

MY GENEROUS LIFE
FOR CONNECT GROUPS
WEEK 4



THOMPSON STATION CHURCH

GENESIS 14:18-24; HEBREWS 7:1-10

WEEK 4

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying Genesis 14:18-24; Hebrews 7:1-10. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for our pastor, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

BIBLICAL EMPHASIS: The Bible calls us to grow in our giving and in our faith by committing 10% of our income to our home church.

TEACHING AIM: I will become faithful in my journey to be generous by tithing at my home church.

MEMORY VERSE: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it” (Malachi 3:10, NIV).

MEMORY VERSE: But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that (1 Timothy 6:8, NIV).

GENEROUS ATTRIBUTES

Cause Giver. A person who is faithful to respond to a need when God calls.

Consistent Giver. A person who is faithful by giving monthly.

Committed Giver. A person who is faithful in their generosity by tithing to their home church.

Courageous Giver. A person who is faithful by giving beyond the tithe.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

- 1 If you unexpectedly received \$50,000 tonight, what do you think you would do with the money? How much do you think you would save? How much would you spend? Would you give any away? Why or why not?

- 2 What is the first thing you usually do on payday? Has that always been the first thing? How have your payday spending habits changed over the years?

- 3 How does where we first spend our money reveal the content of our hearts?

If you want to know what is truly important to a person, look at where he or she spends his or her money. Our bank statements truly reflect what we value. Scripture teaches us that if we love God, then the way we use our money will reflect that love. Tithing is commanded by God; yet, as we heard last week, as few as 10-20 percent of church members and regular attendees give consistently, much less tithe. The word “tithe” means a tenth, and it refers to the first portion of our income that we hold back to give to the work of the Lord through the local church.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

- > Have a volunteer read Genesis 14:18-24.
 - Who was Melchizedek? What are we supposed to understand about him from this text?

- What are the important truths we learn about giving from this text?
- Why should you give to God before you give your finances to anything else?
- What are some of the practical distinctions between giving regularly and tithing? What are some practical steps we might take to become tithers? What changes might this mean for you or your family?

Notes:

We do not see Melchizedek mentioned very often in Scripture, but from this reference we learn he is a representative of the one true and living God. Abraham understood that giving to Melchizedek was giving to God and His work. God has given us everything we have, and we are only called to steward 10 percent of God's blessing back to His work. When we give our first and best to God we are not only obeying God, but also we are providing an example for future generations with our faithfulness.

- Read Genesis 28:20-22. Where did Abraham's grandson Jacob learn to tithe? If you tithe regularly, where did you first learn to tithe? How are you setting an example for your children or younger church members by giving?
- If you grew up in a home with parents who tithed, what impact did that have on your faith?
- Why should giving be seen as worship? Have you ever thought about why we include a time of giving in worship?

Notes:

Jacob was Abraham's grandson. His inclination to tithe as an act of worship was probably learned from the life of his father and grandfather. Finances can be awkward to talk about with your children, but it is formative for them to see you give. Financially supporting the work of the Lord is a spiritual discipline just like Bible reading or praying. Just as you are called to teach younger disciples about these things, teach them also to give. Offering our resources to the Lord should be seen as an act of worship. Giving is not a painful process, but a joyful one.

> Have a volunteer read Hebrews 7:1-10.

- What do we learn about Melchizedek from the author of Hebrews?
- To whom was Melchizedek ultimately pointing forward? What implications does this have about our giving?

Sacrificial giving happens when we give at least 10-12% of our income away. If you are giving 10% away, you are giving in a way that affects your lifestyle and standard of living. Yet when we realize to Whom we are giving, it makes all the difference. When we tithe we are giving directly to God, and He will bless us for our obedience. Yet if we do not give, we are robbing God. We must decide if you want to give to God or rob from God.

- Read Malachi 3:8-10. What are we doing if we do not tithe?
- What does God promise to do if we are faithful to tithe?

Notes:

Jesus said where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matt. 6:21). If you look at where you spend your money, you will find what you treasure. When we give to God we are blessed beyond anything we could imagine, but we do not give to get blessings. We give because of the joy of loving and obeying the Lord through obedience. As you obey Him more and more, you will find it is a blessing in and of its own. Our tithe is the bottom line obedience for all followers of Jesus. When we tithe, we give our first and best to God, knowing He will supply our needs.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passages apply directly to their lives.

