



Week 1: January 13-19

Introduce Guests/Share Life: *How has this week been going? Good? Bad? Ugly? Things to celebrate?*

Open in Prayer: *Include any prayer needs that came up while you were sharing life together.*

Recall the Guidelines: *Ask: "What is the purpose of the guidelines?" Answer: To be relational!*

Share the Vision: *This small group is a discipleship group. Our primary goal is to equip you to be a disciple who makes disciples of Jesus. Everything we do in this group is reproducible so you can do it with others.*

Ask someone to tell last week's story (Luke 7:11-17 – the widow's son).

Hook Question: What is the most generous gift you have ever received? How did that gift make you feel?

Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:

Throughout Scripture, God asks His people to make sacrifices and to invest generously into His Kingdom and His plans. He does not do this because He is poor or because He needs our offerings. God owns everything. God asks for these gifts because He wants us to trust Him, because He wants us to grow to be more like Jesus, and because He wants to include us in His mission.

Today's story is found in the Old Testament portion of the Bible during the lifetime of Moses. For 400 years, God's people, the nation of Israel, had been in Egypt. They were being held as slaves by the Pharaoh. God raised up Moses, an unlikely leader, to deliver His people from their slavery. God did not deliver His people without purpose. God delivered them to fulfill His promises to them and so that they would go to the place He told them to go and worship Him there. God always has a purpose behind what He is doing.

Once Moses and the Israelites were in the wilderness, God began to show them His favor. He gave them the 10 commandments so they would know how to rightly relate to Him and to one another. He gave them His law to help guide them to be a light to the nations around them. He also gave them plans for a tabernacle, a tent, that would become the hotspot of His presence on the earth. He gave them a vision of His presence dwelling among them continually. When God gave the instructions for building this tabernacle, He told them to use the finest materials and craftsmanship available. It would be a costly investment that would require a tremendous amount of sacrificial giving of time and money. The people went to work. This is where our story begins...

Tell the story from Exodus 36:1-7: *Use different storytellers. Teach people to share God's Word with others!*

Rebuild the story: *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*

Read the story from Exodus 36:1-7: *Ask the group to read these verses.*

Discussion Questions: learn to talk about God's Word with others...

Head
Questions:
Quicker
tempo.

- What do you like or dislike about this story? What stands out to you?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God?

Heart & Hand
Questions:
Slow down &
wait!

- What is your greatest weakness when it comes to generously giving your time and money?
- What do you think God is trying to show you right now? How do you need to change?
- Who could retell the story for us right here one last time?

Thank your storyteller for sharing the Word. Ask for a volunteer storyteller for next week.
Close in prayer.



Week 1: Living the Generous Life

Generosity in Discipleship

Take a moment to read the following passage from the gospel of Luke...

Luke 14:25-33

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? 29 For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, 30 saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

31 “Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

Jesus said, “whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” This phrase is, perhaps, one of the most misunderstood phrases by Christians today. Believers struggle to understand what it means to “carry their cross” and follow Jesus.

Many believers are confused and believe that their “cross” is whatever crisis or hardship they are facing in their life today. They believe that they are carrying their cross by navigating difficult health problems, or caring for their elderly parents, or working in a job they don’t enjoy, or by doing the difficult tasks every day with their kids and chores at home.

To be sure, God calls us to trust Him and rely on His grace through the difficulties of life. We are to represent Christ well while meeting adversity head on with the hope and power that comes only from Jesus. Still, these trials and tribulations are not what Jesus had in mind when He told His disciples to count the cost and “carry their cross.” Look at the context of the passage above closely. When Jesus told His disciples to carry their cross, He was talking about the cost of discipleship. There is a real cost involved in following Jesus and making disciples, and carrying our cross means embracing that cost and following Jesus.

Jesus was so selfless. The man hardly had a moment to Himself in three and a half years, much less a vacation. He made Himself available to those He was discipling 24/7. He sacrificed time with family. He sacrificed meals. He slept in difficult places. He gave up the comforts of home. He did all this because it is who He is. As God, it is His nature to be generous.

Jesus calls us to be generous like He was generous. He calls us to follow His example. He calls us to count the cost in our discipleship. He calls us to take up our cross, which is the sacrifices we make to be generous in discipleship, and follow Him.

As a group leader, you are a discipleship leader in our church. You set the pace. You provide the example. What example of discipleship and of counting the cost are you providing to the people in your group? How does God want you to grow in generosity? In the way you give to His Church? In the way you open your home? In the way you use your time to serve others? In the way you volunteer with your church to advance His Kingdom? In the way you participate in worship and preaching on Sunday mornings? In where you choose to sit? In what meetings you setup and attend? It is all connected. It is all part of the cost of making disciples.

Are you all in? Will you take up your cross and follow Jesus' extraordinary example of generosity? No investment you make in this life will be more valuable. Trust Jesus when He says you will not be disappointed.