



MAKING ROOM

SMALL GROUP TEACHING GUIDE
APRIL 2, 2017



THIS SERIES

During this series we will be walking through four fantastic conversations about what it means for us to make room in our hearts for God's plan and purposes individually, as a group and as a church family. Here are a few elements to enhance your group experience and conversation:



VIDEOS | *Week 1 or 2 (March 19 or 26): Watch Chip's video as a group.*
Week 3 (April 2): Hear from your Campus Pastor.

RETURN: *Come back to this section each week and answer these 3 questions:*

- + *Individually, what does it mean for me to make room for God's vision in my life?*
- + *As a group, what does it mean for us to make room for God's vision in our group?*
- + *As a church, what does it mean for us to make room for God's vision as a church?*



PREPARATION

- + **STUDY** | Proverbs 3:9-10; Matthew 6:19-24 & 2 Corinthians 8:1-7. Use the commentary to enhance preparation.
- + **DETERMINE** | Evaluate and determine which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group.
- + **PRAY** | Dedicate time to pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.
- + **LANDING POINT** | You make room in your finances by freely and joyfully giving for the sake of others and God's kingdom



GROUP DISCUSSION

- + **Confidentiality** What's said in the group stays in the group.
- + **No cross-talk** Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
- + **No fixing** We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
- + **Sharing** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Last week your group discussed how our relationships are a mission field and that God uses them to bring others into His kingdom. This week you will discuss what it means to make room in your finances. Every good thing we have—including our finances—is a gift from God. And it's a gift that we can use to bless others and expand God's kingdom.

+ What's your honest reaction to a sermon or study on money? Why do you feel this way?

+ If you could change one thing about your finances (or the way you handle them), what would it be?



LEARN

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

| GOD AND GIVING

What does God think about giving? That's a good place to start. First, the Bible teaches that God commands giving. This isn't something that's optional for Christians. Second, our giving is meant to be a reflection of the way God gives. He knows our needs and provides for them every day. Our greatest need was salvation and God provided for that need by sending His Only Son to die for our sins. Of all people, Christians should be the most compelled to give back.

+ Explain the following statement in your own words: "Of all people, Christians should be the most compelled to give back."

| MOTIVATION TO GIVE

So, what motivation do we have from the Bible to give? Proverbs 3:9-10 says to "honor the Lord with your wealth" by giving Him "the firstfruits of your produce." Here we see that giving honors God. By giving you show where your true treasure is – in God.

Giving is also a picture of the kind of relationship you have with God. Everything you have belongs to God; you're really just borrowing His stuff. Because of this, you can use the money and things you have to bless others in a way that shows them what God is like. He's a loving God who provides for our needs and wants a relationship with us.

This passage gives us another motivation to give, which is that God promises us a reward. Therefore, we trust that the reward is well worth the sacrifice of giving.

+ Read Proverbs 3:9-10 as a group. How does knowing that you're just borrowing the things God has given you affect the way you treat your wealth and possessions?

+ Is it wrong to seek a reward in giving? Why or why not?

| HOW TO GIVE

The Bible offers two main ways we can give: tithes and offerings. In the Old Testament, the tithe was what the Israelites gave to God from their 'firstfruits.' They were required to give a tenth of their wealth towards God's purposes. Offerings were what the Israelites gave in addition to their tithe. They were taken on holy days and for special projects in Israel. Offerings were also used to meet the needs of the poor in the nation. The idea behind the offering was that it was given freely, without obligation.

+ Who in your life models generous giving well? What do you admire about the way they live and give?



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

| FOR OTHERS: GIVE LIKE A MACEDONIAN

What does it look like give freely and joyfully for the sake of others and God's kingdom? Paul uses the churches in Macedonia as an example of this kind of attitude in giving. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 that these churches gave generously out of their "extreme poverty" (even "beyond their means") and with "abundant joy." In fact, they begged Paul to take part in his relief project for believers in Jerusalem.

