

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE

Lesson 2

SESSION TITLE: “PROVIDING FOR ONE ANOTHER”

FOCAL PASSAGE: (Acts 4:32-37; Matt. 6:19-21)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner discover and practice the principle of generous giving back to the Lord to provide for the needs of others.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. **Share-** the following humorous story:

Man Buried with His Money

There was a man who worked all his life and saved as much as he could. He loved money more than anything.

Just before he died, he said to his wife, "When I die, I want you to take all my money and put it in the casket with me. I want to take my money to the afterlife with me." His wife promised she would.

At his funeral, just before the undertakers closed the casket, his wife put a box in the casket. The undertakers shut the casket and rolled it away.

The wife's friend said, " I know you weren't foolish enough to put all that money in there with that man."

She said, "I can't lie. I promised him I would put that money in the casket with him."

"You mean to tell me you put that money in the casket with him?" her friend asked.

"I sure did," said the wife. "I wrote him a check."

"Money in the Casket," *GCFL.net* (7-29-02), (Accessed 9-10-02);
submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Quebec

State- Most people can identify with this man. They would rather hang on to their money and possessions instead of giving it away.

Share- the following information:

Americans Busy Storing Their Stuff

In an *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article by Jim Auchmutey, the writer quotes comedian George Carlin as saying, "The essence of life is trying to find a place to put all your stuff."

Auchmutey writes that there are 32,000 self storage businesses nationwide (or the equivalent of 1.3 billion feet of rentable space), 620 in Atlanta alone (twice as many as 10 years ago), and 100 million storage containers are sold by Rubbermaid every year.

This "stuff" explosion peculiar to Americans has led to a new profession: the professional organizer. Some P.O.'s charge as much as 75 dollars an hour to help people get organized in this culture of clutter."

Jim Auchmutey, "Our Overflowing Lives," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, (1-20-02);
submitted by David Slagle, Lawrenceville, Georgia

People are into hoarding more than giving

In the December 31, 2003 edition of the Dallas Morning News there was an article about Patrick Moore a New York resident. Mr. Moore was rescued in his apartment after mountains of papers and books collapsed and fell on him. Emergency workers said that there were books and papers stacked floor to ceiling covering the entire apartment. Mr. Moore makes his living selling papers and books, on the street, but the very thing that provided his livelihood almost took his live because he hoarded so much stuff.

State- Today we are going to discuss how to give away our resources to glorify God and to provide for the needs of others.

B. Optional Method

Display and Share- the following statement:

“The trouble is that too many people are spending money they haven’t yet earned for things they don’t need to impress people they don’t like.”

Next- Distribute the questionnaire **“What Money Means to You”** and guide members to complete it. (In a couples Bible study this would be good for each spouse to complete the questionnaire and then compare how they rated.)

After members have completed it help them interpret the results.

Ask- Would any of these categories hinder people from having a giving spirit? How? Why?

State- Today we are going to discuss how to give away our resources to glorify God and to provide for the needs of others.

Interpretation of Scores

4 - 8 = Low

9 - 12 = Moderate

13 - 16 = High

17 - 20 = Very High

Understanding what it means:

Money as status. People who identify with money as a status symbol are interested in money as power—as a means of keeping ahead of one’s peers.

Money as security. People who use money as a means of security spend conservatively and focus on saving.

Money as enjoyment. People who view money as a means to enjoyment get satisfaction from buying things for themselves and others.

Money as control. People who see money as a source of control, use it to maintain control of their lives, and to remain independent from their partner or other family members.

Now, compare your scores with each other. The closer your scores in each category are, the easier it will be to meet mutual financial goals and needs. The further apart they are, the more negotiating and compromising you’ll have to do.

