



Say Yes! Life Groups - Week 3 - Say Yes! To an Acceptable Gift

Opening Question:

How did God impact you or speak to you during the message this past weekend?

Be sure to replay the video that was shown during the weekend services about the Darren and Rachel Key Story. Share the impact this had on you first, then discuss the impact that this may have had on members of your group. Don't force everyone to share but encourage them to.

What are the best and worst gifts that you have ever received from someone and how did each of them make you feel?

Not all gifts are the same.

1. [Genesis 4:3-5 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

[Hebrews 11:4 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

Does it surprise you that some gifts to God are acceptable and other are unacceptable? (Example of Cain and Abel)

2. 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.)

[Malachi 1:1-10 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

1 A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.[a]

[Israel Doubts God's Love](#)

2 "I have loved you," says the Lord.

"But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob, 3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

4 Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins."

But this is what the Lord Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the

Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the Lord. 5 You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the Lord—even beyond the borders of Israel!'

Breaking Covenant Through Blemished Sacrifices

6 "A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the Lord Almighty.

"It is you priests who show contempt for my name.

"But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

7 "By offering defiled food on my altar.

"But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'

"By saying that the Lord's table is contemptible. 8 When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the Lord Almighty.

9 "Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the Lord Almighty.

10 "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands.

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

In what types of ways today do people give similar gifts to God? (We no longer give sacrifices, but are there other types of gifts that we give that are not acceptable to Him?)

The Amount Matters.

1. Do the amount of the gifts we give to God really matter? Why?

2 Samuel 24:20-25 New International Version (NIV)

20 When Araunah looked and saw the king and his officials coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever he wishes and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. 23 Your Majesty, Araunah[a] gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the Lord your God accept you."

24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels[b] of silver for them. 25 David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

1 Chronicles 21:24 New International Version (NIV)

24 But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing."

- a. Why did Araunah offer the land, wood, and oxen to David for free?
 - b. Why did David insist on paying full price?
 - c. Does your giving to God "cost" you anything?
2. Does your lifestyle influence your giving or does your giving influence your lifestyle?

You Determine the Amount.

1. In the past how have you determined how much to give to God? From where did your standard come?
2. Have you ever felt challenged about your standard of giving?
3. Do you think it should be a "one-size-fits-all" standard for giving to God? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?
4. Does the Bible command us to pray, fast, worship? How many times a day should we pray? (Daniel prayed 3 times per day.) How often should we fast? (Moses did for 40 days, Daniel for 21 days) How often should we worship? (David praised 7 times per day.)
5. Why would we expect God to handle giving differently?
6. Why do you think God does not set standards for these and other things? (God wants us to walk in relationship with Him - not religious rituals.)
7. [2 Corinthians 9:7 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)
[7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.](#)

What does Paul say about how much the Corinthians were to give towards the offering for the poor?

When you think about receiving a gift from your spouse or someone special in your life, would you rather just tell them what to get and receive just what you asked for? Or would you prefer for them to select a gift based on how well they know you, pick something that they think is perfect for you; a complete surprise?

How would you feel opening such a gift?

How would you feel giving such a gift?

8. [Luke 19:5-8 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

How did Zacchaeus decide to give 50%? Do you think Jesus had set a standard of 50% in their short conversation?

A Two Percent Perspective

1. Of all the verses in the Bible that mention gifts and giving, the tithe is mentioned only 2% of the time.
2. If we use tithing, or 10%, as a standard, what is the standard for? All giving? To be a good Christian? Is it the minimum? The Maximum?
3. [2 Corinthians 9:7 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Does this have a new meaning for you now?

We Give According to our Ability.

1. [2 Corinthians 8:11-12 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have..

How did Paul say the early believers were to determine the amount of their gifts?

2. Would this be the same amount or same percentage for everyone?
3. What do you think it means to give according to your ability?
 - a. Additional Scriptural examples:

[Acts 11:29 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

29 The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea.

[Mark 12:42-44 New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

4. Read Acts 2:43-45. Read Philippians 4:18. What would it look like in the Orlando area, around the nation, and around the world if everyone gave according to their ability through Journey Christian Church?

The Heart Makes the Gift Acceptable.

1. Acts 5:1-10 New International Version (NIV)

Ananias and Sapphira

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2 With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.

3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”

5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. 6 Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?”

“Yes,” she said, “that is the price.”

9 Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

- a. Were they required to give all the money they received for the land?
- b. What was the problem with the gift?

2. Matthew 5:23-24 New International Version (NIV)

23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

- a. Why didn’t Jesus tell them to go ahead and offer the gift, then go and make things right with his brother?
- b. What other areas of our lives might God be interested in being right with Him to make our gifts acceptable to Him?

3. Proverbs 21:3 New International Version (NIV)
3 To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

4. Matthew 23:23 New International Version (NIV)
23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—
mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and
faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

What did Jesus say they were neglecting? How does this impact us today?

Once again, Consider the 6 levels of giving that Pastor John has talked about.



At what level are you currently giving?

How is God leading your heart towards being a more acceptable giver of gifts to Him?

What is an immediate action step that you can take to move up to honor God?

Be sure to check your heart so that you give with pure motives, not out of status or selfishness.

Can you see your giving in light of your relationship with God rather than of “Christian duty?”

What one truth will you take away from this study that has most impacted you?

How will you apply it to your life?

Close in prayer by asking God to lead the hearts of people in your group towards giving acceptable gifts with pure hearts and motives.