



# Life Group Study

Grace Growth Gifts Give Go Grace  
Growth Gifts Give Go Grace  
Give Go Grace  
Gifts Give Go Grace  
Give Go Grace Growth Gifts Give Go Grace  
Growth Gifts Give Go Grace  
Grace Growth Gifts  
Go Grace Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give Go Grace  
Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give Go Grace Growth  
Gifts Give Go Grace Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Go Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give Go  
Growth Gifts Give Go Grace  
Give Go Grace  
Gifts Give Go Grace Growth Gifts  
Give Go Grace Growth Gifts Give Go Grace  
Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Go Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give Go Grace Growth  
Gifts Give Go Grace Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Go Grace Growth Gifts Give  
Grace Growth Gifts Give Go  
Growth Gifts Give Go Grace Growth Gifts Give Go  
Grace Growth Gifts Give Go

# THE MISSION

Grace Point Church

Study on G5 & the Pursuit of Full Devotion

January-February 2010

## About This Study

Grace Point Church is purposed to *lead unsaved people to a relationship of full devotion to Jesus Christ*. That mission or purpose compels us, directs us and focuses the things we go about as a community of Christ-followers. It reminds us that “church” is not about us – it’s about Jesus, His fullness lived out in each of us and His desires to draw all people to Himself through us.

Within that mission are the words “full devotion.” How do you define “full devotion to Jesus Christ” practically? Obviously that’s the million dollar question. We know that when we exchange our life for the life of Jesus, God begins to transform us and the result will literally be the life of Jesus lived out in and through us (John 10:10, Romans 12:2, Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 5:17-20, Ephesians 2:10).

Having a clear mission is amplified by having a *measure* – gauges and categories in which to look at the pursuit and fruit of that mission lived out. The G5 represent 5 categories, 5 gauges, 5 *measures* by which to pursue and evaluate our mission together. These measures are: Grace, Growth, Gifts, Give and Go. Each represents a significant component to the life in Christ, as well as helpful practices we employ to focus our pursuit of a full devoted life.

This study will invite you and your life group to spend time unpacking each of the Gs in the G5 within the context of community. The life Jesus invites us to is not a solitary one – we’re invited, outright commanded even, to live in community with “one another” and to share in the journey of faith together. As you process the material, remember that this is not a “study” to just be completed – but an opportunity for you as an individual and your entire life group to spend time thoughtfully evaluating “where are we?” in this pursuit of full devotion. What areas represent strengths or weaknesses? Where are “next step” opportunities for us to pursue full devotion more intentionally, and how do we encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11) in these areas?

Study overview:

### **Week One – The Mission**

What are we about? How does purpose orient us and provide focus?

### **Week Two – Grace (My Relationship to Others)**

What does it mean to have and live out of a “grace identity” and to see that translated into a “grace lifestyle?”

### **Week Three – Growth (My Relationship to God)**

What are the types of relationships and practices most conducive to advancing my intimacy with God?

### **Week Four – Gifts (My Relationship to the Church)**

How has God uniquely shaped me for His purposes and am I living that purpose out fully?

### **Week Five – Give (My Relationship to my Finances)**

Why is it a big deal and what does it look like to worship in my stewardship of resources in a manner that is systematic, proportionate and even sacrificial?

### **Week Six – Go (My Relationship to the World)**

Where and to whom am I called to be an ambassador of God’s love and the Good News of the Cross?

## A Note to Leaders

The purpose of this study is to really invite each person and group to dive into what it means to live out our mission together. This study is a resource to facilitate further understanding, interaction with and application of the G5 principles to our individual and group lives. Feel free to supplement and enhance each week with personal testimonies, experiences and materials to make it connect with your unique group context effectively.

