

BiG IDEA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small groups that focus on the Big Idea for the week can use this guide to apply the message to life and take action. Feel free to use whatever parts of this guide best fit your group personality and time frame. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

3.21/22.09 // WHY DO WE DO THAT? GIVING

BiG iDEA: Giving is for honoring, partnering with, and demonstrating our trust in God.

// Ice Breaker _____

Option 1: What is the best gift you ever gave someone? How did it make you feel when you presented that gift?

Option 2: What is the last gift you gave out of "obligation"? How did it make you feel when you presented that gift?

// Questions for Discussion _____

1 Money is a tense topic to discuss. Yet Jesus talked more about money and material possessions more than anything else. He knew this was a big deal, and a big problem. What are some ways people end up making money an idol in competition with God?

Matthew 6:24

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

2 How much faith do you have that your employer will pay you at the end of the week? How certain are you that you will have your job next month? What would your next job be if money were not an issue?

3 This economy presents us with a challenge. Will we pull inward, and view God as a luxury item in our budget that can easily be cut, or will we be forced to look at the instability and insecurity of money, and put our full trust in God? What might God be trying to make teach us during times when he withholds financial prosperity?

4 When you were a child you were probably taught (or forced) to share with a sibling. How did this make you feel as the giver? How did you feel when your sibling was made to share with you?

5 Under the Old Law of Moses, everyone had to give at least 10%. The Pharisees tithed, but it was out of mere obligation. How does Jesus bring out the idea of giving being a "heart" thing?

Luke 11:42

"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone."

6 What do you think it means that Jesus became "poor"? What do you think it means that we become "rich"?

2 Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

7 The New Testament does not give a specific percentage to give, but it does say we should give proportionally. How much would you say that is?

2 Corinthians 8:12

"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."

1 Corinthians 16:2

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."

Luke 21:1-4

1 As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2 He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 3 "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. 4 All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

8 If it's true that most American Christians give 2.5% of their income to God's work, why do you think they do not tithe? Is it personal? Theological? Sinful? Lack of understanding?

9 Many of us tithe once everything else has been taken care of. Read Matthew 6:33 and discuss how this verse might change that way of thinking. Read some of the preceding verses in Matthew 6, what are "all these things"?

Matthew 6:33

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"

10 Would you agree that God would rather that you give nothing, than to give out of mere obligation?

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

11 If you've ever dropped money in a one of those red kettles with a person ringing a bell or wrote a check to a charitable organization, how did that make you feel? Do you feel like you are really making a difference in someone's life or is it a simple act of charity?

12 What are some of the blessings of being a generous giver? What does it do for the giver?

**13 What are some ways that God can bless you, other than monetary? For example:
...a new job...a surprise raise or bonus...unexpected insurance checks or refunds...making that old car last 5 more years...maybe your roof won't leak...maybe the scholarship will be renewed...He may just make you content with less than before...maybe keeping your from losing an important account...not being be passed over unfairly for a promotion...not getting bumped off the schedule for overtime...fewer people shorfing you on tips...relationships... opportunities... expanded territories... and God's hand of favor on your life.**

// Application_____

Read and commit to memory 2 Corinthians 8:7

But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

If you're not currently worshipping God through tithing, the challenge for you is to begin.

Try it for 10 weeks...do it from the heart, and see what happens.

If you have to start incrementally...increase your giving by 1 or 2%, until you reach 10%.

If you've just been giving out of obligation, say, "God, this is a gift of love."

// Prayer_____

Pray that you will trust God to be true to His word to bless you.

Pray that God's work will be fully funded.

Pray that this country seeks God's kingdom as the answer to the economy