



Week One – “Trust”
February 5, 2023

Opening Discussion

If you think about it, the commission Jesus gave the church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them AND teaching them to obey *everything* he commanded us, is rather, uhm, ambitious. Not just when you think about how big the world is. But also, when you think about how much growth *you* still require when it comes to obeying *everything* Jesus commanded us. The truth is that our entire lives are to be lives of transformation and growth as we continually redeem the sinful parts of our lives to obey Jesus and become more like him.

- How do you feel like God has grown you as a disciple?
- How do you believe that you are still being transformed?
- When is our growth process supposed to end?

BIG IDEA 1: SOME OF OUR MONEY PRACTICES ARE SINFUL, BUT THEY ARE REDEEMABLE

Romans 6:3-14

Some of our money practices are sinful, but they are redeemable. This may sound like a strong statement; but for us to be transformed in our giving so that we may be more like God, we must first recognize that there may be ways we handle our money that are not honoring to God. When the Apostle Paul talks about “offering every part of ourselves to God as an instrument of righteousness,” this should be reflected in our finances as well. Are we honoring God with our spending decisions? With our saving decisions? With our giving decisions? This passage reminds us that just as Christ died and was raised again, we too can be redeemed from our sinful ways.

- As you read this passage and think about a growth step that God wants you to take when it comes to your finances, what area comes to mind (please be honest)? What transformation do you need to ask God to make in you as you learn to obey everything Jesus commanded us?

BIG IDEA 2: WHEN WE ARE NEW IN CHRIST, WE NO LONGER LIVE FOR OURSELVES; WE LIVE FOR HIM

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

When we are new in Christ, we no longer live for ourselves; we are a new creation that lives for Him. There is hope in this truth, as well as challenge. We desire and aspire to live for God. But if we really embrace that, then it means that we can no longer live for ourselves. When it comes to your finances, are you living for God, or are you living for yourself? If Christ's love truly compels us, we want to respond according in our devotion to him. Falling more in love with him makes us more generous.

- What's the relationship between your finances and living for him who died for us?
- What's the relationship between your finances and being Christ's ambassadors?
- If you were to make a significant financial commitment through the NEXT initiative, how would that transform and change other things that you currently spend your money on? What would that do to your budget?

BIG IDEA 3: GOD CALLS US TO THINGS WE CANNOT YET SEE

Genesis 12:1-3

God called Abraham to a life he could not yet see – to a path that was not yet known. God was asking Abraham to trust Him. If Abraham trusted and obeyed, he would be blessed. But the blessings were not for him to hoard. God blesses people so that they can become a blessing to others. We were never designed to be the terminus of God's blessings, but distributors of God's blessings. God blesses us in order to bless others.

- What's the hardest part about submitting to whatever God calls you to do?
- What would change inside of you if you viewed the purpose of God's blessings the way God does?

Closing Discussion

- Have you begun to ask God what he wants your generosity level to be over the next year? What has that been like?
- Do you agree that a person's generosity is linked to the size of their trust in God? Why or why not?

What's Next?

- Next week: NEXT Q&A Nights at Hope Church, February 13 – 16, 6:30pm
- Commitment Sunday: February 26



Week Two – “Multiply”
Q&A Nights, February 13 – 16, 2023

This week, all Hope Groups are invited to meet at Hope Church for a Q&A conversation about NEXT. Anyone who is not in a Group is also invited to attend any evening. We are meeting at 6:30pm Monday – Thursday, with childcare available on Tuesday evening.

Discussion Questions:

1. Jesus said that “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” If an impartial third party could see every detail of your finances, what would they conclude about your heart?
2. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul couldn’t talk about generosity without talking about grace. Why? What’s the connection?
3. “NEXT” is a season to seek God’s will for your generosity, and then deciding to give that much. Have you begun to do this yet? What is the experience like?