Reprinted by permission of Warner Books, Inc. of New York, New York, U.S.A. From *The First Year of Marriage* by Miriam Arond and Samuel L. Pauker, M.D., Copyright by Miriam Arond and Samuel Pauker. Quoted in *Together Forever*, Aid Association for Lutherans, Appleton, WI, 1997, pp. 46-57

Daniel D. Busby, Kent E. Barber, and Robert L. Temple,
“Worry-free money management”, *Christian American*,
January/February 1997, pp. 40-42

C. Optional Method- Movie Clip “Bruce Almighty”

Start: 00:59:38

Stop: 01:02:22

Synopsis: *Bruce Almighty* is the story of Bruce Noland, who lives as though the world revolves around him. He is a reporter whose dream is to be promoted to the news anchor position at a Buffalo television station.

One night, while Bruce is complaining loudly about the way God runs the world, God meets with Bruce and gives him the opportunity to try and run the universe for one week.

First come the prayer requests. As millions of prayers start flooding in, Bruce is overwhelmed.

Thinking out loud, he comes up with a plan. "I know, let all prayers be organized into files." Immediately, thousands of files fill up his apartment.

Bruce tries another idea. "I know. Prayer Post-its." Everything in sight is instantly covered in yellow Post-it notes. Bruce looks like a yellow mummy.

Bruce's next idea is prayer e-mail. His computer says, "You've got prayers," and begins downloading the requests. Thousands pour in. Bruce realizes this is going to take a while. The next morning the computer tells him he has 1,527,503 prayer messages. He uses his power to reply to the requests at superhuman speed.

"I had to have made a dent," he says. He checks his progress and finds that over 3 million have come in since he began.

His final solution to the mountain of prayers is to say yes to everyone.

"There you go. Now everybody's happy.

"Elapsed Time: From Universal logo, scene begins at 00:59:38 and ends at 01:02:22.

(Bruce Almighty (2003), from Universal Pictures, produced by Tom Shadyac)

State- Later in the movie the world is thrown into catastrophe because all of their wants were granted. If God acted this way the world would not be a better place because mankind's greed would rule out.

Ask- If you could ask God for a material need and you knew He would answer yes, what would you ask? Would this make you more giving, more generous? Generosity is not based on possessions it is based on the attitude of the heart. It is a value.

State- Today we are going to discuss how to give away our resources to glorify God and to provide for the needs of others.

II. Book

- A. Utilize the discussion guide to examine the scripture passage.

III. Look

- A. Distribute the handout "10 Benefits of Generous Giving" and guide members to complete it.

IV. Took

A. Share-the following story

Money More Important Than Life?

When I was 13, my dad owned his own business—a tiny shack where he sold chicken, ribs, hamburgers, hot dogs, and fries. One day the oil that the chicken was fried in caught fire. In a few minutes the whole place exploded in flames. My dad bolted from the store before the flames could engulf him.

Then my mom and I arrived on the scene, and we all stood outside watching the fire burn away my dad's business. All of a sudden, my dad realized he had left his money in the metal cash register inside the building, and I watched in disbelief as he ran back into the inferno before anyone could stop him.

He tried to open the metal register, but the intense heat had already sealed the drawer shut. Knowing that every penny he had was locked in front of him about to go up into flames, he picked up the scalding metal box and carried it outside. When he threw the register on the ground, the skin on his arms and chest came with it. He had escaped the fire safely once, untouched. Then he voluntarily risked his life and was severely injured. The money was that important.

That was when I learned that money is obviously more important than life itself. From that point on, earning money—lots of money—not only became what drove me professionally, but also became my emotional priority.

Suze Orman, *9 Steps to Financial Freedom* (Random House, 2000), p. 3; submitted by
Aaron Goerner

State- Let's not put undo priority on money and possessions. Let's make the commitment this week to give back to God and help provide for the needs of others.

B. Optional Method

Share- the following humorous story.

Cheerful Givers

A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church. "Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself," she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. "Well," said the little girl, "I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I'd be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did."

Bits & Pieces, February 4, 1993, p. 23

Ask- How many of us have ever thought if I just had more money, I would give more.

Share- the following statistics that prove the opposite is really true:

INCOME	% GIVEN AWAY
Under \$10,000	3.6%
\$10-19,999	3.4%
\$20-29,999.	2.5%
\$30-39,999..	1.8%
\$40-49,999....	2.3%
\$50-74,999...	2.0%
\$75-99,999..	1.9%
\$100,000 and above.	2.5%

Ron Blue, *Storm Shelter*, Thomas Nelson Publ.,
quoted in *New Man*, March/April 1995, p. 16

State- The norm is the more we have the less generous we are.