- 1 Have you started to tithe? If not, what is holding you back?
- 2 What do we communicate to God when we tithe faithfully? Why should tithing be a source of joy and not a burden for us?
- 3 What would we be able to do as a church if every single member tithed? What are we unable to do because not everyone does?

90-DAY ACTION STEPS

Use these steps to help your groups process the truth from this lesson in an ongoing way.

- 1 Learn: I will read *The Genius of Generosity*—Chip Ingram.

- 2 Pray: I will share my journey with someone on the same journey and ask them to partner with me in prayer. "Thank You, Lord, for blessing me in all ways at all times with more than I need. Lead me to live faithfully, give generously, share joyfully, and look expectantly toward my future."

Notes:

- 3 Respond:

I will commit to a year-long weekly devotion/
journal for my household

I will partner with TSC to minister through
missions and serving.

I will set up online giving and commit to a
90-Day giving challenge at
TSClife.org/90day.

PRAY

Pray that God would take our firstfruits and use them for His glory. Ask that God would convict people to give their first and best to Him, both in their finances and in devotion.

GENESIS 14:18-24

14:18. Melchizedek, whose name means “king of righteousness” (Heb 7:2), held two titles: he was king of Salem (literally, “King of Peace”)—Salem being another name for nearby Jerusalem—and priest to God Most High. Abram considered Melchizedek, who is the first person in the Bible to be called a priest, to be a priest of Yahweh, since he equated the title “God Most High” with Yahweh (v. 22). The writer of Hebrews drew significant parallels between Melchizedek and Jesus Christ (Heb 5:6; 7:1-28). Jesus is the ultimate king of righteousness and peace, and the ideal high priest who offered up the ultimate sacrifice that sufficed for all time for the sins of the whole world.

Notes:

14:19. When Melchizedek blessed Abram, he was performing what would become a major traditional function of priests (Num 6:23; Dt 10:8). Abram was blessed in the name of God Most High (Hb ‘el ‘elyon), whom he confessed to be Creator of heaven and earth (1:1).

14:20. In a construction that paralleled his blessing to Abram, Melchizedek also “blessed” (give praise to) God Most High because of the saving acts He had performed. The priest subtly reminded Abram that his recent victory was really God’s work; God had handed over the enemies to Abram. The first recorded act of tithing took place here as Abram gave the priest a tenth of the booty he had acquired from the Mesopotamian kings. Abram’s tithe anticipates Israel’s tithe to God (Lv 27:30-32; Num 18:21-30; Mt 23:23).

14:21. The king of Sodom then ordered Abram to hand over the liberated captives, including citizens of the king’s city. As payment for his military efforts, however, the king gave Abram the recaptured possessions, a term which can refer to livestock as well as objects.

14:22-23. With Melchizedek king of Salem, who worshiped God, Abram was cooperative (vv. 18-20); but when the Canaanite king of Sodom told him to take the possessions, he refused. Abram would not let the king diminish God’s glory by taking credit for Abram’s prosperity.

HEBREWS 7:1-10

The Levitical priesthood of the Jews was grounded in the order of Aaron, but the priesthood of Jesus Christ is grounded in the order of Melchizedek. The mysterious Melchizedek appeared in Gen 14:18-20 and was not mentioned again until the messianic promise was made in Psalm 110. The author of Hebrews drew from the OT witness to show that the order of Melchizedek was eternal in origin and scope. Melchizedek participated in the divine attributes of eternity, righteousness, peace, and sovereignty. His eternality is evident in that he was a priest forever—without beginning or end. His righteousness is evident in His name since Melchizedek is Hebrew for “king of righteousness.” His peace is evident in the fact that he was also declared to be the King of Salem, which means “king of peace.” Finally, Melchizedek’s sovereignty was recognized by Abraham, who paid this priest-king a tithe of all he had when he returned victorious from war. If Abraham recognized Melchizedek’s superiority by paying him a tithe, then Israel must, too. The author argued that the Levitical priesthood was inferior to that of Melchizedek because the inferior is blessed by the superior. The sovereignty of Melchizedek is reflected in the sovereignty of the Son of God, because while the Levitical priesthood was authorized by a legal command, the priesthood of Christ was authorized by the power of an indestructible life.

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