Week Three – “Sacrifice”
February 19, 2023

Opening Discussion

- What is something you would say you have sacrificed? What did you sacrifice it for? Was your sacrifice made from joy or out of resentment?
- What is something in your life that would be very difficult for you to sacrifice?
- Have you ever been changed by a sacrifice that someone made for you? What about a sacrifice that you made for someone else?

BIG IDEA 1: GIVE FROM WHAT YOU HAVE

Exodus 35:20-29; 36:4-7

The remarkable thing in this passage is the multitude of different types of stored assets that were given for the construction of the tabernacle – jewelry, garments, anointing oil, etc. Whatever each person had to offer, they gave. So much so, that Moses had to stop the giving because it was too much!

For many people, the first objection to generosity is to say that we can’t give because we don’t have enough. “If I had more money, then I would give more.” But the same people would never say, “If I had more money, then I would buy groceries.” When something is essential, you figure out how to make your resources work. Do you see your giving as something optional rather than critical? Is it an equal priority with other needs in your finances? The Israelites are an example of materially giving from whatever you have. What do you have, and are you giving it?

- Take money off the table for a minute. Think about the other resources that you have in your possession – your home, your clothes, your electronics, your season tickets, your transportation... Do you honor God with those resources? Do you lend your car anytime someone is without? Share what you have freely? What about the stored assets in your possession (stocks, bonds, boats, a cottage, savings)? How are you honoring the Lord with what you have?

BIG IDEA 2: DON'T GIVE SOMETHING THAT COSTS NOTHING

2 Samuel 24:18-24

As David is building this altar for the Lord, he knows that the sacrifice won't mean anything (and won't even be a sacrifice by definition) if it doesn't cost him something. He knows that it won't be honoring to the Lord. When we give to the Lord, only we know whether it is a sacrifice or not. A person can give a very large amount to the church, but it is not honoring to God if it didn't really cost them much. God wants us to give in a way that changes us, in a way that honors him with giving up part of us. Yes, this is bold and radical. But that's what he's asking of us. He is asking us to truly care about our purposes less and to care about His purposes more.

- What would it take in order for you to give sacrificially? What is holding you back?

BIG IDEA 3: SACRIFICE IS MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE WITHHOLDING RATHER THAN WHAT YOU ARE GIVING

Mark 12:41-44

Sacrifice is more about what you're not giving rather than what you are giving. Jesus draws our attention to the widow not because of what she gave. He drew our attention to it because of what she withheld. She withheld nothing. That doesn't mean we're supposed to give all that we have. That's not the point. But we are supposed to honor God with all that we have. Is God honored by what you give AND by what you withhold?

- "Generosity isn't measured in quantity, but in what it costs." What does this statement mean to you?
- If your level of giving doesn't cost you some luxuries, possessions, or experiences, do you think it could be considered "generous"?

BIG IDEA 4: SACRIFICE REQUIRES DYING TO SELF

2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-18

A lifestyle of generosity is at odds with the modern worldview. The modern worldview encourages us to take as much as we can for ourselves because all there is to life is this life. But Paul shares, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." There is an eternal glory coming. You can't change anything in your past about how you used to handle money. But you can handle it differently today.

- Some choices we make are large, and others are small. There may be a large choice that you've made in your past that you need to revisit or reverse having to do with a home

purchase, a car purchase, or some type of investment purchase. Is there something you feel is preventing you from having true, sacrificial giving?

- Other choices are smaller and yet their impact over time can make a large difference. Things like choosing not to go out to eat as often, not purchasing new clothes for a period of time, or choosing to make other spending allocations in a more judicious way are all things that can reflect our choice for our giving to be sacrificial. List some of the smaller choices that will make a sacrificial difference in your giving.

