

# **Generous Joy: Straight Talks on Giving**



**Community Group Study Guide  
January 2010**

**Holy Trinity Church, Chicago**

**South Side and West Side Congregations**

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## WELCOME TO A COMMUNITY GROUP

### Introduction

We are committed to building authentic community in Chicago that transforms lives – so that each of us looks more and more like Jesus. Because we’ve been changed by the stunning good news of the gospel, we want to respond to one another in love. Jesus tells his followers, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

### Vision

We are praying for a movement of community groups throughout Chicago, so that our city is filled with Jesus’ glory.

### Structure

Community groups meet weekly in homes throughout the neighborhoods of Chicago in groups of 6-12 people who commit to stay together for 12-18 months and plant a new community group.

### Life

Community Groups at Holy Trinity Church help us connect on four levels:

- ***Connect to God:*** God designed people for relationship with Him – and so we’ve specifically designed community groups to bring you closer to God. In fact, the very reason why Jesus came into the world is to bring people into intense, personal and eternal relationships with God.
- ***Connect to the Word:*** We believe that God speaks today through his word. So in our community groups we train each other on how to listen carefully to what God says in his Word. We have found that as we’ve studied the Bible, it has changes us individually and as a group to be more like Jesus. Jesus teaches (Luke 24:44-47) that he is the point of history and the Bible, and so we are always connecting our story to the story of the text and the larger story of God’s work in history.
- ***Connect to other people:*** City living can be isolating. But Jesus calls us to live in Christ-like community with each other in accountability, sharing, love and commitment. So we laugh, pray, sing and share together on a weekly basis. We celebrate the idea that God himself lives in eternal community!
- ***Connect to the city:*** Even as God sent Jesus as a missionary to us, we believe God has called us on a mission for the Kingdom. So we intentionally serve those in our city, the poor, disadvantaged and isolated – celebrating God’s goodness towards us with them.

You are most welcome!

## WINTER/SPRING 2010 COMMUNITY GROUP CALENDAR

### *Week of:*

January 11	Group Study #1	1 Kings 10:14—11:8 <i>personal study/ sermon/ group discussion</i>
January 18	Group Study #2	Luke 12:13-21 <i>personal study/ sermon/ group discussion</i>
January 25	Group Study #3	Luke 16:1-13 <i>personal study/ sermon/ group discussion</i>
February 1	Group Study #4	2 Kings 5:15-27 <i>personal study/ sermon/ group discussion</i>

*Groups will continue through the week of May 10th*

## GENEROUS JOY: STRAIGHT TALKS ON GIVING

Over the next 4 weeks we will look at the very sensitive issue of our money and particularly our giving to the Lord's work. We look forward to these studies together.

Compared to prior years, we have a new format, a format we believe will help us to understand the text, God and our ourselves, as well as to help us to apply the text to life.

*Objectives of this study guide:*

- **Greater growth:** We believe that the daily study of God's Word is critical for your spiritual growth. We are providing you with materials to study, in an accountable context, in order to foster greater growth in the Gospel.
- **Greater application:** The opportunity to study a scripture passage a number of times personally, to hear a sermon preached on the text, and then to discuss it in your Community Group will allow for greater understanding and application.

### ***How it works***

We are asking you to engage the Biblical text through:

- *Personal study* - Study each passage on your own three times;
- *A Sunday Sermon* - Hear a sermon preached on the text;
- *Community Group study* - Discuss and apply the passage with the others in your community group.

*Personal Study*

We suggest that you find a regular time and place for 30 minutes each day to learn from the Scriptures. You will need a pen or pencil, your Bible, a notebook and study materials. In the following pages, each study suggests three readings for each text, along with a set of questions for each reading, each with a slightly different focus.

- *God*: What does this passage tell you about God?
- *Yourself*: What does this passage tell you about yourself (or people in general)?
- *Your life*: What does this passage tell you about how you should live?

### Sunday Sermons

Typically each Sunday you will hear a sermon based on the same text as the Community Group study. Our prayer is that the sermon will be meaningful resource for understanding and applying the Biblical text. The Sunday sermon will also be available online at [www.htcchicago.org](http://www.htcchicago.org) for those unable to make the service, or if you would like to listen again.

### Community Group Study

Most weeks you will have a chance to study and discuss the text together in your community group (see calendar on next page).

