



**IGNITE**  
FAITH | FAMILY | FUTURE

## **Small Group Study**

*Plastic Donuts*  
By Jeff Anderson

## Session 3 - 2% Perspective/Because I can

Before the lesson, read Chapters 5 and 6

### Group Prayer

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Give us courage to trust in You, not just in word, but in action.*

### Opening Discussion

Have you heard about the tithe, which is giving 10% of your income? If so, what are your thoughts on the tithe?

Americans give about 2% of their income to the Church or charitable organizations. Does this statistic surprise you?

### Reflections on Reading

Why is viewing the tithe as a requirement dangerous for our faith?

How do you view the tithe in light of reading 2 Corinthians 9:7, Luke 19:5-10, and Exodus 25:2 last week? (Pg. 7-8 in booklet)

If God requires us to give based on our relationship with him, and not by an across-the-board giving standard like 10%, how does that make you feel? Unsettled? Nervous? Excited? Challenged?

**Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2** - [1] Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. [2] On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Why is it important to plan your giving, both how much and how often?

**Read 2 Corinthians 8:11-12** - [11] So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. [12] For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

What does it mean to give an acceptable gift in light of the reading?

How do you determine the amount of your gift?

**Read Mark 12:41-44** - [41] And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. [42] And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. [43] And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. [44] For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

How could the widow have put in more than everyone else when she gave less than everyone else? How does her giving stretch your idea of "giving an acceptable amount?"

Why was Jesus pleased with her gift?

## Because I Can

**Read Exodus 35:20-21, 29; 36:3-7** - [20] Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. [21] And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments.... [29] All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD....[3] And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, [4] so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task that he was doing, [5] and said to Moses, "The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do." [6] So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, "Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing, [7] for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more.

**Read Phil 4:18** - [18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus (ee-paf-ro-DAI-tuhs) the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Imagine Trinity collected "too much money", paid off our mortgage, and we were able to use our yearly mortgage of \$300k for God's ministry. How could that money further God's mission? If the newspaper wrote a story about the generosity of Trinity, what would the headline read?

**2 Corinthians 8:13-15** - [13] *For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness [14] your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. [15] As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."*

How could Trinity further God's mission in Michiana and beyond if everyone gave according to the ability that God gave them? What would this look like?

## **Discussion**

Have you ever looked back and seen a missed opportunity to be generous? What would you do differently?

What if we've made poor financial choices in the past which affect our ability to give now? Or current circumstances have affected our ability to give?

**Read 1 Kings 17:7-16** - [7] *And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. [8] Then the word of the LORD came to him, [9] "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." [10] So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." [11] And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." [12] And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And*

*now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” [13] And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. [14] For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’” [15] And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. [16] The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.*

How can this reading comfort you in a difficult financial situation?

Is there a time when you were in a difficult situation and God provided?

Is there a way our Trinity family could support our people who truly can't give as much as their heart desires?

As we draw closer to making our Ignite commitments, let us be thankful and consider all God has given us, and praise Him for the ability to give back to Him and our neighbor! How do you plan to prepare for your commitment? Share ideas with the group.

## **Extra Resources for future studies**

Work this week on developing a plan for giving. If you are married and/or have children, discuss it as a family.

Think of how generosity was modeled for you as you grew up. What impact did it have on you? Who looks up to you for a model of generosity?

How is giving an act of worship? How can giving engage your heart in worship?

### **Read Acts 11:29**

How can this verse inform how you plan your generosity?

### **Acts 2:43-45**

How were everyone's needs met?

How can we help meet the needs of others in our community of faith?