

12/05

HOME GROUP GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

LISTEN

Listen to the sermon and read through the main passages(s)



REFLECT

Prayerfully answer the questions below



DISCUSS

Meet with your group to discuss



RESPOND

Apply the truth of God's word to your life

BACKGROUND:

"I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare." C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity.

In John's letters to the churches in the province of Asia, one of his main goals was to answer the question, "how should a Christian live?" In the third chapter, he specifically lays out the implications of what it means to be a child of God. If God is our true spiritual Father, then generous living is a part of our very nature. As we receive the gift of Jesus, we ought to respond with gifts of our own. We demonstrate God's generosity toward us and toward the world as we "lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

OPEN:

1. What is the best or worst gift you have ever given? How did giving that gift make you feel?

REFLECT:

2. Read Matthew 2:7-12. After speaking with Herod, these wise men were directed to Jesus by a star in the sky. When they came to him as a young boy, they gave him gifts. Can you describe a time when you felt a distinct pull to go to someone and show generosity? How would you describe your motivation in that scenario? (Guilt? Gratitude? Obligation? Something else?)

3. Read 1 John 3:16-18. How does John define love here? What motivates Christians to show love? How does Christ's sacrifice on the cross shape the way we show love to others?

4. Look closely at 1 John 3:17. Why is a willingness to meet people's material needs important? What does this tell us about the character of God?

5. Laying our lives down for others requires being generous with more than just our material possessions. What are other ways we are called to demonstrate generosity?

6. Read Matthew 7:11 and 1 John 3:10. Do you ever avoid being generous out of a fear of scarcity? If so, how can the description of God as a loving, generous father help fight this temptation? How does a Christian's generosity reflect his or her status as a child of God (cf. 1 John 3:10)?

APPLY:

7. Could changing some current habits in your life free you to be more generous? If so, what might those look like? Pray and ask God for specific ideas.

8. What is your biggest takeaway from this week's message? How will you apply it moving forward?

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