



## Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

### Living a Life of Startling Generosity November 9-11, 2024

Mark 12:38-44

<sup>38</sup> As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, <sup>39</sup> and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. <sup>40</sup> They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

<sup>41</sup> Jesus 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. <sup>42</sup> But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

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

1. Why do you think Jesus took the time to watch people give their offerings? How does this perspective challenge or affirm how we think about our own giving?

Offerings are a tangible expression of our gratitude to God and our trust in God and his promises to provide for us. Our offerings are "faith in action." If Jesus took the time to evaluate other people's offerings, we should do the same for our own.

2. Agree or Disagree: Jesus cares about our relationship to God more than the actual amount we give. Why or why not?

Agree. Jesus emphasized the widow's gift because it came from a place of trust and sacrifice, reflecting her faith and relationship with God rather than the monetary value itself.

3. Agree or Disagree: Giving out of wealth is less pleasing to God than giving out of poverty. Explain.

Disagree. While Jesus commends sacrificial giving, He doesn't condemn wealthier individuals for giving large amounts. First, God is concerned about the motivation for our gifts. He then encourages us to give in proportion to the gifts he's given to us.

4. How would you answer the question, "Why do I give the amount I give?" What factors influence your decision?

Answers may vary but could include personal finances, tradition, or a desire to express gratitude. Aligning giving with trust may involve prayer and thoughtful decision-making about what portion genuinely reflects dependence on God.

5. How does the concept of living forever with God change our perspective on generosity and how we use our resources in this life?

Knowing that our ultimate fulfillment is with God can free us from holding tightly to temporary things. It encourages using our resources to serve God and others, recognizing that our eternal treasure lies beyond this life.

6. The sermon mentions a "life of startling generosity." What might a modern example of startling generosity look like, and what motivates such actions?

Examples today might include someone choosing to live on less to give away more, canceling a luxury to support a person in need, or donating a significant portion of an inheritance. Such generosity often comes from a desire to reflect God's love and grace, as well as a profound understanding that God will meet all needs. The motivation lies in faith that God's kingdom work is greater than personal accumulation or security.

7. Agree or Disagree: Generosity is primarily about giving financially. Disagree. Generosity also includes giving time, sharing talents, offering emotional support, and helping in practical ways. True generosity reflects a lifestyle of serving and loving others.

8. Who "modelled" Christian stewardship for you? How can adults shape a child's understanding of stewardship?

Parents and grandparents can model by regularly giving, discussing the importance of supporting others, and involving children in charitable acts. This instills values of stewardship and faithfulness that children can carry into adulthood.

9. The sermon describes God's provision as "a pie" that He can expand. How does this view of God's resources affect how we think about sharing what we have?

Viewing resources as expandable encourages a mindset of abundance rather than scarcity, allowing us to give more freely, trusting that God can and will provide for our needs and use our gifts to bless others.