### **Resources**

#### Resources provided through Holy Trinity Church:

In order to help you grow in God's word, we will provide you with the following resources:

1. *The Biblical text* – the attached studies have the applicable Biblical text printed at the beginning of each study. Our study efforts are primarily a study on the Biblical text.
2. *Personal study questions* – the attached studies contain three sets of questions for each study. Arrange your schedule during the week to allow for three separate daily readings of this text, attempting to answer the questions to the best of your ability. As things come to mind when interacting with the Biblical text, make them a matter of prayer.

#### Additional optional resources:

If you would like to the matter of biblical giving at a more in depth level, we recommend the following resources:

Alcorn, Randy. *Money, Possessions and Eternity*, Tyndale, 2003

Alcorn, Randy. *The Treasure Principle*, Multnomah, 2001

## Study #1: 1 Kings 10:14—11:8

Week 1 - **Week of January 11<sup>th</sup>**

Community Group calendar: **Study #1**

Text: **1 Kings 10:14—11:8**

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached on January 10<sup>th</sup> from **1 Kings 10:14—11:8**
- Group discussion during week of January 11<sup>th</sup>

### **1 Kings 10:14-11:8 (ESV)**

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, [15] besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the west and from the governors of the land. [16] King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold; 600 shekels of gold went into each shield. [17] And he made 300 shields of beaten gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. [18] The king also made a great ivory throne and overlaid it with the finest gold. [19] The throne had six steps, and at the back of the throne was a calf's head, and on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing beside the armrests, [20] while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom. [21] All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. [22] For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

[23] Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. [24] And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. [25] Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.

[26] And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. [27] And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah. [28] And Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Kue, and the king's traders received them from Kue at a price. [29] A chariot could be imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver and a horse for 150, and so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

[11:1] Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, [2] from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. [3] He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. [4] For when Solomon was old his wives

turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

[5] For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. [6] So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. [7] Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. [8] And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

### **First Reading – Taking in the Big Picture...**

1. Who is the main human character in the text?
2. What words come to mind when you size up Solomon's situation?
3. Read 1 Kings 10:1-13. How does what we see complement this week's text?
4. How did the queen of Sheba respond to what she saw? What was her take on the situation based on 1 Kings 10:9?

### **Second Reading – Sizing Up Solomon's Success...**

1. According to this week's passage Solomon's life's energies were focused on three things. What were they?
2. What are some contemporary parallels to the areas of Solomon's investments and energies?
3. Based on what we see, Solomon would be considered "successful" by this world's standards. Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20 and size up Solomon's success based on that passage.
4. Point out some of the danger signs in Solomon's life based on this passage.

5. Where is God in the picture in 1 Kings 10:1—11:8?

**Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?**

1. What do we learn about God and His gifts from this passage?
2. How do we guard against “clinging in love” to the wrong things (see 1 Kings 11:4-8)?
3. 2 Samuel 7:12-17 speaks of David’s offspring building a house for the Lord’s name. What from the 2 Samuel passage applies to Samuel? (See also 1 Kings 11:9ff.) What applies to Christ?
4. How might you preach the Gospel from this passage?
5. Which “son of David” does your life most resemble?
6. Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text for application to your life.

**Summarize the passage:**

What is the **theme** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

What is the **aim** of the passage (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

## **Study #2: Luke 12:13-21**

Week 2 - **Week of January 18<sup>th</sup>**

Community Group calendar: **Study #2**

Text: **Luke 12:13-21**

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached on January 17<sup>th</sup> from Luke 12:13-21
- Group discussion during week of January 18<sup>th</sup>

### **Luke 12:13-21 (ESV)**

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." [14] But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" [15] And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." [16] And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, [17] and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' [18] And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. [19] And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' [20] But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' [21] So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

### **First Reading – What does the text tell us about God?**

1. What does this passage say about God's perspective on material things?
2. What's the Lord's evaluation of the person who labors and plans for material success but neglects the matters ultimate importance?
3. What does it mean to be rich toward God?

### **Second Reading –What does the text tell us about people/ourselves?**

1. Identify the words or phrases that speak of "abundance," "plenty," etc. in the passage.
2. The "peril of plenty" comes into view in this passage. What can one do to guard against "plenty" being a problem?

