

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

In the final week of our "Shift" series, we find Jesus making a big deal out of what seemed like a pretty small offering. But when we understand the final shift from greed to generosity, we'll begin to see how the greatest offering ever is one that decreases who we are in order to increase our capacity for releasing heaven to the world around us. Giving is a powerful discipline that actually moves God, and we can give knowing that **God gives increase to those who increase what they give.**

1. **2 mites:** From a financial point of view, the widow's offering was almost non-existent – one quarter of one cent! But from a spiritual point of view, they were 2 mighty mites because they represented everything she had to give! Plus, it started a 3-word chain reaction of epic proportion.
2. **3 words:** There is a cycle that every follower of Jesus must accept if we're to live lives marked by generosity: **DECREASE – INCREASE – RELEASE.** When we decrease who we are and surrender all we have to the Lord, he increases our capacity to become vessels that he can pour heavenly blessings through. God isn't looking for people to give **TO**; he's looking for people to give **THROUGH.** The cycle ensures that we're ready to be used in that way!
3. **A shift and a number:** For that 3-word cycle to become reality in our lives, we've got to make the shift from greed to generosity. Of course, no one wants to think of him or herself as greedy, but until we're giving everything like the widow in Luke 21, we've got some shifting to do! For our church family, the shift from greed to generosity has a lot to do with our willingness to release ALL resources – money, supplies, even people! After all, we could reach 10% of our city and still be greedy, but shifting to generosity as a church could allow us to impact 100 times the people by sending and planting in other areas!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- The overriding theme in Luke 20 is the authority of Jesus (either the acceptance of it or the rejection of it). How is giving like the widow tied to our view of the authority of Jesus?
- The NIV says in Luke 21:4 that "out of her poverty she put in all she had to live on." Put yourself in her shoes. What would you feel if you were giving Jesus everything you had to live on?
- Paul talked about the 3-word cycle of **DECREASE – INCREASE – RELEASE.** Have you ever been given something and then given it away? On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being hoarder and 10 being vessel), where would you put yourself when it comes to sharing God's blessings with others?
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 and then answer the following questions: What is the purpose of God's material blessings? How is giving contagious? How does it reflect God's grace? How can God's promise in verse 8 enable you to be more generous? How do generosity and financial planning and responsibility fit together?
- What takeaways do you have from this week's shift (see the attached chart)? Of all the shifts, which one has had the greatest impact on you? What will you do as a result? (**Shift 1:** Cop to Coach; **Shift 2:** Maintaining to Multiplying; **Shift 3:** Will you steal the donkey?; **Shift 4:** Preying to Praying; **Shift 5:** Stubbornness to Submission; **Shift 6:** Hypothetical to Actual; **Shift 7:** Greed to Generosity)

GREED

Resources come to me
Giving is an obligation
Needs to be seen
Closed hand
Driven by fear
Will never give enough

GENEROSITY

Resources flow through me
Giving is an opportunity
Sees the need
Open hand
Driven by faith
Will never give enough

shift