

Leader Copy

## **“GIVE”**

*[Please remember to forward your group attendance to the church office!]*

Ice Breaker (Target time: 10 minutes – Allow time for new introductions)

Have you ever received an unexpected gift from someone at the time you needed it most? How did it happen?

Centering on Jesus' Presence (Target time: 5 minutes)

*[Ask the group to close their eyes and focus on God's blessings. Then, after a moment, read Psalm 112 aloud and ask them to make it the group's prayer.]*

Psalm 112

Applying the Scriptures (Target time: 40 minutes)

*[Play the DVD...Session V...GIVE...5 minutes]*

Read Matthew 6.2-4.

Jesus said that, when giving to the needy, “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret.” Why did He give this instruction? *[Leader: Jesus said that hypocrites announce their giving “with trumpets...to be honored by me.” Giving isn't about earning favor with either other people or God; it's about responding to what God has already given us in Jesus!]*

From a practical standpoint, who are the “needy” among and around us today? What are the most effective ways for individual Christians to “give to the needy” in today's society? *[Open Discussion]*

How should a congregation identify and minister to the needy in its community? How could our congregation do this in practical and effective ways? *[Open Discussion]*

Read Matthew 6.19-33.

Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and money.” How can money become the master of our lives? *[Open Discussion]*  
How can we prevent money from becoming our master? *[Leader: Only by God’s grace are we able to master money...its power is so great that Jesus talked about it more than almost any other subject in the New Testament.]*

Immediately following this statement, Jesus urged His followers not to worry. What point do you think Jesus was trying make? *[Leader: People tend to look for security in money, when security is found only in God.]*

Jesus ends this discussion by saying, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” What did Jesus mean by this statement, and what are the practical implications for our daily lives? *[Open Discussion]*

Read Malachi 3.6-12.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew people were commanded to offer one-tenth of their income to God through giving to the common Temple treasury in their capital. While the New Testament does not demand that Christians give this amount to their local church, it does not prohibit the practice; indeed, many followers of Christ have used the “tithes” (“tenth”) as a guide in giving. How can regular and generous giving to a local church’s ministry help us grow into the likeness of Christ? How can it help a local church carry out its mission to the needy? *[Open Discussion]*

Read Ephesians 4.11-16.

Followers of Christ are called to give more than just money to a local church. Christians are called to offer their gifts for ministry, and they are called to exercise those gifts with other Christians as a team (or as the “Body of Christ,” as the New Testament calls the Church). How can we discover our spiritual gifts? *[Leader: One way (among others) is to take a Spiritual Gifts Inventory, such as the one linked to our congregation’s website.]*

How does gathering together in a small group help followers of Jesus discover our spiritual gifts and our ministry calling? How does it help us trust God more fully through our financial giving? *[Leader: The insights of trusted Christian friends who know us can guide us in discovering our spiritual gifts and in confirming our inner calls to ministry. Listening to others talk about their experience in trusting God through giving strengthens our own confidence and hope as we give faithfully and sacrificially.]*

Take a few moments of silent prayer and ask God's leading on this question: "Are you calling me to use my gifts for ministry in specific ways? Are there ministry needs that you are calling me to meet with my gifts, or is there a ministry project you are calling me to lead as a team member? Are you calling me to trust you more fully through my financial giving to Your Church?"

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Prayer time:

\* How can we specifically pray for God's will to be done in our individual lives and in the life of our congregation? *[Leader: You may want to ask a group member to offer a prayer after a time of sharing, invite others to offer a sentence prayer for specific concerns, and then personally close in prayer.]*

Vision Moments (Target time: 5 minutes)
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*[Again, ask participants who are not currently part of a small group if they would be interested in starting or joining an ongoing group at the end of this series. Try to obtain definite and detailed information from each participant with regard to level of interest in a small group, availability of times to attend a group, and availability to lead/host a group. Be sure that church brochures/information is offered to everyone, both for personal use AND for distribution to others!]*