

# Leader's Guide

## A LIFE THAT IS TRULY LIFE!

Welcome to the Living Generously journey! When I read "whoever loses his life for My sake will find it," I want to know what that looks like. They're more than words; they're meant to change the way I live.

In this series, you will see a family take risks, experience suffering, doubt and joy. Moreover, you'll see what happens when this family chooses to embrace a generous life in the midst of uncertainty. And like them, you will be invited into a transformational process.

Living Generously is the first of three in a series on generosity that we have produced at Reimagine. Our films seek to bring Scripture to life, and serve as an effective tool serving pastors and small group leaders.

In Genesis 12, God tells Abraham something extraordinary. He tells Abraham that he will be blessed SO THAT he can be a blessing to the nations. Our goal is for you to discover what that means in your life, your relationships and your leadership. When we think of the joy of imagination, we often think of children. We want you to "Reimagine" what this can look like for you, and for your family. To see what other resources we have for you and your church, visit *TheReimagineGroup.com*. To see other film series by Reimagine, check out *TheReimagineGroup.com*.

Lastly, I'd love to hear your stories, and to answer any questions you may have. I never tire of talking about how we can live a generous life and free others to do the same. Feel free to email me at [jack@thereimaginegroup.com](mailto:jack@thereimaginegroup.com).

Blessings to you, your family and your church,

Jack Alexander  
Chairman  
The Reimagine Group  
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# WELCOME TO LIVING GENEROUSLY

Welcome to the Living Generously series! They say every journey begins with a single step. Fortunately for you, this journey begins with five great films!

## SO WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

We live in a culture that has lost the true meaning of a generous life. Jesus spoke about generosity throughout his ministry in ways that now seem foreign even to those in the church. This series is designed to open our eyes to the biblical model of generous living and chart a course for our own journey of generosity.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

You may belong to a congregation that is watching the films during the Sunday morning sermons. Or you may belong to a small group that is watching the films together. We have designed the films, this study guide, and the other media we have produced so that they can be customized to your circumstances. If some or all of the members of your study group have not seen the films by the time you meet, then you will probably wish to watch the films together. If you are all watching the films during the sermons, however, and then gathering afterward in small groups or classes for discussions, then you may wish to watch the short vignettes we've designed to help you transition from the films into conversation. Or you may well wish to watch both the films and the vignettes when you meet and walk through these studies.

While the specifics are up to you, we have found this to be the best general approach:

- Open in Prayer
- Recap the previous lessons (weeks 2-5)
- Watch the film, the vignette, or both
- Work through the study guide questions in group discussion
- Allow time for reflection and closing prayer

You can learn more about the films and the Living Generously series at *TheReimagineGroup.com*.

# THIS WEEK LEADERS

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU LEAD THE DISCUSSION

1. As you begin this five-week journey, be prepared for the Holy Spirit to convict people over their self-centeredness. Be prepared to be convicted YOURSELF, as you truly come to understand what the Bible says about living generously.
2. You may wish to watch the film during your study meeting – or if you are watching the film outside the studies, then you may elect only to watch the short “vignettes” before engaging the study. Use your discretion.
3. Emphasize this study is NOT about money, but about living like Jesus. We want participants to understand by the end of five weeks that generous living leads to generous giving. The Bible wants us to live generously, with all aspects of our time, talents and treasures. Money is just a part of it.
4. Much of today's philosophy on giving teaches Christians to be faithful materialists. It seeks to balance the American Dream with the call to follow God. True biblical generosity may not always line up with the American Dream. Remind the members of your group that our number one goal is to follow the example set by Jesus, not by our culture.
5. The final page is for individuals in the group to pray over, ponder and put into practical use throughout the week. Emphasize how important it is for them to do this for the series to truly work in their lives.
6. Set up a communication network after the lesson, maybe on Facebook, so your group can talk about this study throughout the week. As the leader, you need to make sure this happens.

# SESSION 1

## FIRST

### OPENING QUESTION

1. How has someone else's generosity affected you? How did it encourage you to live more generously?

### FOCUS

In the Old Testament, God had very specific rules regarding sacrifices and offerings made to Him. Leviticus addresses these offerings in detail: burnt offerings, meal offerings, sin offerings, peace offerings, the list goes on and on.

But Jesus came and changed everything. In the Old Testament God had blessed his people with everything they had. But in the New Testament God the Father gave everything he had. Jesus gave himself. His generosity cannot be matched. He gave his own life so that we could be together with him. Mark 10:45 clarifies the generosity of our Lord, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus paid the price of his own life to free us from our self-centered, separation from God, way of life.

. As we look in the New Testament for guidelines on giving, we no longer find rules about 2-year-old rams and grain cakes made with oil. Instead we see teaching that focuses on our hearts. Luke 10:27 says, "He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" 2 Corinthians tells us that God loves a cheerful giver and we are not to give under compulsion. What a difference! From a list of specific do's and don'ts to a call to live a life of generosity.