Be looking ahead so that you can prepare your group for the upcoming weeks' discussion when needed. Also be sure to follow-up at the beginning of each week on any application steps from the previous week. The week of Go will involve a series of local serving opportunities scheduled for just about every night of the week. Rather than just spending time talking about the concept of being sent out, this week is intended for each group to get out and experience Go-ing together and then reflecting on it afterwards. Begin discussing which time and serving opportunity will work for your group prior to that week so that everyone is able to participate.

Have fun! If you hit any snags, have any questions or try something and find some success in it – contact your Navigator right away.

# The Mission: what are we about?

On January 3, 2010 Jeff will be launching this sermon series and study by looking at what the Mission of Grace Point Church is. If your group meets this week it is a good week to utilize the Sermon Discussion Questions found in the Weekly Download (<http://www.gracepoint.org/sermons>). If the purpose of Grace Point Church is to “lead unsaved people to a relationship of full devotion to Jesus Christ,” then how does that purpose play out in this life group?

If your life group has not spent time reviewing purpose/direction recently, it is also a good time to utilize the Values Reset exercise ([http://lifegroups.weebly.com/uploads/6/4/3/3/643318/lgl\\_-\\_values\\_reset\\_template1.pdf](http://lifegroups.weebly.com/uploads/6/4/3/3/643318/lgl_-_values_reset_template1.pdf)).

Spend some time setting up this new study/series. This is also a good study to consider rotating facilitation among group members to diversify the experience and give others the opportunity to lead.

# Grace: my relationship to others

## It Starts with Grace

God's **grace** enables us to make a very important beginning spiritually. It's by grace – the word means "a favor we didn't earn" -that we start the Christian life and begin a life in Christ.

Our purpose at Grace Point is to lead you to full devotion to Jesus Christ. Your relationship with Jesus is of course central to being fully devoted to Christ. And not only is it critical that you have exchanged your life for His but that you have an assurance of your salvation. Without a saving relationship with Christ, you have no chance to be devoted to Christ, and without assurance of your salvation, your relationship and devotion to Christ suffers. Around Grace Point we describe our new identity in Christ like this:

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Passage</b>
<i>Solely by God's gift of faith...</i>	I can't do it!	Ephesians 2:8-9
<i>...And not dependent upon my works...</i>	Exchange	Luke 9:24
<i>...I have exchanged my life for life in ...Christ</i>	In Christ	Galatians 2:20
<i>...I am a new creation in Christ...</i>	Totally New!	2 Corinthians 5:17
<i>...Freed, and forever approved!</i>	Free!	Galatians 5:1

If you are a Christ-follower there was a time in which you began your spiritual life in Christ by the grace of God. However, if you have exchanged your life for that of Christ you have assurance – look at 1 John 5:13 and Ephesians 1:13--14.

**Q:** When did this event happen in your life?

## Grace Received

*Included in Christ...* You are united with Him for eternity. How does this happen? What goes on before that moment in time?

### 1) **Heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...**

**Preparing** - God's grace involves working behind the scenes long before this point in time.

He literally came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ and by means of the death on the cross, Jesus paid our sin debt. He comes to each of us now, pursuing us even in our waywardness and points us in a new direction. He pursues us with his grace, captures us with his grace and keeps us through His grace.

**Sharing** - You heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Someone shared with you the gospel. Through word or perhaps witness, you came to understand what Christ had done for you on the cross and that you had a need for and wanted God's grace.

List below people who helped influence you to exchange your life for Christ's:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Understanding** - You realized that you were separated from God and through your own strength, works, or goodness you could not make it on your own.

**Key Passages:**

Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8-10

Some people assume that they are not that much worse than anyone else, so they don't need any special help from God.

**Question:** After reading these verses, what would you say to someone who says they are morally acceptable?

**2) (Believing) Having believed...***(the truth, the gospel of your salvation), you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.* You came to a point when you believed in what Jesus had done for you and accepted God's grace, His free gift. Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 1:10-12, Acts 16:30-32, Titus 3:4-8

Sometimes, we're afraid to admit our sinfulness because to do so feels so hopeless. Many of us react to that sense of despair and decide to become "religious". We try to change our behaviors so we feel and appear better.