3. One of the “Seven Deadly Sins” is avarice. What’s so deadly about greed?
4. What “people problems” are caused by greed? See also 1 Timothy 6:6-10.

**Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?**

1. How does the example of the Lord Jesus factor into our understanding of and attitudes toward what we possess? See 2 Corinthians 8:9.
2. What does this text teach us about priorities?
3. Based on Jesus’ teaching, are you more rich in material or spiritual things?
4. Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text for application to your life.

**Summarize the passage:**

What is the **theme** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

What is the **aim** of the passage (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

### Study #3: Luke 16:1-13

Week 3 - **Week of January 25<sup>th</sup>**

Community Group calendar: **Study #3**

Text: **Luke 16:1-13**

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached on January 24<sup>th</sup> from **Luke 16:1-13**
- Group discussion during week of January 24<sup>th</sup>

#### **Luke 16:1-13 (ESV)**

He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. [2] And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' [3] And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. [4] I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.' [5] So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' [6] He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' [7] Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' [8] The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. [9] And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

[10] "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. [11] If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? [12] And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? [13] No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

#### **First Reading – What's the text about?**

1. What is this passage about? How does the context help you better understand our text?
2. How would you divide verses 1-13?
3. Who are the main players in the text and who do they represent?

4. After coming to grips with the essence of the story, reset it in “Chicago 2010.” Who are the players, their roles, etc.?

**Second Reading –What does the text tell us about people/ourselves?**

1. What does this passage have to do with stewardship?
2. How does “mismanagement” factor into this story?
3. How would you evaluate the manager’s plan? How did the Lord evaluate the manager’s plan?
4. What does the phrase “looking out for number one” have to do with this story?
5. What are our general thoughts about how we should look out for ourselves? What can be missing from our perspectives?

**Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?**

1. How do you handle the tensions between earthly and eternal interests as it relates to stewardship?
2. How faithful are you in wisely using what you have been entrusted with?
3. Do you have a stewardship plan that includes the “worldly wealth” or opportunities that have been given to you?
4. Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text for application to your life.

**Summarize the passage:**

What is the **theme** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

What is the **aim** of the passage (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

### **Study #4: 2 Kings 5:15-27**

Week 4 – **Week of February 1<sup>st</sup>**

Community Group calendar: **Study #4**

Text: **2 Kings 5:15-27**

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached on January 31<sup>st</sup> from 2 Kings 5:15-27
- Group discussion during week of February 1<sup>st</sup>

#### **2 Kings 5:15-27 (ESV)**

Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant." [16] But he said, "As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none." And he urged him to take it, but he refused. [17] Then Naaman said, "If not, please let there be given to your servant two mules' load of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the Lord. [18] In this matter may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter." [19] He said to him, "Go in peace." But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, [20] Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him." [21] So Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, "Is all well?" [22] And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me to say, 'There have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two festal garments.' " [23] And Naaman said, "Be pleased to accept two talents." And he urged him and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two festal garments, and laid them on two of his servants. And they carried them before Gehazi. [24] And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. [25] He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere." [26] But he said to him, "Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants? [27] Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper, like snow.

**First Reading – Tuning in to the text...**

1. Read 2 Kings 5:1-27 to familiarize yourself with the context of our passage.
2. Who are the main characters in the narrative?
3. What characters are in contrast?
4. What are the stewardship issues in the passage?

**Second Reading –What does the text tell us about people/ourselves?**

1. *The Free Dictionary* defines greed in the terms: **Greed** (also called **avarice**) in psychology is an inordinate desire to acquire or possess more than one needs or deserves, especially with respect to material wealth. How does greed factor into this week's text?
2. Greed can lead to other personal and people issues. How is that true in this week's text?
3. How might Elisha's servant Gehazi have justified his actions?
4. Read verse 26 again. Note the part about timing, "Was it time....?" Is there ever a time to look out for number one?" If so, what was the big deal about what Gehazi did?
5. Has the Lord ever asked you to do something that was contrary to human reasoning?

**Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?**

1. Read Luke 12:14 to see what Jesus would say to Gehazi and us? What’s Jesus’ word to the “would-be greedy.”
2. How does generosity counter greed?
3. How is this story related to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How might one preach the Gospel from this passage?
4. Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text for application to your life.

**Summarize the passage:**

What is the **theme** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

What is the **aim** of the passage (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?