judea which was, at that time, suffering with famine. Paul is instructing the church both in his plans to come and collect the gift to take to Jerusalem and in how the Corinthians ought to view their generosity.

📖 *2 Corinthians 9:5-15 ESV*

⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.⁹ As it is written,

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Before moving on to the next session take 2-3 minutes to share some of your observations with each other.

KNOW THE WORD

1. What stands out to you about what you have read and heard so far? What are one or two take-aways?
2. How would you summarize Paul's instructions about giving in verses 5-7?
3. How do verses 8-10 connect to or shed light on verses 5-7?
4. What do verses 11-15 say will be produced in those who receive? In those who give?

LIVE THE WORD

1. What do you make of Paul's charge not to give reluctantly? How should we understand this and how should it direct our giving?
2. Is there anything that you have decided in your heart to give – time, talent, treasure?
3. Generous giving flows from what we have been given. How have you experienced God's generosity in the past year? In what ways has He met your needs, made His grace abound, and enriched your life?
4. As you think of God's generosity and blessing over the last year, how do you want to respond?

THIS WEEK

This week we saw how generosity and thanksgiving continuously reinforce and produce the other. When we are generous, we become grateful because we realize and give out of God's generosity to us. This produces thanksgiving in others and in us as well.

For many of us, this will be the last Small Group meeting of the semester as we shift gears and move into the break of the holiday season. It is interesting that our holiday season begins with Thanksgiving, moves towards receiving the gift of Jesus at Christmas, and closes with celebrating the past year and greeting all the possibilities of the new. This season encapsulates everything we have been learning in this series. As we close out our semester, talk together and think about how we can be intentional about living in both generosity and gratitude throughout this Holiday Season.

LIFEPOINT CHURCH

1701 Emory Road (Route 91)
Reisterstown, MD 21136
410-239-4700 | lifepointchurch.us