Next- Read the following poem.

Leftovers

Leftovers are such humble things,
We would not serve to a guest,
And yet we serve them to our Lord
Who deserves the very best.

We give to Him leftover time,
Stray minutes here and there.
Leftover cash we give to Him,
Such few coins as we can spare.

We give our youth unto the world,
To hatred, lust and strife;
Then in declining years we give
To him the remnant of our life.

- Source unknown

Challenge members to generously give to God's work to help provide for one another's needs.

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)

1. What was the evidence that the believers in (Acts 4:32) were of one heart?

Because they had everything in common including their possessions.

2. How did the people of the early church care for each others needs? (vs. 34-35)

They sold possessions and brought the proceeds to place in a general fund to care for any who had a need.

3. If a fellow believer in your SGM had a need would you be willing to sell something to help them? Would you really?

4. What would happen if every believer just gave a tithe (10% of their income) to the work of the church? Would any believer ever be in need?

5. There are 3 keys to giving back to God, how are you doing in each? (Pick one for each key - Not at all, some, doing the right thing)

a. Proportionately (If God blesses you a lot give a lot?) _____

b. Systematically (Do you have a plan for consistent giving?) _____

c. Sacrificially (Are you giving up something to give? _____

6. What happens to all of the “stuff” we work so hard to accumulate? (Matt. 6:19)

Moths & rust will destroy it. Thieves will break in and steal it.

7. What percentage of time in a given week do you devote to...

Storing up treasure on earth _____

Storing up treasure in heaven _____

8. How do you store up “treasure in heaven”?

Sharing your faith

Sharing your possessions

Sharing your time for ministry

Sharing your gifts & talents for ministry

9. Where is your heart? Is it on the things of earth or the things of heaven?

10. How can you refocus your heart, which will affect your treasure? What needs to change in your life?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What was the evidence that the believers in (Acts 4:32) were of one heart?
2. How did the people of the early church care for each others needs? (vs. 34-35)
3. If a fellow believer in your SGM had a need would you be willing to sell something to help them? Would you really?
4. What would happen if every believer just gave a tithe (10% of their income) to the work of the church? Would any believer ever be in need?
5. There are 3 keys to giving back to God, how are you doing in each? Not at all, some, doing the right thing

- A. Proportionately** _____
B. Systematically _____
C. Sacrificially are you giving up something to give? _____

6. What happens to all of the “stuff” we work so hard to accumulate? (Matt. 6:19)
7. What percentage of time in a given week do you devote to...

Storing up treasure on earth _____
Storing up treasure in heaven _____

8. How do you store up “treasure in heaven”?
9. Where is your heart? Is it on the things of earth or the things of heaven?
10. How can you refocus your heart, which will affect your treasure? What needs to change in your life?

10 Benefits of Generous Giving

How much should a believer give to the cause of Christ? A minimum amount is 10% but if you can't begin there you should begin where you can and increase.

C.S. Lewis said it this way..." I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is we should give more than we can spare."

Benefit #1 It is a tried and proven practice by Godly people throughout a long period of time.
Gen. 14:17-20 _____
Lev. 27:30 _____
Mal. 3:7-15 _____

Benefit #2 It will help you revere God more in your life.
Deut. 14:23 _____

Benefit #3 It will allow God to bring wisdom & order in your finances and help you avoid materialism.
I.Tim. 6:6-10 _____
Eccl. 5:10 _____

Benefit #4 It will serve as a practical reminder that God is the owner of everything.
Chron. 29: 11-18 _____
Psalm 24:1-2 _____

Benefit #5 It will allow you to experience God's creative care & provision in you life.
Psalm 3:9-10 _____
Mal. 3:7-15 _____

Benefit #6 It will encourage your spiritual growth and trust in God.
Deut. 14:23 _____

