

# GIVING FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Small Group Participant's Guide – Lesson One



## INTRODUCTION:

This is a study of financial giving. Please be assured that we will not be discussing personal finances or details about our giving, but rather reviewing scripture to understand God's perspective on the gifts we give.

We will all be challenged by what we see in scripture, and have moments of freedom as well, but there is no agenda behind the study except to find clarity.

Financial giving is something we all do – and most people have questions, doubts, and sometimes even negative feelings about the subject. There must be more to the story – and that's why we're here!

## BEFORE THE LESSON:

Read the introduction and chapters 1-3 in the book, *Plastic Donuts*, and complete the following questions. Please note that your answers do not have to be lengthy, but feel free to elaborate in areas that are most meaningful to you. Also, be prepared to share about how this material is impacting your perspective on giving.

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## ? DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 2 - NOT ALL GIFTS ARE THE SAME

Look up and read Genesis 4:3-5 and Hebrews 11:4

Does it surprise you to think that some gifts to God are acceptable and others are unacceptable?

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Have you ever thought about “pleasing God” with your giving? That God would see your gift and have special regard for it?

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### ? DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 2 - NOT ALL GIFTS ARE THE SAME (continued)

Can you recall a time when you gave a gift that you thought would have pleased the heart of God? (Don't share specific amounts. Just give the general story)?

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What do you think acceptable means?

- Look up and read Psalm 19:14 – Describe acceptable/pleasing
- Look up and read Romans 12:1 – Describe acceptable/pleasing

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We know in the Old Testament, that many of the gifts given to God were animal sacrifices. God was very specific for many of these gifts about the condition of the animal to be given.

Look up and read Leviticus 1:3 & 10

- What condition did God expect?
- Why do you think He required an animal in such a condition?
- Was it a picture of something else? Something in the future? (2 Corinthians 9:15 and 1 Peter 1:19)
- What was the result of such offerings? (Leviticus 1:9 & 13)
- How does this resemble the offering in Ephesians 5:2?

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### ? DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 2 - NOT ALL GIFTS ARE THE SAME (continued)

Look up and read Malachi 1:1-10

- What was wrong with the gifts offered by the priests?
- Why do you think they offered such gifts to God?

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Look up Philippians 4:18

- Discuss how Paul describes God's view of this offering.
- Why do you think he describes a financial offering with these terms?
- Do you see the connection to the Old Testament gifts?

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How would you now describe an acceptable gift today?

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Can we now see that not all gifts are the same? (That some are acceptable and some are not) How does that make you feel?

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### ? DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 3: THE AMOUNT MATTERS

Why was the plastic donut gift not the same when it came from Jeff's seven-year-old son?

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Does the amount of the gifts we give to God really matter?

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Read the story of John and Amy from pages 36-37

- Why was Amy so upset?
- What had John failed to understand?

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Look up and read 2 Samuel 24:20-25

- Why did Araunah offer the land, wood, and oxen to David for free?
- Why did David demand to pay full price? (1 Chronicles 21:24)
- Does your giving "cost" you anything?

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### ❓ DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 3: THE AMOUNT MATTERS (continued)

Have you ever received a gift that you knew was costly? How did you respond?

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Have you ever received a gift that you knew was not well thought out or was of much less value than you expected? How did that make you feel?

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What are the amounts that matter to you? Amounts that you know you set aside every month.

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What are the amounts that don't matter as much? You may or may not set them aside on a regular basis?

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Do you calculate, plan, and track your giving in the same thoughtful, intentional manner as you do other expenses?

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Does your lifestyle influence your giving or does your giving influence your lifestyle?

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### ❓ DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 3: THE AMOUNT MATTERS (continued)

Would you say your giving engages your heart in worship? Why or why not?

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Look up and read Matthew 6:21

- What do you think Jesus meant?

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- How can we connect our heart to God and His objectives?

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### NEXT SESSION PREPARATION

- Read chapters 4-5 in *Plastic Donuts*
- Complete the participant guide questions