

4: Give Like the Macedonian Church



Aim

To learn what the Bible says about giving money and be challenged to be more generous with our own money and possessions.



Memory Verse

Read the memory verse out loud to everyone in the group. Then help them to learn it by repeating it out loud many times, with the group repeating it after you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21



Bible Knowledge

Read this Bible passage out loud to the group.



The Example of the Widow's Offering (Mark 12:41-44)

⁴¹Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴²But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few pence.

⁴³Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.'

Jesus was watching the money being put in the offering. He saw many rich people put in large amounts of money but these were not the ones he praised. Instead he explained to his disciples that the widow's offering was the best.

Sometimes in Africa we use the excuse that we are poor so that we do not give. **Being poor is not a reason to not give.** God knows we have little but still wants us to give. He has promised us that He will provide for us and has told us not to worry. Trust him and ask Him what he wants you to give. Then be brave, step out in faith and give as he commands you. The widow was not rich and yet she gave what she had.



The Example of the Macedonian Church (2 Corinthians 8:1-7)

¹And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ²In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their

extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵And they exceeded our expectations: they gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. ⁶So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you – see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

A powerful follower of Jesus called the Apostle Paul established the Church in Macedonia. They were a church made up of poor people. They had faced many troubles and did not have much money or many possessions.

However, they were also generous. They were more generous than others expected them to be. They did not just give what they had spare. They did not just give what would be easy for them. They gave more than they had. They were praised for the way they gave generously.

It was not about just one person giving though; it was about a whole group of believers giving together.

Often it is difficult to do something on our own, but together we can do great things. Maybe you think 'what is the point of me giving when I can only give a small amount.' That small amount may not change things alone but if you put the gift together with others then that small amount becomes more.



Discussion

Get into small groups of 3 or 4 people. Discuss the following questions.

- Does God notice if we can only manage to give a small gift? Is it still worth giving?
- Out of the severest trial and poverty the Macedonian Church gave to the needs of others. This is a fantastic example for us. What problems do we face that make us delay giving?
- Did the Macedonian church delay its giving?
- Did giving increase the suffering of the Macedonian church?



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An Example for us to Follow: Giving to a Funeral

Share this story with everyone to encourage them.

In Luapula Province of Zambia there is a group of Christians who meet in the community once per week. They are from different denominations and different traditions. They are all villagers.

One day they found a bus driver had died suddenly in their village whilst away from home. He was from Lusaka the capital city, at least 1000km away. There was no family around to take care of the body and funeral arrangements, so the group decided to step in and help.

Some members got involved in finding the family so a funeral could take place. They also gave money from the group to help with the funeral expenses. All of this they were doing for a complete stranger.

The group has also assisted in funerals for other people in their community, even those who do not go to church. The group members are just normal everyday Christians and they don't have lots of money. They just saw a need and decided together they could meet that need.

Look around you. You will see plenty of needs. What is God calling you to do? Yes, it may be you he wants to meet that need. Do not wait for someone else to come along. God can use you!



Discussion

Get into small groups of 3 or 4 people. Discuss the following questions.

- Our normal thinking says that if you give something away you will miss it. Our thinking also says that the more money and things we have the happier we are. Is this true or false and what does the Bible have to say about it?
- Have you ever received a gift of relish, food or money when you really needed it? Share with the others in your group what happened. If you believe and have seen that God provides, does it make it easier for you to give to others?

- What do you think you could give as a group?



Prayer

Silent individual prayer

Ask everyone to sit quietly and ask God to forgive them for the times when they have not given. Ask them to ask God what he wants them to give and to help them to trust that God will provide for their needs.

Pray out loud as a whole group

- Ask God what he wants you to give as a group.
- Pray that God would begin to provide for you as a group so that you can help others.
- Thank God that he does provide for us his children.



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To do this week

You must decide together to give to people poorer than yourselves. When you meet you can decide to do the following.

- Take a collection of money, food, or something else for those who are poorer than you in your village. You may only be able to give a small amount, but it is more than they had before. It is important that you take this decision together as a group. The items you could give are clothing, seeds or anything else that you may have.
- Have a discussion this week and come up with some ideas of a task that your group could undertake for the village. Together you can decide to do something for your village. It may be helping orphans or perhaps growing a garden of food to give away.

Maybe when you prayed in Week 1, God showed you something that your village group should do. Your group knows the problems and needs in your area. God wants to bring transformation not only in one person's life, but in the lives of those around you. He has chosen to use us as his hands and feet in our villages and places we stay.