



PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

Welcome: *Icebreaker – What is the best gift that you have ever received?*

Study Context: This week's study guide revolves around the ideas of tithes and offerings in the church service. Here are a couple of key Old Testament passages that can help you navigate the discussion of tithing.

Genesis 14:18-20 / Hebrews 7:4-9: These passages describe Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek. Abraham offers 1/10 of all his wealth to this Mysterious king of righteousness who presides over the city of Salem (peace, *Shalom*, Jerusalem). The author of Hebrews writes that Abraham, when he does offer 1/10 of his wealth to a higher authority is modeling a giving pattern to a king who represents God Himself.

Exodus 23:19, 34:26; Leviticus 27:30: These are passages that echo God's desire to see the first fruits – or the "fat cuts" – of all things to be dedicated to the Lord.

Numbers 18:8-32: The tithes dedicated to the Lord in these passages are designated for offerings and the funding of *the unique work of the Levites and the High Priest of the Temple*.

Deuteronomy 14:22-29; 26:1-14: The tithes dedicated to the Lord in these passages are similarly designated for ceremonial offerings, *a celebratory meal*, and a reserve for the 3rd year to give to the poor.

Scholars debate whether there are 3-4 tithes that add up to 23% or whether the same tithe is used for all expenditures – arguing that tithes could've served different purposes given that Numbers was written during the wandering of Israel and Deuteronomy prepared the nation to enjoy a permanent land. Regardless, pay attention to how God might be calling you toward a deeper relationship with Him through practices of [generosity!](#)

What's Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Danny brought us into the seventh week of our series titled *A Church that Pleases God*. Pastor Danny directed our attention to the story of Cain and Abel in *Genesis 4:1-6* to discuss that one of the main reasons we **gather** is to present our gifts and offerings to the Lord through His church. Pastor Danny explains that throughout the scriptures, money is nothing more than a tool that God has given us to bring glory to Him. As you read this study guide, pay close attention to your heart when it comes to the topic of giving.

“The better you know someone, the better equipped you are to give them a good gift that honors them...Money is nothing more than a tool that God has given you to bring Him Glory. How are you going to steward the portion he has placed in your hand?” – Pastor Danny Strange



GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

Worship (10 – 15 minutes)

Take time with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter into the presence of God for this meeting.

Option 1: Worship Music Have someone share their favorite song. You can find it online, play it, and even sing along with your group! Have them explain why the lyrics have impacted them!	Option 2: God Sightings The premise of today's discussion is the <i>abundance</i> of God's blessings. Go around your group and share all the ways you have seen God abundantly provide for you this week!	Option 3: Transformed Worldview Matthew 6:21 Before you meet, spend some time meditating on the ways your heart might be drawn away from the Lord and toward material wealth. Be prepared to share with your group.
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Word #1: Challenge Your Perspective of Giving Your First Fruits (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Genesis 4:1-6; Malachi 3:8-12 – In the very first story of fallen humanity after Adam and Eve, the scriptures confront us with a passage about generosity. While it is not explicitly stated, Abel's offering is accepted because he presents the "fatty portion" of his "firstborn". The assumption that follows is that Cain held back the "first fruits" of his offering and was therefore not accepted. Malachi, the very last book of the Old Testament, suggests that when we do not bring our offerings to the Lord, we are robbing him, taking what is already His, and we are also undermining our relationship of trust for God. **How might your giving practices change if you came to the Lord in a posture like Abel looking to offer the "fat cut" of whatever God brings your way? What stands out to you the most about the Malachi passage?**

Host Tip: Allow the lessons from scripture here paint a beautiful vision of what life could be like if we let go of our resources and learn to trust the Lord. Leave these questions intentionally open-ended so that the Lord may fill in the blanks through their imagination.

Word #2: Challenge Yourself to Grow in Generosity (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Matthew 25:14-30; Mark 12:41-44; Luke 16:1-15; John 3:16; Acts 4:32-35; Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 – Listed are scriptures that reveal (1) Jesus' teachings on money and wealth, (2) the early church's treatment of money, and (3) a reminder that the greatest gift we have received is the gift of Jesus Christ. **Which of Jesus' teachings about money in the gospels stand out to you the most and why? What might it look like for your Life Group to become like the early church and meet each other's needs on a deeper level? How might you be able to continue practices of generosity throughout the week and in the context of your Life Group moving forward?**

Host Tip: There are 3 specific challenges that were given to us as a church. Allow yourselves to discuss these and then continue to brainstorm new methods of participation in the gospel message moving forward.

Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

- Pray for the Unfolding Events in the [Russia – Ukrainian crisis](#).
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to inspire us to surrender ALL to Jesus.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would show you new opportunities to be generous.
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
- Pray for the entire group and how they may be able to participate in future group meetings.
- Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!
- Pray for God's hand in the multiplication and revival of your group!

Stay up to date with our Prayer Ministry by signing up to be an intercessor online at 3Crosses.org/pray/!

Throughout the Week

- **Prepare for Next Week:** *WORSHIP AND PRAYER - Primary Texts: TBD* — In the **gather** portion of our series, we will talk about all the ways we offer a sacrifice of praise as we bring our words to God in Worship and prayer. Be prepared by looking at all of the teachings you see about prayer and worship in the scriptures.
- **Follow up between group members:** Have each member of the group pick one other group member to follow up with about how they are growing in their faith as they learn to keep in step with wherever the Holy Spirit is leading them.
- **Join relief efforts locally and around the world:** Looking to contribute to what is going on both locally and around the world? Visit our website and volunteer in our [neighborhood resource center](#) or help sponsor an [indigenous missionary](#)!
- **Life Groups 2022:** For more information about joining a group, hosting a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org or Carmela at carmela@3crosses.org