

## Living Generously

# Generous With Wealth

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### SESSION GOALS

*The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of informing our knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**MAIN IDEA:** We are called to be generous with our wealth.

**Head Change:** To know that all our money and possessions belong to God.

**Heart Change:** To feel relieved that generosity is possible not because of what we have, but because of the immeasurable love God has for us.

**Life Change:** To intentionally adjust our budgets to prioritise giving as a way of life.

### OPEN

**Would you ever apply to be a participant on a televised game show, to win money? Why, or why not? If you did win a boatload of money, what's the first thing you'd do or buy?**

Our culture is fixated on money, and it's difficult for us not to get sucked into the obsession. In this session, Jonathan walks us through the stages of discipleship that help us recognise the money we work so hard to hoard and spend, isn't ours in the first place. There's tremendous freedom and joy when we learn to give it away.

**VIEW**

As you watch, write down how Jonathan answers these questions.

**What are the five stages of giving outlined by Jim Sheppard?**

**In Mary's view, who owned the perfume?**

**Why was Mary so grateful to God?**

**According to Jonathan, what's the key to unlocking generosity?**

**What is the '1% challenge'?**

Show SESSION #3: *Generous With Wealth* (8 minutes)

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## **REVIEW**

Jonathan opens the session by pointing out that the lyrics of a particular Johnny Nash song are theologically profound when it comes to being generous with wealth: 'What is life? How do we live? What should we take and how much should we give?' **Without thinking too long and hard (or giving the answer you think others would expect), how would you answer each of Johnny Nash's questions in the space of a post on X?**

Jim Sheppard summarises the five stages of giving with five questions. Each stage takes us a step closer to understanding God's generous heart and how He wants us to use the resources He's given us.

Stage 1: *What do I do with what I earn?*

Stage 2: *What do I do with what God has given me?*

Stage 3: *What does God want me to do with what God has given me?*

Stage 4: *What does God want me to give from what God has provided?*

Stage 5: *What does God want me to keep from what God has provided?*

**Discuss what shifts subtly in each of these discipleship stages. Which question are you asking? What would it take for you to move on to the next question? What one thing could you do this week or this month, to get there?**

Jonathan says, 'The move from asking ourselves how much of *our* money should we *give away* to how much of *God's* money should we *keep* is one of *the* great discipleship challenges of generous giving.' **Do you use an app or Excel or Sheets to draw up a monthly budget? If not, why not? What stops you from giving as soon as you earn (before saving or spending)? Which emotion fits you best: *Ordering my finances in this way (give, then save, then spend) makes me anxious / expectant / excited / relieved / stressed / grateful.***

Mary saw what she had as God's, so in pouring out the perfume she was just giving back what was already His. Her gift to Jesus cost a year's salary. It was incredibly generous – even extravagant. **What had Mary just witnessed that would have made any gift to Jesus utterly insignificant in comparison?**

Jonathan explains that the key to unlocking generosity is the realisation of God's extraordinary love for us. Mary was overwhelmed by this love and gave generously in response. If we have a nagging sense we should be

living more generously, the best thing we can do is not to look at our bank statements or a spreadsheet but to look at the life of Christ and to learn afresh what divine generosity is. **What would God have to do to convince you that you are completely loved by Him, and that there is no future point at which His love for you will end? What has God already done?**

Mary’s generosity with her wealth is immensely difficult for us to live up to because we live in a world telling us we are what we earn and own. There are limitless enticing ways to spend ‘our’ money, not to mention the crushing social pressures and expectations over what we should buy and how we should live, and the inescapable fact that debt is real: tiny houses come with huge mortgages. **Describe how you experience this tension in your current season of life. Specifically, who or what is putting financial pressure on you?**

To emulate Mary’s generosity is difficult, but possible. The New Revised Standard translation of the Bible renders ‘goodness’ in Galatians 5:22 as ‘generosity’. Generosity is part of the fruit that grows in a Spirit-infused life. The divine paradox is that we can’t respond generously to God’s generosity without His help. Praying that God gives us the spiritual gift of generosity is the starting point for a generous life. **Do you ever ask God for more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control? Is generosity something you habitually pray for? If not, why not?**

The irony of generosity is that we receive more than we give. **How have you found this to be true in your life? Do you agree that, in God’s economy, generosity produces more generosity? If you are mostly surrounded by people with a scarcity mindset, how might generosity create a culture of abundance?**

Jonathan challenges us to be intentional about planning for generosity. **Would you be up for the 1% challenge, in which every year you aim to give 1% more of your net income away? What kind of adjustment would this require of you?**

Lined writing area for reader response, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



## **DEEPER WALK**

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

**Read:** Read Exodus 16 in The Message. If you're already familiar with this story, what have you perhaps noticed for the first time? What is God saying to you about His provision in your life?

**Write:** Write down all the ways God has been generous to you this year so far. Now write down all the ways you'd love to pour out generosity on those around you, even if your ideas seem outrageous, extravagant, or impossible.

**Pray:** Meet with a couple of friends and pray for one another, asking God to make you all more generous with your wealth.