Benefit #7 It will ensure you of treasure in heaven.
Heb. 6:10 _____

Benefit #8 It will strengthen the ministry of your church.
2 Cor. 9:12-13 _____

Benefit #9 It will help provide the means to keep Pastors and missionaries in full time service.
I Cor.9: 9-11 _____
Phil 4:15-19 _____

Benefit #10 It will help accomplish needed building projects and improvement for your church.
2 Kings 12:2-16 _____
1 Chron. 29:2-10 _____

What Money Means to You

Rate each of the following statements:

Strongly disagree = 1

Disagree = 2

Uncertain = 3

Agree = 4

Strongly agree = 5

1. It is important to me to maintain a lifestyle similar to or better than that of my peers.
2. In making a major purchase, an important consideration is what others will think of my choice.
3. Since money equals power, I am willing to work hard for money in order to have more power.
4. I really enjoy shopping and having nice things.
5. Saving money for a rainy day is an important principle to live by.
6. If I had a moderate amount of money to invest, I would be more likely to put it into multiple resources that are relatively safe than into one fairly risky source that has the potential to make a lot of money.
7. Being “flat broke” is one of the worst things that could happen to me.
8. Saving for retirement is an important financial goal for me.
9. If I suddenly came into a windfall of \$1,000 for something I have always wanted to do or have, I would do it or buy it.
10. Since “You can’t take it with you,” you might as well spend it.
11. Money can’t buy happiness, but it sure helps.
12. Few things in life give me greater pleasure than making a great buy.
13. I like/would like having my own business because I can/could control my own financial destiny.
14. I like being able to make decisions about how to spend the money I earn.
15. It bothers me to be dependent on someone else for money.
16. I feel uncomfortable if someone offers to “pick up the tab” because I feel indebted to them.

Now, add your scores for the four questions in each category. The higher your score, the stronger you identify with that approach.

Category	Questions	Your Score
Money as Status	1-4	_____
Money as Security	5-8	_____
Money as Enjoyment	9-12	_____
Money as a Control over Life	13-16	_____

THE Word For The Week

1 Peter 4:10; Phil. 2:4
Serving One Another

Monday – 1 Peter 4:10

- When each of us is born again we receive three things: God's Grace through salvation, the Holy Spirit to live and dwell in us, and a Spiritual Gift.
- Have you ever taken a Spiritual Gifts test? (for further reading: Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-10)
- If not then go directly to the next line. If you have then how are you regularly using your gifts to build up the body of Christ?
- Challenge yourself to visit the Discovery Center next weekend and pick up a Spiritual Gifts Assessment. Also, pick up a information on different areas of ministry that match your spiritual gifts.
- By discovering how God uniquely gifted you to minister, you can begin to understand who you are in Christ and where you can most effectively give of your time and energy.

Tuesday – 1 Peter 4:10

- What does the apostle Peter tell us that we should do with our spiritual gifts?
- Why should we serve one another? What was Christ's example? (Read Mark 10:43-45)
- Matthew 22:39-40 tells us that serving one another literally holds together the words and commandments of the scripture. It follows Christ's example and it puts into play God's perfect plan of proclaiming his name through love.
- How are you doing at serving your brothers and sisters in Christ? Are you involved in an SGM and are you actively serving in a position? Make a commitment to serve today and meet with your SGM Coordinator.

Wednesday – 1 Peter 4:10

- What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? Is it to glorify the individual with the gift? Or is it to glorify God, proclaim his wisdom above all created things, and pronounce with certainty that our God is in complete control of all things at all times?
- Ephesians 3:10 tells us that the church doesn't just have an earthly mission but also a cosmic mission. That mission is to make the earth but also the expanse of heaven and the depths of hell shake with the awesome power of God's perfect plan of redemption.
- Have you realized the importance of your role in this war and taken your place of service in the church?
- Memorize 1 Peter 4:10 today and never forget that you are integral in God's plan.