Understanding these verses explain why you can't and don't have to earn Gods' acceptance.

**Question:** How would you describe the difference between Religion and Relationship in your life?

**3) You were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of his glory.** You are united with Christ for eternity. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Nothing can drive Him out. You are secure for eternity. God continues to pour His grace on you. You are not only saved by grace but sanctified by grace also. Hebrews 13:5, John 6:37-38

## The Outward Signs of Grace Received

**Read:**

Acts 2:37-38

Acts 8:36-39

Acts 16:14-15

**Question** According to these verses, what was the response of new believers – those who had recently received grace – that visibly demonstrated what God had done in their lives?

Many people, perhaps you also, were baptized as a child or as a religious act. But the pattern in the New Testament is "believe – then be baptized."

**Question:** Why do you think it would be appropriate for a person to be baptized after his or her conversion instead of before it?

## The Responsibility of The Recipients of Grace

Read Matt 28:19-20. Jesus has commissioned us to become persuasive communicators of His love and truth. **We** were made to fulfill the Great Commission. That is the primary reason God left us here on the planet.

If you examine the gospels you will find that God's overriding message is that He cares greatly for those who have not come to faith in Jesus Christ his son. In **Luke 15** we have three beautiful examples told by Jesus of how much God loves those who don't love Him. Jesus is being criticized for hanging out with the tax-collectors and sinners by the Pharisees. So Jesus tells them these parables: a shepherd that has lost one of his sheep, a woman who has lost a coin, and the prodigal son.

We can understand three truths from these parables:

- 1) Lost people \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) We mattered so much that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) There is a \_\_\_\_\_ each time one of the lost is found.

It changes your whole perspective when you understand that at one point in your life you were lost and you mattered a whole lot to God. There was an all out search for you. That the day you turned over your life to Christ there was a cosmic party for you all across heaven.

Knowing that, how easy should it be to share with friends and relatives that they matter to God. That God loves them so much he is pursuing them right now and that a party awaits when they decide to trust Jesus Christ with their life.

We encourage our members to build relationships and live out the grace that God has appropriated to us.

- **Pray for those they know who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.**
- **Share a verbal witness of God's grace by sharing their own salvation story.**

*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...  
1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)*

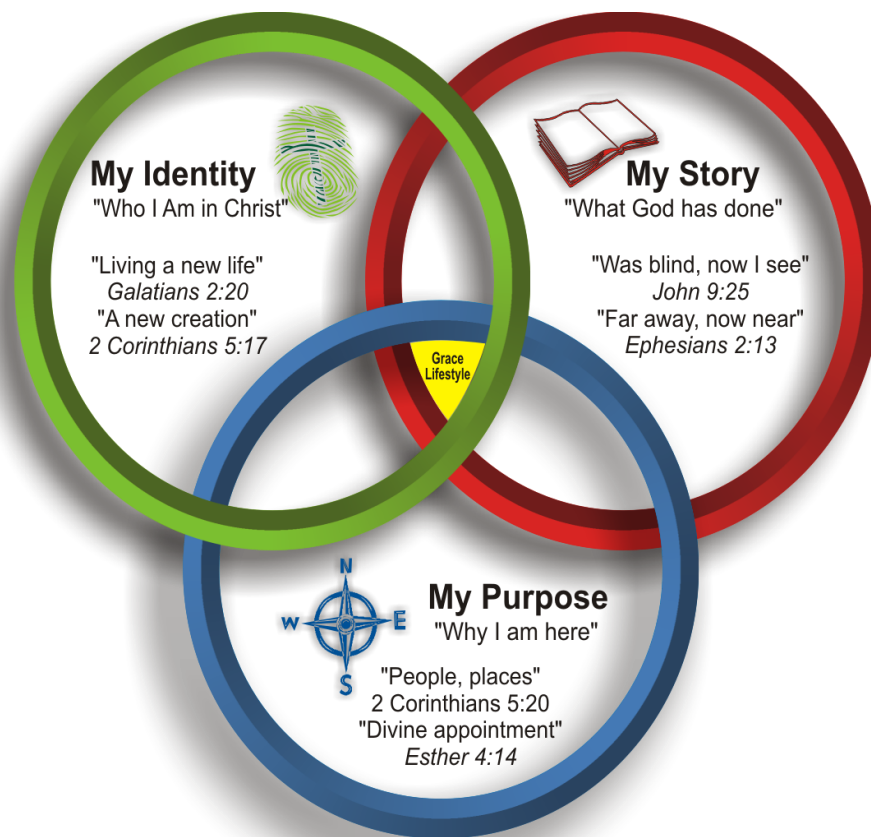
List some of the reasons you think Christ-followers may not share their faith with others?

