



STILL GOD'S

Still God's Series

Small Group Material

Leader Guide

Part 3 - "What Start's Giving?"

February 18th, 2018

Bottom Line: *You can't offer everything if you're clinging to anything.*

Study Verses: *2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Matthew 6:24, Acts 20:35*

Define The Win: *Participants would understand the importance of testing their motives when giving. They would pinpoint the places where they are gripping tightly to their resources and unwilling to give them up. Group members would articulate next steps in their quest to develop a generous heart.*

Key Points

- *Stewardship is informed by purpose.*
- *Choose to give. Choose to be cheerful.*
- *Track every penny. Spend less than you earn. Make it a point to give.*
- *The discipline of receiving frees us from the pressure of providing.*
- *The discipline of giving frees us from the pressure of defending.*
- *Giving without generosity is torture.*
- *Giving from generosity is freeing.*
- *Giving is a tangible way of letting go. Money is tangible trust.*
- *The source of letting go is trust.*

- *Giving takes trusting God out of the realm of theory and into practice.*
- *If you give out of guilt you will always be haunted by fear.*
- *When you see yourself as the provider, you become the defender of your "stuff."*

ENCOUNTER

- **How is the act of giving an invitation to trust? How does money serve as tangible trust and a way to declare that God can be trusted?**
- **In what ways does giving test our motives? What dangers arise when we don't test our motives before we give?**
- **How does seeing yourself as the sole provider influence the way you handle "your stuff"? How does this mindset lead us to defend our resources and become stingy?**

FORMATION

- **Read 2 Corinthians 9:7-8. How has this passage been misused to justify a lack of generosity? What level of reflection is needed to develop the habit of being a generous giver? What is it about a cheerful giver that God loves?**
- **Read Matthew 6:24. How have you experienced the tension mentioned in this passage? How does one serve money?**
- **Read Acts 20:35. It is better to give than receive. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? What blessings come as a result of our giving to others?**

EXPRESSION

- **You can't offer everything if you're clinging to anything. If this is true, what are you clinging on to and unwilling to give away? What keeps your grip tight? How can you begin to loosen it?**
- **When it comes to your spending and giving, where do you find yourself stuck in an unhealthy cycle? Why do you remain in this place? What might God be trying to teach you by leaving you in these patterns?**
- **What is the greatest insight you've gained from the *Still God's* series? What would it look like to put that insight into practice?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *Without a vision for our provision, we will not find contentment. Before we can decide what we actually "need" to be content, we must first examine what we believe about the source of our provision. When we see ourselves as the sole provider, we will become the defender of our "stuff." The discipline of giving frees us*

from the pressure of defending. The act of receiving frees us from the burden of providing. Consider looking at contentment as a byproduct of trusting that God will give us everything we need to do everything He wants us to do.

We need a vision that compels us towards action. Stewardship and generosity are informed and fueled by purpose. Our vision for our resources must be big enough that it demands the discipline required to become a great steward and a generous giver. Until we arrive at this point, we will default to old financial patterns and habits. We will find ourselves stuck in destructive loops and patterns. Where there is no discipline, there is no vision.

When we are gripping tightly onto something else for our fulfillment and security, it is impossible for us to receive God's grace and follow Him with our whole heart. Clenched fists don't leave much room for receiving. Neither do they encourage giving and generosity. We can't offer everything if we're clinging to anything.

Money is a revealer. It serves as provision. But, most importantly, money is tangible trust. It provides us with the most visible way to see the condition of our hearts and who we trust. Giving takes trusting God out of the realm of theory and into practice.

There will be moments when we have to choose to give and decide to be cheerful. Giving without generosity is torture. If we give out of guilt, fear will haunt us. But, giving from generosity is freeing. The source of letting go is trust.