

THE BIG GIVE

Group Discussion Guide // Week 1

WARM-UP

1. What are some traditions your family has around the holidays?
 2. What's your favorite Christmas movie and why?
 3. Are the holidays a good or difficult time for you and your family? Why?
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TRUTH

Read Acts 20:32-35

As the decorations go up and the Christmas playlists begin, you'll likely find yourself singing these familiar words, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!" The joy that Jesus brings is far more than a fuzzy feeling. One of the ways that followers of Jesus share in his joy is generosity. But this means much more than just buying gifts at Christmas time for family and friends; it means living life with a posture of generosity all the time. The Bible shows us how our joy is directly connected with our willingness to be generous.

Give Because You're Already Rich

"And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 2:32)

The reason that followers of Jesus can give sacrificially in this life, is because they're guaranteed eternal treasure. What can often keep us from giving is the belief that what we're able to gain in this life is all there is, so why give any money away? If we store up treasure for ourselves in this life, it will rot and rust. If we recognize that there is treasure that God has already given us by his grace, we're free to be generous.

- ▶ Read Matthew 6:19-21. How are our hearts affected by what we do with our money?

Give to Combat Covetousness

"I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel." (Acts 20:33)

Nothing steals joy faster than covetousness. When we covet we're essentially saying, "I'll only be happy when I have [fill in the blank]." Not only does covetousness make us hold our money with an iron grip, but it places joy out in some other future situation. Generosity, on the other hand, gives us joy here and now. The Greek word for "blessing" also means "happy," so Jesus says that, when we're generous we're happy right there and then.

- ▶ What are some things that are highly coveted in our culture?

GRACE

Give Because Jesus Gave

"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

Jesus lived out his own words. His life was characterized by generosity, constantly serving those in need. His death was an act of generosity, saving those in need. Hebrews 12:2 tells us why he was willing to make such sacrifices – it was for "the joy set before him." We are the recipients of the generosity of Jesus. May we live lives that take their cue from this man who saw amazing joy in giving.

CHANGE

Generosity will not always be easy, convenient, or without sacrifice. But it will always be a joy. Paul encouraged his friends to live with this mindset, and his words ought to move us to change too.

- ▶ What things do you have a tendency to covet? How can you battle that tendency?
- ▶ What has giving looked like in your past? How would you like it to look in your future?
- ▶ Are there any changes you need to make in your life to participate in the joy of giving?
- ▶ How does the generosity of Jesus change your view of giving?

PRAYER

- ▶ Pray for courage to take Jesus' words to heart and be a generous people.