Exercise and Reflection to do at home prior to Commitment Sunday:

- List out the financial commitments that you currently have – those that go beyond a one-time payment but that have a time duration to them. Examples would be a home mortgage, a lease agreement, a car loan, a cell phone contract, your child's tuition for school, your own tuition for school, etc.
- Now write out the commitment you are planning to make for the NEXT initiative. Where does it fall in the priority of these other commitments? Do you need to change or modify one or more of these other commitments to fulfill your NEXT commitment? What if you wanted to raise your NEXT commitment? What would that require? Is there a financial commitment you currently have that appears to be prioritized above your ability to make a truly surrendered giving commitment to help move God's mission forward?
- If someone who didn't know you looked at your financial commitments, what would they say that you value?
- If you keep your commitment over the next 12 months, what type of spiritual growth might that cause in you?
- Pray over your commitment as you prepare to give your commitment to God on Commitment Sunday.



**Week Four – “Commitment”
February 26, 2023**

Opening Discussion

Making a commitment means that your decision becomes the priority. To make a commitment to financial giving, you must make it the priority.

- Who is the most “committed” person you know? To what are they committed?
- What does commitment mean to you? To what are you committed?
- When has a commitment cost you something? Can something be a commitment if it doesn’t cost you something?

BIG IDEA 1: COMMITMENT REQUIRES FOCUS

2 Timothy 4:6-8

Commitment requires focus. To honor your generosity commitment, it will require you to forsake other pursuits. You might be tempted to turn away. Because your commitment is not a legal document and has no collateral like a home or other possession tied to it, you will feel as though you can ‘let it go’ when hard times come. But this commitment to God is bigger than a legal commitment. This is not a commitment you are making to Hope Church as much as it is a commitment to do what you believe God is calling you to do. Keeping your word will require changing things around a little bit, doing things on God’s time instead of your own. It will feel different, and it will require unashamed, unwavering commitment to God who has called you to give in this way. So stand firm, and know that he is God. He wants to take you to the next stage in your generosity and do a transformative work in you.

- What makes you nervous as you think about a 12-month commitment to generosity?
- What obstacles might be in your future? When they arise, how will you overcome them?

BIG IDEA 2: WHAT YOU ARE COMMITTED TO REVEALS WHO YOU ARE

Matthew 6:19-24

Think about what you are committed to financially – the things that will still happen, even if things get tight financially. Who gets paid first? Likely it will be the things that you can’t stand to lose. For you, what are those things? Your home? Your medical expenses? Your cell phone?

Your gym membership? When things get tight, we are forced to prioritize. And we often prioritize that which is most important to us. Does your giving to God fall into that category? Jesus writes, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” What he means is that you will do anything for the things you treasure. You’ll work harder, you’ll spend smarter, you’ll do anything for what you treasure. Jesus shares with us that a treasure in heaven is one that cannot wither away. Every other treasure we invest in is temporary. Every single one – even relationships. Investing in God’s Kingdom is the one thing that won’t wither away.

- Do you find it helpful to think about your generosity as a financial priority in your life?
- How does generosity impact faith in Jesus?

BIG IDEA 3: A COMMITMENT TO GENEROSITY IS NOT THE AMERICAN DREAM. IT’S A HEAVENLY CALL.

Luke 12:13-21

There is a passage in Proverbs that says, “One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.” (Proverbs 11:24) Many generous Christians have learned by experience how true this proverb is. It’s amazing how giving away seems to result in abundance. It may not even mean abundance in wealth, for those who seek wealth are not seeking God’s heart. But it may mean abundance in relationships, abundance in opportunities, abundance in ministry impact, abundance in significance, and abundance of treasure in heaven. With the way you handle your resources, would you say you are committed to a life of giving away, or a life of storing up? Be honest. Sometimes storing up and retaining control of our resources is acclaimed by many as a wise thing to do. It is said that you are “providing for your future.” While part of that may be true, to what degree are you providing for your future at the expense of investing in the Kingdom now?

- Is your balance of giving/saving/spending a healthy one?

CLOSING DISCUSSION

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- What is God’s promise for those who persevere in their commitment to do good?
- In light of everything we’ve discussed and everything you’ve prayed about; do you need to revise your commitment?