17/04/2024, 18:43 Reader

Living Generously

Generous With Possessions	
SESSION GOALS	
The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of informing our knowing, feeling, and doing.	
MAIN IDEA: Everything comes from God and we're called to share what He's given us.	
Head Change: To know that true generosity entails no recompense or replacement.	
Heart Change: To celebrate that giving away our accumulated possessions liberates us from the tyranny of things.	
Life Change: To be on our guard against the unhealthy hold possessions can have on us, and instead to travel light.	
<u>OPEN</u>	
Which of your possessions do you find it hard to lend to friends or family? Why? Have you ever ruined, lost, or broken the precious possession of a loved one? What did you do about it? Have you ever given away a large appliance, car, house, plane ticket, or something else pretty enormous?	
In an increasingly cashless society, the physicality of possessions generously given away speaks loudly to a watching world of the lavish love of our Heavenly Father. In this session, we'll take a look at what stops us from being generous with our possessions and how we	
can start living more openhandedly.	
ghtnow MEDIA	

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VIEW	
As you watch, write down how Jonathan answers these questions.	
Why was it significant that Mary poured out <i>all</i> the nard?	
What did Lionel Shriver, Albert Schweitzer, and Jesus have to say about possessions and generosity?	
Why is giving away possessions so profoundly countercultural?	
How does being generous with our possessions set us free?	
Show SESSION #5: Generous With Possessions (7	
minutes)	

REVIEW

Jonathan explains that, in his experience, people have a distorted view of generosity. Do you agree that generosity is more than a vaguely altruistic act, like adding some loose change to a charity collection box? Why, or why not?

The nard Mary used to anoint Jesus' feet was a precious possession – and she used *all* of it. Her generosity was lavish and extravagant. The fragrance of the perfume filled the whole house. Lionel Shriver writes, 'True generosity entails no recompense. It means giving up something you fiercely value and cannot replace.' Would Mary ever get any of the perfume back in the bottle? Which valuable possession have you given away knowing you'll never get it back and you won't be rewarded? Do you regret giving it away?

Albert Schweitzer said, 'If you own something you cannot give away, then you don't own it; it owns you.' Be honest (and not super spiritual): What owns you? Is there something you feel you could never part with? Why? What's your next step, to resolve the tension in your life when it comes to being generous with this possession in particular?

Jesus urged us to be wary of the power of possessions. He said, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.' (Luke 12:15) He also said, 'Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys.' (Luke 12:33) It's hard to see greed in the mirror, but are you aware of a tendency in your life to hoard things simply because it satisfies you to do so? If so, what's the antidote? In your experience, how does giving away possessions train your heart and strengthen your faith in God's provision?

Possessions can have a particular hold on us, and so being generous with them can be a particularly powerful witness to our faith and belief in God's economy. Giving away our possessions is profoundly countercultural. Our culture tells us, 'You are what you own.' We need to tell our culture, 'God owns everything, and I'm free to share what He's lending me.' What do your possessions tell your neighbours, friends, family, riand colleagues about your priorities, values, and aspirations? Would the social media influencers you

envy or admire look at your life and tell you, 'You've arrived!'?	
Being generous with our possessions is also wonderfully liberating. Our lives can be dominated by the accumulation of stuff, but we free ourselves from this tyranny by choosing generosity. Share about a time when you let go of some material possessions and consequently felt unencumbered, lighter, freer.	
Many of us hardly ever carry cash anymore, so there's something compelling about the physicality of being	
generous with possessions. Of course, it's easy to give away things we no longer want or need, but as Mary shows, true generosity is when we give away something we fiercely value and cannot replace. Mary had lost, and	
then found, her beloved brother. Compared to that, material possessions were insignificant to her. She generously gave away a treasured possession and, in	
doing so, showed her faith in Jesus. By giving away some of what we have, we can do the same. Is a	
particular possession coming to mind? What do you value far more than that precious possession? How do you sense God prompting you to be generous?	
BIBLE EXPLORATION	
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LAST WORD

At the end of the day, things are just things. May we constantly keep in mind that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). We serve a generous, well-resourced God, and our lives reflect His character when we are generous with our possessions, expecting nothing in return except joy.

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete before watching the next session.

Read: Read 1 Timothy 6:17–19 from a Bible translation you don't usually use, or write out these verses, or read them aloud. Are you rich, by the world's standards? Are you ready to share?

Write: Every day this week, prayerfully write up an inventory of possessions in a different wardrobe or drawer of room of your house. What is God nudging you to give away?

Pray: Write a crafted prayer – one you can come back to again and again to pray and re-pray – in which you surrender to God your material possessions, commit to living generously, and declare your dependence on His provision.