



## **Week 5: Joyful Generosity PRACTICE**

### **Day 1 (Sunday) - Changing the Narrative (Part 1)**

We're going to read Matthew 20: 1-15 three times this week. Today is the first day to read that passage. After you read it, answer these questions:

- What do you notice?
- If this were the only story you knew about God, what would you conclude?
- How does this story inform your sense of generosity?

### **Day 2 (Monday) - Abundance vs. Scarcity**

Our God is constantly generous. Everything we have is a gift. We were made without any effort on our part. It is all manna, the unearned provision of a lavish and loving God. We have never been and will never be in a place where we can say to God, "You owe me. I deserve this." Yet God continues to give. This week keep a list of God's generosity. Asking yourself: "What are some ways I/we have experienced the unearned blessings of God?"

### **Day 3 (Tuesday) - Changing the Narrative (Part 2)**

Read Matthew 20: 1-15 for the second time this week. After you read it, answer these questions:

- What do you notice this time that you didn't notice last time?
- If this were the only story you knew about God, what would you conclude?
- What new insights to inform your sense of generosity did you find today?

#### **Day 4 (Wednesday) - Belief = Action**

The most important thing about a person is *what they think about God*. Our thoughts about God will determine not only who we are but how we live.

- How do your beliefs about God explain how you live your life?
- Take some time this week to note how you spend your time, energy, and money.
- What do your choices say about what you think about God?

#### **Day 5 (Thursday) - Changing the Narrative (Part 3)**

Read Matthew 20: 1-15 for the third time this week. After you read it, answer these questions:

- What do you notice this time that you didn't notice the other two times?
- If this were the only story you knew about God, what would you conclude?
- What new insights to inform your sense of generosity did you find today?

#### **Day 6 (Friday) - Being Generous**

The season of Lent begins just five days from now. One of the centuries-old Lenten practices is that of almsgiving, along with prayer, fasting, scripture study, meditation, and solitude. As you prepare to observe a holy Lent, consider a sacrificial gift of time, energy, and/or money as a spiritual practice for Lent: a Lenten Discipline. How can you respond to God this Lent in faith, joy and love?

#### **Day 7 (Saturday) - Preparation for Lord's Day Worship**

Tomorrow is the last Sunday before Lent begins: the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord. As it is a Dominical Feast (i.e., a feast "of the Lord"), we will be celebrating the Eucharist (a.k.a. Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper) in worship. In the historic and ecumenical Christian liturgy, as found in the *Book of Common Worship* of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Eucharist properly begins with the Offertory.

We often think of the Offertory as just an excuse to "pass the plate," but the primary purpose of the Offertory is to offer the Eucharistic Gifts of Bread and Wine for the Celebration. But in all of our offerings: the offerings of the Eucharistic Gifts and our monetary offerings, we symbolically offer our selves, our souls and bodies, to be "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1). As you prepare for worship on the Lord's Day, reflect on all you've learned this week about Joyful Generosity, and ask God to enable you to worship with your whole self—mind, body, and spirit—tomorrow, and to offer to God everything you are and everything you have.