## The Value and Power of Your Transformation Story

1. It is unique! There are no others just like it.
2. It is personal and easy to understand.
3. You are the authority on it. It is difficult to argue with.
4. People love to hear personal stories and they remember them.
5. People can relate to it. It builds a relational bridge.
6. In our postmodern world, it may be your most effective witness.

## What's next for your group to continue on "grace"?

- (1) Is everyone experienced and comfortable with sharing their testimony? If not, consider obtaining the One Workshop materials and spending a week or two growing in this area.
- (2) Does everyone have the ONE Impact Cards or a similar practice for remembering to intentionally pray for those people God has placed in our lives?
- (3) Has everyone been equipped to lead a new believer through initial discipleship? If not, consider obtaining the One-on-One Discipleship Training material and spending 2-3 weeks growing in this area.
- (4) Do people struggle with navigating tough questions about their faith when talking with lost people? Talk to your Navigator or Small Group Director regarding curriculum options that discuss apologetics or good resources on discussing the core truths of our faith with those unfamiliar.
- (5) How can your group begin to pray and encourage one another to reach out to those people God has placed in each of your worlds in the weeks ahead?





# Growth: my relationship to God

## Introduction:

We never stop growing, from birth onto adolescence and into adulthood our physical body is always growing. In fact our nose and ears never really stop growing even though our eyes are the same since birth. Spiritually we should never stop growing either. How do you grow spiritually? The bible talks about spiritual disciplines; participation with other believers; and having accountability partners are part of spiritual growth. You know, even one spiritual discipline, solitude, was at the center of Jesus' life. Mark 1:35 tells us how He found a secluded place early in the morning, even when life was busy. Luke 5:16 and Luke 6:12 also tell us of Jesus seeking solitude.

Spiritual growth, with the end purpose of staying effective, is explained in detailed in 2 Peter 1:3-8. Peter writes in verse 8, "For if you possess these qualities in **increasing measure**, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Could there ever be an end to growth? Even for the world's top performing golf player, growth is still something to pursue. In a 2006 interview with Tiger Woods, he stated that he still gets "up at dawn and can stay out on the course for as long as 14 hours hitting balls again and again and again off the tee, out of the sand, or on the green." By this point in his career, Tiger had won his 50th professional tournament (most ever at his young age), and yet practice and growth was still a daily discipline.

## Biblical basis:

Read these verses below in the context and discuss possible answers to the questions given for each group of verses.

1. *Why should you grow/learn?*  
Romans 12:2  
John 16:13-15  
2 Peter 1:3-8
2. *Why should you grow/learn with others?*  
Hebrews 10:24-25  
Galatians 6:2
3. *What's the point of disciplines/spiritual pursuits?*
  - a. Prayer (Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, 1 Thessalonians 5:17&19, Ephesians 6:18)
  - b. Reading/meditation/study (Acts 17:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 119:97)
  - c. Fasting (Luke 5:35, Matthew 6:16-17, Acts 13:3)
  - d. Silence/solitude (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, Isaiah 30:15, Mark 6:31 and Luke 6:12)
  - e. Serving (Mark 10:45 and 1 Peter 4:10)

## Application:

What does it mean to you?