Generosity in giving isn't determined by the number of zeroes behind your gift. It's a matter of the heart. The Macedonians were poor, but their hearts overflowed with love for God and a desire to help others. Paul called this an "act of grace" and urges the Corinthians to give like the Macedonians.

You can live out the Macedonians example today, whether you're a successful investor on Wall Street, in college and eating a steady diet of Ramen or sweeping a broom as a janitor. Wherever you are and no matter how much you have, God can use you and your finances for kingdom purposes.

+ Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 as a group. How would you characterize the churches in Macedonia?

+ *What's one change you could make this week to be more like the Macedonians in your giving?*

| FOR GOD'S KINGDOM: LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Jesus taught His disciples to invest their wealth on eternal things, not earthly things. Put another way, He was telling His followers, "Put your money towards something that will matter 20,000 years from now." Jesus went on to teach His disciples that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Whatever or whomever your heart goes after is what you truly treasure (or worship). If you treasure Jesus above all else, doesn't it make sense that you'd see your finances with a different perspective than the world? That you'd spend and give towards things that will still matter 20,000 years from now?

+ *What are the dangers of treasuring the wrong things in life?*

+ *Where might God be leading you to invest in His kingdom more with your time, money and/or resources?*



LEAD

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

| MAKING ROOM INITIATIVE

So far, you've discussed the Bible's teaching on giving, motivation to give, how to give and examples of giving. Some may be wondering, "That's great. So, what do I do next? How can I put some skin in the game and actually live this out?" The Making Room Initiative is your chance to make room in your finances for the sake of others and God's kingdom. You can take part in this initiative by:

1. *Committing to tithe for the next 24-months*
2. *Giving an offering over-and-above your normal tithe*

+ *What do you hope happens in your life as result of taking part in this initiative?*

+ *In what ways can your group be part of this initiative?*



PRAY

Thank God for His provision in your life. Acknowledge that every good thing you have comes from Him. Ask for opportunities to give back and make room in your finances for the sake of others and God's kingdom.



FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- *Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 and reflect on what Paul writes about the benefits of giving.*
- *Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their life.*



COMMENTARY

WHAT KIND OF REWARD? “This reward [in Prov. 3:10] for honoring the Lord highlights God’s delight in those who worship him; it does not indicate that God governs the world according to a rigid, hard-and-fast system of reward, nor does it entail that God is a cosmic vending machine who is forced to dole out rewards in some sort of mechanical fashion.”¹

TITHING IN THE BIBLE. As mentioned earlier, a tithe was 1/10 of a person’s wealth that was offered to God and His purposes. Typically, this offering was agricultural or monetary. Tithing was a concept familiar in Ancient Israel, especially after Israel was given the Law (see Deut. 12, 14 and 26). After the destruction of the temple, the tithe was expanded in the Mishnah. Tithing doesn’t appear frequently in the Gospels, except when Jesus uses the idea as a rebuke of the Pharisees (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42). The New Testament authors rarely refer to it (perhaps because the tithe was assumed in this period). Today, there is debate whether Christians should still observe the tithe as obligatory. Regardless of one’s opinion, both Old and New Testaments show that God values generosity in giving.²

THE CHURCHES IN MACEDONIA. These churches would have been from Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea (see Acts 16:9–17:15; 18:5; 19:21–22, 29; 20:1–4; 27:2).³

WHY WORRY? (Matt. 6:25-34) After Jesus taught on laying up treasure in heaven, He spoke about worry and anxiety with His disciples. Jesus understood the close relationship between worry and finances. That's why He taught His followers to see how much God cares for the needs of His children and that, in the end, no one has any legitimate reason to worry about anything. Did you hear that? There's nothing that ever warrants worry on the part of God's people. Instead, we are to see God's provision and trust Him to provide in the future as He has in the past.

1. D. A. Carson, ed., *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1199.

2. Charles Meeks, "Tithe," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

3. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2233.

