

gracepoint

A M E T H O D I S T C H U R C H

Homegroup material

GIVING
IS
LIVING

GARY RIVAS | 20TH NOVEMBER 2011 | gracepoint

i. Introductory Discussion Questions

1. What stood out for you most about the “Giving is Living” sermon?
2. In your understanding, what is a Biblical perspective on money and giving?
3. Do you feel like you are a giver? Why or why not?

ii. Some have the attitude of the rich young ruler

1. Read the account of the rich young ruler in Mark 10 vs 17-22 below. This man felt that he was a good person and follower of God and that His finances had nothing to do with his faith. We are often tempted to separate our finances from our faith. Do you think this is possible? Why or why not?

- **Mark 10 vs 17-22:**

“And when He had gone out into the way, one came running up and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except one, God. You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honour your father and your mother. And he answered and said to Him, Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth. Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him and said to him, One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have and give it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven. And come, take up the cross and follow Me. And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.”

2. In the end, the rich young ruler chose money over God. Are there any ways in which you might be doing this at present?
3. Why do you think that the Bible says that the love of money “is the root of all kinds of evil”? (1 Timothy 6 vs 10).

iii. Some have the attitude of Judas

1. Judas had an attitude of conditional giving. Read the following account from John 12 vs 3-6 below:

- **John 12 vs 3-6:**

"Then Mary took a whole pint of a very expensive perfume made of pure nard, poured it on Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The sweet smell of the perfume filled the whole house. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot---the one who was going to betray him---said, "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. He carried the money bag and would help himself from it."

2. Why do you think we are often tempted to be conditional givers – i.e. to want only to give when we have control over where the money will be spent, or a say in how it is distributed?
3. How do you think we can come to a place of unconditional surrender, and therefore, unconditional giving to God?

IV. Some have the attitude of Ananias and Sapphira

1. Ananias and Sapphira decided to sell their land and give the proceeds to the early church, but between the decision and the implementation, they became greedy or insecure and ended up keeping some of the money from the sale back for themselves... and then lying about it. Read their story in Acts 5 vs 1-10 below:

- **Acts 5 vs 1-10:**

"But there was a man named Ananias, who with his wife Sapphira sold some property that belonged to them. But with his wife's agreement he kept part of the money for himself and turned the rest over to the apostles. Peter said to him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan take control of you and make you lie to the Holy Spirit by keeping part of the money you received for the property? Before you sold the property, it belonged to you; and after you sold it, the money was yours. Why, then, did you decide to do such a thing? You have not lied to people---you have lied to God!" As soon as Ananias heard this, he fell down dead; and all who heard about it were terrified. The young men came in, wrapped up his body, carried him out, and buried him. About three hours later his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in. Peter asked her, "Tell me, was this the full amount you and your husband received for your property?" "Yes," she answered, "the full amount." So Peter said to her, "Why did you and your husband decide to put the Lord's Spirit to the test? The men who buried your husband are at the door right now, and

they will carry you out too!" At once she fell down at his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband."

2. Why do you think it is often so difficult for us to have faith in the area of finances?
3. Read Jesus' teaching about money in Luke 12 below. What does it reveal to you about finances and about faith?

- **Luke 12 vs 15-34:**

"And he went on to say to them all, "Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because your true life is not made up of the things you own, no matter how rich you may be." Then Jesus told them this parable: "There was once a rich man who had land which bore good crops. He began to think to himself, 'I don't have a place to keep all my crops. What can I do? This is what I will do,' he told himself; 'I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, where I will store the grain and all my other goods. Then I will say to myself, Lucky man! You have all the good things you need for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself !' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night you will have to give up your life; then who will get all these things you have kept for yourself ? ' " And Jesus concluded, "This is how it is with those who pile up riches for themselves but are not rich in God's sight." Then Jesus said to the disciples, "And so I tell you not to worry about the food you need to stay alive or about the clothes you need for your body. Life is much more important than food, and the body much more important than clothes. Look at the crows: they don't plant seeds or gather a harvest; they don't have storage rooms or barns; God feeds them! You are worth so much more than birds! Can any of you live a bit longer by worrying about it? If you can't manage even such a small thing, why worry about the other things? Look how the wild flowers grow: they don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. It is God who clothes the wild grass---grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, burned up in the oven. Won't he be all the more sure to clothe you? What little faith you have! "So don't be all upset, always concerned about what you will eat and drink. (For the pagans of this world are always concerned about all these things.) Your Father knows that you need these things. Instead, be concerned with his Kingdom, and he will provide you with these things. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom. Sell all your belongings and give the money to the poor. Provide for yourselves purses that don't wear out, and save your riches in heaven, where they will never decrease, because no thief can get to them, and no moth can destroy them. For your heart will always be where your riches are."

V. Some have the attitude of Barnabas

1. Barnabas had the attitude of simplicity. He sold what he didn't need and gave it to those who needed it more (See Acts 4 vs 36-37). Would you say that you are living a simple life at present when it comes to finances and possessions? Why or why not?
2. How do you think we can determine how much is really enough?
3. What excess stuff do you have right now that you need to give away?
4. Read Jesus' teaching in Luke 3 vs 9-11. What does this teaching reveal about what Christian generosity should be like?

- Luke 3 vs 9-11:

"And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answered and said to them, He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. And he who has food, let him do likewise."

VI. Some have the attitude of David

1. Read the account of David's sacrifice in 2 Samuel 24 vs 21-25.

- 2 Samuel 24 vs 21-25:

"And Araunah said, Why has my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, so that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said to David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Behold, oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments, and instruments of the oxen for wood. All these Araunah, like a king, gave to the king. And Araunah said to the king, May the LORD your God accept you. And the king said to Araunah, No, but I will surely buy from you at a price. And I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God of that which costs me nothing. And David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."

2. David was unwilling to make an offering to God that did not personally cost him anything. He understood sacrificial giving. Does your faith cost you anything at present?

3. What do you think it means to give sacrificially?

“True love is to give... to give... until it hurts.” – Mama Maggie Gobran

4. Why do you think God wants us to give in this way?

Vii. Some have the attitude of Tabitha

1. Tabitha was an entrepreneur who ensured that her resources and resourcefulness impacted those who needed it most. We live in a place in which the need around us is extremely evident. How do you think we can remain open towards the needy and not allow ourselves to become jaded?

- **Acts 9 vs 36:**

“In Joppa there was a woman named Tabitha, who was a believer. (Her name in Greek is Dorcas, meaning "a deer.") She spent all her time doing good and helping the poor.”

2. How do you think we can cultivate more generous spirits?
3. What is one way in which you can practically use your resources to help others this week?

Viii. Call to action

1. What will we do with what we have discovered in this session?
2. How will we hold each other accountable to this?