--Discuss the disciplines above with a group and their experiences with each.

--Have you ever done one of the spiritual disciplines? Have you ever had a "problem" with one of the disciplines?

--Rank each one of the spiritual disciplines on your practice of these disciplines...

1) Never have done it

- 2) Once or a few times in life
- 3) Once a month
- 4) Weekly

- Which discipline would you like to do more?
- Which discipline would you like you to learn more about?
- What could you do to make each of these more of a habit/routine in your life?

The Bible contains examples of different types of intentional relationships. At Grace Point you've likely heard this referred to as "360 Relationships," referencing the idea of having relationships above, around and below you. Paul modeled this in having Barnabas as a mentor, Silas as a partner in ministry and Timothy as a disciple. Discuss 360 relationships (mentors/accountability/disciple) with your group and their experiences with it.

*--Do you currently have a mentor, an accountability partner, and/or a disciple? Have you had one in the past?*

*--What is the purpose of a mentor, accountability partner, or disciple in your Christian walk?*

*--Could you identify what you would look for in a mentor? NOTE: Mentors can often be a mentor of a specifically part of life (marriage, educational, work related, physically trainer, etc) rather than a mentor for everything.*

*--Could you identify what you would look for in an accountability partner? NOTE: As with mentors, accountability partners can be mostly for one specific area (marriage, finances, spiritual growth, etc) of life rather than for everything.*

*--Could you identify what you would look for in a disciple? NOTE: Remember you would be this person's mentor, so the same approach for a specific area of life remains true.*

*--If you don't have one/all of the areas of a 360 relationship, pray for God to help identify who could be your mentor/accountability partner/disciple. Then seek out that 360 relationship with this person.*

### **Taking it the next step:**

What to do this week?

- a. Exercise a prayer routine that goes above/beyond what you currently do.
- b. Memorize, research, and meditate on a specific passage.
- c. Fasting for a purpose.
- d. Practice a time of silence/solitude.
- e. Other?

### **Prayer focus:**

God give me the longing to learn more and more about you each day.  
Psalm 51:10 and 42:1

### **What's next for your group to continue on "growth"?**

Take a favorite Bible study and dive into it to discover insights from more robust study/examination

- a. Study disciplines study
- b. Bible Study techniques study
- c. Biblical Understanding – broaden study

**\*\*Note:** Send group members a link to take Spiritual Gifts Inventory/Assessment. Everyone should complete it prior to the next meeting and come prepared to share top 2-3 gifts

# Gifts: my relationship to the church

## Introduction:

Ever seen how many people are involved with making the home you live in? It goes beyond the construction workers who physically put your house together, but there was also architects and designers, electricians, plumbers, painters, sales people, furniture makers, appliances manufactures, etc....it literally takes an army to build a house. Is your church like that? Of course it is. There are people teaching, preaching, singing, playing instruments, welcoming visitors, helping kids, and so much more every Sunday. The house builders had skills that allowed them to do their jobs...and the people serving at church also have skills to do their "jobs" on Sunday, or any day.

The apostle Paul wrote in Romans about spiritual gifts given to each believer. Interestingly enough he starts in chapter 12 writing about offering ourselves as a spiritual act of worship (vs 1), and then he wrote about not conforming to this world but being transformed by God (vs 2). Paul then leads right into the gifts given to the body. Are they all connected? YES (but of course, as he would write)! Understanding your spiritual offering is your greatest worship, and living your life transformed by God rather than confirmed -- all that leads into you using your spiritual gifts playing a part of a bigger story for the continuous works of the body of Christ.

