

**Lesson Aim:** To guard our heart and focus on developing a heart that cultivates generosity based on God and His Word.



*connecting*

Bridge LifeGroups are **currently on winter break**. We will continue to offer study questions each week in this simplified format, which can be useful for personal devotions and/or discussion starters for LifeGroups that choose to meet for a portion of the winter break.

**Prayer:** Start your time together by asking the Holy Spirit to lead your discussion.

**Icebreaker:** What are 2 or 3 of the most significant influences on your thinking about money?

1. In Acts 4, the believers in the early church were praying for God to grant them boldness in the face of persecution. **Read Acts 4:27-30.** What did the believers pray for in these verses?

2. **Read Acts 4:31-35.** How did God answer their prayer? What does this reveal to us about the connection between the gospel and generosity?

3. *It is important to remember that the narrative of the book of Acts is descriptive not prescriptive. Acts 4 shows us how God worked in a miraculous way in this instance to reveal the power of the gospel. The lesson here is not necessarily that God will always do exactly what He did here but rather that we can ask Him for gospel influence by working a financial miracle in our hearts that reveals Christ to the world around us.* What are some ways you have heard of churches making an impact in their community through the way they handled money? What are some ways you or your LifeGroup could impact the community through how you handle money?

4. **Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 & 1 Timothy 6:17-19.** Would you be willing to share a way that the consumer trap has dulled your appetite for God?

5. Do you know a mature Christ-follower who seems to have struck a healthy balance between preparing for the future and trusting God's provision? How might you follow this person's example?

6. What are 3 financial goals you have for 2012? Why? Have you included the concepts of generosity and margin in these goals? If not, how can you modify them to do so? (If you haven't thought about this yet, what are 3 possible financial goals you could make for this year? If married, please be sure to include your spouse in the discussion before making things final.)

7. What is at least one way you can create greater margin in your life this year for the purpose of being more generous?

8. What are some other ways we can nurture a generous spirit?



*growing*

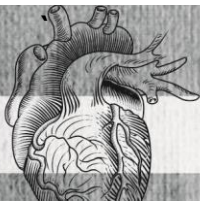
Close in prayer by reading 1 Timothy 6:6-10 & 17-19 and offering sentence prayers drawn from these verses. (For example: "Lord, I struggle with being content with what you've given me. Help me to be content." "Lord, I have been guilty of greed and I can see where it is getting me in trouble. Please forgive me." "Thank you for the earthly riches you have provided. Thank you for the riches you give that are so much better than money." "Lord, help me to see things from an eternal perspective and be more generous.")



*sewing*



*reaching*



# Heart

## GENEROUS HEART

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### THE EARLY CHURCH WAS CHARACTERIZED BY... (Acts 4:32-35)

- ✦ Unity (v.32a)
- ✦ Assistance (vv.34,35b)
- ✦ Stewardship (v.32b)
- ✦ Radical Generosity (vv.34-37)
- ✦ Sharing (v.32c)
- ✦ Power + Grace + Growth (v.33)

PRINCIPLE: One of the keys to unlocking the mysteries of God's power, grace & growth is developing a generous heart.

### OBSERVATIONS

- ❶ All reality, including generosity, starts with God (John 3:16)
- ❷ We have an incredibly generous God (Acts 14:17)
- ❸ God has built margin into our lives so we can be generous like Him
- ❹ Without margin, you cannot be generous
- ❺ Generosity is actually logical (Proverbs 11:25; Luke 6:38; Galatians 6:7; 2 Cor. 9:7)
- ❻ Generosity is contagious (cf. Acts 36-37)
- ❼ The opposite of generosity is so \_\_\_\_\_

### TWO KINDS OF GIVERS

- ❶ People who give what's leftover
- ❷ People who give off the top & live on what's leftover

### WHY BE GENEROUS?

- ❶ To imitate God (Matthew 6:19-21)
- ❷ To maintain spiritual intensity
- ❸ To alleviate pain, suffering & injustice (Micah 6:8)
- ❹ To further the kingdom purposes of God (2 Corinthians 8:6-11)