



## STUDY GUIDE

**2 Corinthians 8:16-24, Acts 5:1-5**

*“Leaning In, In the Sight of God”*

Pastor Patrick Bowler

11-5-2023

### Consult the Scriptures:

**2 Corinthians 8:16-24**

**Acts 5:1-5 (see also Acts 4:32-37, cf. 2:42-47)**

*(Other Scripture referenced: e.g., Gen. 4 [Cain and Abel], 1 Sam. 13 [King Saul], Acts 8 [Simon the Magician], Acts 5 [Ananias and Sapphira] Is. 1:11-14, 29:13; Micah 6:7-8; 1 Sam. 15:22; Heb. 4:13; Ps. 51:6; Matt. 23:27-28; Prov. 1:7, 8:13, 10:27, 15:16, 19:23, 23:17; 2 Cor. 2:17, 4:1-2, 7:2, 11:7-11, 12:14-18)*

### Consult the Scholars:

#### *The King, the Carrot, and the Horse*

*“Once upon a time, a very poor carrot farmer lived on a small farm in rural England. During one harvesting season, he unearthed the largest carrot he had ever seen. He thought, ‘Now that is a carrot that befits a king.’ So he traveled to the king’s palace, obtained an audience, [and] laid the carrot joyfully at the king’s feet. ‘Oh king,’ he said, ‘you have always been such a wonderful, fair and gracious king to me, and I love you very much. As a token of my love for you, I want you to have this carrot. It is a gift which you truly deserve.” The king, touched by the man’s simple offering, responded, ‘Thank you for this gift. I happen to own the farmland that surrounds your farm and I would like to give you the land as a gift. Please know that it also is a small token of the affection that I have for you, my son.”*

*One of the king's noblemen, standing in the court that day, thought, 'Wow! If the king would give all that farmland in response to a carrot, imagine what he would give for a real gift!' So the nobleman went that night and found the most majestic horse he'd ever seen and brought it to the king the next day. The crafty nobleman said, 'King, you are a wonderful and worthy king. As a token of my love for you, I want you to have this horse as a gift.'*

*The king, being very wise, saw through the ruse, and said to the nobleman, 'Yesterday the poor man was giving the carrot to me. But today, you are giving the horse to yourself.'"<sup>1</sup>*

## **Discuss:**

### ***Related to your personal devotional time during *Leaning In*—***

1. Is there anything you might want to share related to your time in prayer this week (see *Prayer Journal* in the *Leaning In* booklet)?
2. Is there anything you might want to share from working through the *Devotional Journal* provided at one of the Vision Dinners (Note: copies can be found in the *Leaning In* booth)?

### ***Related to this week's sermon during *Leaning In*—***

1. Is it possible for two people to do the same thing for two very different reasons? Why or why not? Can you think of any examples? Now, how might this relate to the matter of generosity?
2. Read the story of ***The King, the Carrot, and the Horse*** and discuss. Related to motive, i.e., matters of the heart, what are the differences between the two men in the story and how might it relate to our generosity through *Leaning In*?
3. Read Acts 5:1-5 and discuss (see also Acts 4:32-37). What stands out for you in this story? What does this text primarily teach us? What place does the fear of the Lord have in our personal walk with Christ, but also in our journey together as a church, i.e., a community of faith?

---

<sup>1</sup> (1) J.D. Greear, *Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), p. 35, 36 (See endnote #6 on p. 258 re: Spurgeon citation; as well, notes that D. Martin-Lloyd Jones told the story as well). Story also appears here, (2) Tim Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (New York, NY: The Penguin Group, 2008), p. 60-62.

4. Read 2 Cor. 8:16-24 and discuss. What stands out to you in this passage? Related to their own generosity initiative, what does Paul mean when he says, "*We aim at what is honorable?*" What examples can you identify in the text that serve as a proof?
5. Next week is ***Commitment Sunday*** (Nov. 12). This is the day where we all come together and make our commitments, showing our "*readiness*" (2 Co. 8:12). As a group, read the "*Generosity Pathway*" in the *Leaning In* booklet and discuss. What stands out to you? What challenges you? Where are you on this "*pathway?*"
6. What is on your heart and mind as you prepare for Commitment Sunday?
7. The title for this week's sermon was "*Leaning In, In the Sight of God.*" How do we know we are doing something (whatever that thing is) "in the sight of God?" Why do this matter?
8. What immediate applications can be made following this week's sermon? What questions do you still have?