

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE HEART

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OVERVIEW Giving is all about the heart. Joy-filled giving is what God desires from us. Jesus said, “Give and it will be given back to you.” This principle of giving applies to all areas of our life. Genuine gratitude is powerful, and a heart of gratitude is vital for creating a lifestyle of generosity.

CONNECTION

Speed Friending: Give everyone 30 seconds to describe themselves.

QUICK RECAP

Key Scriptures: Luke 6:30–38; Deuteronomy 15:7–10, 14–15

- **Deal with a selfish heart.** The Lord is concerned with our hearts. God does not bless giving, rather, He blesses giving from a right heart attitude. It is true that when we give, we receive; however, that should not be our motivation for giving. We must deal with any selfishness in our hearts.
- **Deal with a grieving heart.** We shouldn't give and then grieve over that decision. Selfishness attacks us before we give, and grief attacks us after we give. If we realize that we are simply stewards, and everything belongs to the Lord anyway, we will have a correct perspective.
- **Develop a generous heart.** God said He wants us to not just give but to be generous. The first time we are born in the natural, we are born selfish. When we are born again, we are born generous. God wants us to be generous like He is generous.
- **Develop a grateful heart.** If we allow God to remind us every now and then that we were once slaves (Deuteronomy 15:15) and that everything we have is by His grace, it will help us to be grateful. All we have is the Lord's, and we can be more generous when we are grateful.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What does having a heart of gratitude mean to you?

2. What have you been taught in the past about giving? Did these teachings have a positive or negative affect on you? Explain.

3. Why do you think we sometimes struggle with selfishness before we give and grief after we give? Can you think of a time you struggled with either selfishness or grief when giving? What are some practical ways we can work through those initial heart struggles and choose generosity with a grateful heart?

4. Why does God want us to give from a heart of gratitude? What is an example of giving from a right heart attitude versus a wrong heart attitude? What are the results of both?

5. Giving with a generous heart is not limited to money. What are some of the many ways we can give that are not monetary? What are some ways you can participate in the “Now Is The Time” campaign?

6. We can give of our treasure, time, and talents. How does the way we spend our time, give of our treasure, and use our talents show where our heart is? In which of these areas are you the most generous?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week, take time to really think about and honestly reflect upon having a heart of gratitude in these three areas of your life: treasure, time, and talent. As you think seriously about these things, journal your responses to these questions:

- **Treasure** When you have extra money, where does it usually go? If you were to look at all the places your money goes, what would it say about where your heart is?
- **Time** Where do you spend the most time? Are there areas of your life where you spend too much time? Are there important things in your life where you don't give enough time (time with God, time with family, time investing in relationships)? If you were to look at where the time in your week goes, what would it say about your priorities?
- **Talent** Write in your journal the gifts and talents God has given you that you are grateful for. Now, how often are you using the gifts and talents God has given you? Are you using them to build God's kingdom, are you using them for selfish reasons, or are you not using them at all?