Thursday – Philippians 2:4

- Question: Who benefits from acts of service? Answer: Everyone
- God receives the glory and those we serve get their needs meet. What do we get?
- Matthew 13:44 tells of a man who gave away everything to serve the Lord. In return the man received the ultimate JOY in taking part in God's cosmic plan.
- Do you have that joy in your life? Serve the needs of someone you know in your SGM today, anonymously!! See what kind of joy God gives you.

Friday – Philippians 2:4

- What attitude should we have when we serve others?
- Verse 4 is the last in a small passage about humility. The members of the church were serving one another but with the wrong attitude and for the wrong reasons. Read verses 1-4.
- Write down the words that describe the proper attitude of a servant of the Lord.
- Pray these verses over you life today. Portray this attitude to everyone you see today.

REAL LIFE
“Providing for One Another”
Acts 4:32-37 & Matthew 6:19-21

The early church was committed to providing for one another because they viewed the church as the manifestation of God’s kingdom on earth. To care for the individual members of the church was to care for the things of the kingdom. Selfishly holding onto property was no temptation for those who expected the return of Christ at any moment, those who trusted the protection and provision of God in the mean time. Providing for the needs of others was laying up treasures in heaven.

The members of the early church often fell into serious financial and material need because of their new-found faith in Jesus Christ. They lost jobs, homes, and savings due to Jewish persecution. Their only earthly hope for survival was the mutual concern of individual members as they provided for one another. Barnabas exemplified this concern for the things of God as expressed in his gracious provision to the church.

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to Theophilus/Jewish Christians back THEN)
LUKE’S POSITIVE MODEL OF THE NEW COMMUNITY
PROVIDING FOR ONE ANOTHER, AS THEY GREW
BY THE POWERFUL INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,
WAS JOSEPH, A LEVITE FROM CYPRUS, NICKNAMED BARNABAS
WHO SOLD A FIELD HE OWNED AND BROUGHT THE PROCEEDS
AND PLACED THEM AT THE APOSTLES’ FEET (Acts 4:32-37).

- I. The EVIDENCE that all the Community of believers was one in heart and soul was that no one said that his possessions were his own, but rather had everything in common (*koina*), (32).
NOTE: This summary passage mirrored the 2:44-45 passage.
- II. The RESULT of the Apostles’ great power (see 1:8) in Giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was that great grace was upon all of them (cp. 2:43), (33).
- III. The REASON there were no needy people among New Community was because those who owned land or houses Sold them and, Bringing the proceeds to the Apostles, Placed them at their feet for Distribution to each according to their need, (34-35).
- IV. A Positive MODEL of the compassionate unity of the New Community, growing along with the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, was Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, nicknamed Barnabas (Son of Encouragement) who Sold a field he Owned and Brought the proceeds and Placed them at the Apostles’ feet, (36-37).

THE REASON JESUS COMMANDED HIS FOLLOWERS TO INVEST ANYTHING OF
VALUE IN HEAVEN, RATHER THAN IN EARTH,
WAS BECAUSE THEY WOULD COMMIT THEMSELVES TO
WHATEVER THEY INVESTED IN, (Matthew 6:19-24).

- I. Jesus' Negative Command Regarding Investing Anything of Value in The Temporal Things of Earth that Perish was, "Do Not Invest In Earth," (19).
- II. Jesus' Positive Command Regarding Investing Anything of Value in The Eternal Things of Heaven that Remain was, "Do Invest In Heaven," (20).
- III. The Reason Jesus' Followers Were To Invest Anything of Value in Heaven was Because They Would Commit Themselves To Whatever They Invested In, (21).

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)

THE ETERNALLY FOCUSED CHURCH PROVIDES FOR ONE ANOTHER.

- I. A Maturing Spiritual Community Provides for the Needy, (Acts 4:32-37).
- II. Following Jesus' Teaching Means Investing in the Enduring Things Of Heaven, (6:19-21).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW)

PROVIDE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

- I. Provide for the Material Needs of the Christian Community, (Acts 4:32-37).
(Be like Barnabas.)
- II. Invest in the Eternal Things of Heaven (God's People), (Matthew 6:19-21).
(Contribute to God's Work to/through His Church.)
- III. Read *The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving* by Randy Alcorn.