These next five sessions are not about rules for giving. They aren't going to give you a checklist or a dollar amount. This study is not about our wallets, but our hearts.

### WATCH THE "FIRST" FILM/VIGNETTE

## THOUGHTS

In the film we watched for this week, one of the main characters, Frank, gave sparingly out of his abundance. His wife Cassie gave her time and resources to serve a missionary family. The gardener "Re" (pronounced "Ray") gave sacrificially of his time and used his gifts to communicate truth. But Frank's son Evan – well, Evan gave his all. He gave his favorite toy, one that he couldn't just run down to the store and replace. He saw a need, an opportunity to bless someone, an opportunity to give the "best sheep," and he simply did it.

Frank missed this child-like faith. He was giving his first and his best – but where was it going?

At the beginning of the film, Frank had a conversation with his financial planner, Allan. At Frank's request, Allan had put together a plan to hit a "finish line" that would cover every expense for the rest of his life. What was Frank's response? "Double it."

Fiscal responsibility is important – in fact the Bible is filled with great wisdom on working hard, saving money – all the things that Frank was, at the core, trying to do. BUT, in his drive to provide and protect, Frank had lost that child-like faith. He had forgotten, or ignored, that God asks for our first and best... and promises that He'll bless the rest!

Frank had forgotten that it is God who gives to us so that we can bless others.

Let's dig in.

## HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

1. In this week's film, Frank has his financial planner Allan take the net present value of everything he and his family will need and multiply it by 2.
2. What do you think causes Frank to think this way? How has this mindset affected you when it comes to your resources?

*Frank is taking what is known as the "finish line" approach to giving. It says, "I'll give when..." We can all share a time when we felt we weren't ready to give.*

2. Before we go any further let's examine something important. When you look at Frank, do you see someone with far more to give than you? What about Re who only had his service to offer? Or Evan?

*The truth is that God gives us all gifts and the principles of living generously apply to us all. This is not a series for the wealthy. It's for each of us.*

## AN ATTITUDE OF THE HEART.

1. Which of these is the hardest for you to give up?

- *Your time*
- *Your money*
- *Your stuff*
- *Your space*

*We all have areas of our lives that are precious. For some, writing a check is impossible. For others, giving an hour a week is inconceivable. And still others cannot fathom allowing a needy family to move into their house. It's not the same for everyone.*

2. When you face the opportunity to give or serve do you usually default to Re's way of thinking or Frank's? What causes that response?

*Leaders, encourage honest conversation. We each need to identify the leaning of our heart in this area.*

### THE BIBLE SAYS

*He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).*

3. Reread Luke 10:25-37. What is the standard of generosity? Who sets that standard? What does this story illustrate about true love? (Pay special attention to verse 27)

*Jesus is the only one who gives like the good samaritan and pays the price that others owe. This story is a demonstration of how we love the lord with all our heart, soul, and mind, and love our neighbors as ourselves.*

### THE BIBLE SAYS

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

4. Is our problem with giving all about the money?

*If we are being honest, the answer is probably no; it's about loving. Do we love God and others more than our own happiness, livelihood and security?*

5. What are your sheep? What's your "good sheep" and what's your "stinky sheep"?

## FIRST AND BEST

1. Reread Mark 10:45. What was Jesus' ransom price? What does that tell us about what God has called us to give?

*He gave his very self. This is true generosity, and Jesus calls us to follow him Mark 8:34-35.*

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

"What are your sheep?"

Evan had an airplane, Frank had watches and Re had his service. We all have something to give: time, gifts, our resources, the list goes on. What they did with what they had didn't reflect their level of financial ability – it reflected their heart, their view of God.

Where is your heart today? Does your heart take joy in an opportunity to honor God through giving? Or does your heart search through dusty drawers to find what it will give to God?

Spend time talking to God this week about where you aren't giving your first and best. What is God asking you to give? Time? Money? Service? Let's give our first and best this week. What we offer Him reflects our heart!

## DIG DEEPER

Questions to ponder this week as you pray about this lesson.

1. Which character would you say you are most like?

• *Frank – the man who has enough, but gives little*  
• *Re – the man who has little, but serves/gives with his time* • *Evan – the kid who is just learning to give his first and best* • *Cassie – the woman who is willing to serve/host at the last second*

2. Are you willing to test God and give your first and your best?

## DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

Things to do this week as you apply this lesson to your life.

- Ask God to show you where you need to be more generous in your life, and ask Him to prepare you to give your best "sheep."
- Trust God's prompting to give this week. Whether it is your time, your attention, your resources or your talents. Step out in generosity and watch God work!
- Memorize Luke 10:27.

## NOTES