



IGNITE
FAITH | FAMILY | FUTURE

Small Group Study

Plastic Donuts
By Jeff Anderson

Session 2 - The Amount Matters/No Rules

Before the lesson, read Chapters 3 and 4

Opening Discussion

Think of a time you gave a gift that was joyfully received. What thought and sacrifice went into the gift? How did you feel as they received it?

Group Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Bless us with your truth and understanding. Teach us to be sacrificial as you have been sacrificial for us.

The Amount Matters

Reflection on Reading

Why was the plastic donut gift not the same when it came from Jeff's seven-year-old son?

Refresh your memory on pg. 36-37 on John and Amy. Why was Amy upset? What did John fail to understand?

Does the amount of the gift we give to God really matter? Explain.

Read 2 Samuel 24:20-25 - [20] And when Araunah (uh-RAW-nuh) looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. [21] And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people." [22] Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. [23] All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you." [24] But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. [25] And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.

Why did David demand to pay full price?

Can you give without sacrificing? Can you sacrifice without giving?

Where are places (or what are things) you spend money without thinking?

Think about how you calculate monthly expenses. Does your lifestyle influence your giving, or does your giving influence your lifestyle?

Why is it important that our generosity be sacrificial?

There are No Rules

Reflection on Reading:

How have you determined how much to give to the Lord in the past? Where did that standard come from?

What would the advantages and disadvantages be of a one-size-fits-all standard for giving to God?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:7 - *[7] Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Read Exodus 25:2 - *[2] Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.*

When has your heart been prompted to give?

What was it about the gift that connected with your heart? (pg. 41) (*doesn't have to be church*)

Read Luke 19:5-10 - [5] *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."* [6] *So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.* [7] *And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."* [8] *And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."* [9] *And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.* [10] *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

How did Jesus react to Zacchaeus decision?

Closing Discussion

What does a meaningful gift from someone tell you? How do you feel after receiving it?

God says, "You determine the amount--not Me." How does this challenge previous ideas of giving to God?

Why would God allow us to choose the amount?

When have you followed a prompting of God to be generous? How did it cause you to experience joy?

Recap

Extra Resources for Future Study

Read Deuteronomy 16:16-17

God is telling the people there is no strict rule on how much they must give to Him. They are to give as they have been blessed by God! What has God given to you that you are thankful for? Where are places in your life you may fail to recognize the gifts of God?

Read Matthew 6:21

How does our allocation of treasure indicate the prompting of our heart? Another way to think of it: "If someone was given your monthly bank statements, what would they believe is most important in your life?"

How do we connect our heart to God and His Mission?

C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc, is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them."

What does this quote mean for your life and generosity?