Are we then to be compared to skilled professionals working on a house? In some ways "yes" but our gifts and talents were given for grander purposes than that! It is true if we have no idea what a hammer is then construction work should not be our first take. God has gifted, granted, and blessed everyone one of us with skills and talents to accomplish His work. You may be skilled mathematically, so helping the finances of a church or church body is more of your "hammer," rather than other skills. Can your natural talents be used at church? Of course! World renowned Billy Graham is a gifted speaker and could be successful in the business world as such, but Billy Graham is using his skills and abilities for God and has thus done the work gifted to him by God. All in all, if we are gifted, granted, and blessed with these skills, then we should use those talents and skills to honor God and continue to live out our spiritual act of worship.

Probably the simplest definition of a spiritual gift would be this: *A spiritual gift is the God-given capacity of every Christian to carry out his function in the body of Christ.*

Likely you have all heard of spiritual gifts. Many of you have probably taken a spiritual gifts inventory either in the Discovery Class or at another church.

## **Why is it important that we know about spiritual gifts and specifically our spiritual gifts?**

One answer to that question can we find in I Corinthians 12:1 - *"Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant."*

God wants you to know your gifts and how to use them.

Think back to this Christmas. Did you carefully consider the perfect gift for a close friend or family member? Imagine that you placed the gift under the tree and waited for her to find it. December 25th comes and goes and the present still sits there. Did she not see it? Wouldn't she assume that you care enough to get a gift? You move the package to her bedside. Surely now it will be seen.

But months go by and it simply collects dust. You are so disappointed knowing the joy and use she would get out of the present you selected for her. The Scripture above tells us that God wants us to

know about these Gifts. That's not surprising considering He has lovingly picked out a gift for every one of us. Do you know what your gift(s) is/are? If so, have you thanked God for it? And finally, are you using it?

Let's unpack other reasons for knowing and using our spiritual gifts.

Divide into three groups and assign one of the following scripture passages to each group:

1. Ephesians 4:7-16
2. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27
3. Romans 12:3-8.

Each group is to read and report what they learned regarding spiritual gifts from the passages.

Make sure the following points are made:

- Effective functioning of the body of Christ is dependent upon the contribution of each individual part of the body.
- Spiritual gifts enable us to carry out our task within the body of Christ in a way which no one else can.
- Every part of the body is essential to the well-being of the body. When one member fails to do his part, the body suffers.

### **Spiritual gifts are a matter of individual stewardship**

Have you ever thought of your use of your spiritual gifts as a matter of stewardship?

When Peter spoke of spiritual gifts in 1 Peter 4:10, he considered them a matter of personal stewardship: *"<sup>10</sup>Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."* Peter meant that just as we must give account of our use of the material things God has placed under our control, and just as we must give account of the use of our time, so we must also be accountable for the use of our spiritual gifts.

How can we be a good steward of something we know nothing about, and of something that we do not even know we possess? If you have never taken a gifts inventory or if you don't remember what your gifts are, I encourage you to go to the church website at [www.gracepoint.org](http://www.gracepoint.org) and access the Discovery page and use the link to the Spiritual Gifts Inventory.

<http://www.gracepoint.org/connect/discovery/spiritualgifts>.

### **More about Spiritual Gifts**

Ask those in your group what else they know about Spiritual Gifts? Points for discussion include:

- They are given by the Holy Spirit to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). Spiritual gifts are 'spiritual' in that they are given only to those who are believers in Jesus Christ.
- Spiritual gifts must not be confused with natural talents. But they can't be divorced from natural talents and abilities. In [Psalm 139](#), we're reminded that it was God who crafted us in the womb. Whatever our capabilities or weaknesses, they were given to us by the omniscient God who designed not only our spiritual gifts, but also our talents and abilities to carry out a certain task. A gift is to glorify Christ. A secular talent does not do this. Human abilities alone will never produce

eternal fruit, but when our abilities are empowered by the Holy Spirit they can bring about spiritual fruit.

- Spiritual gifts must be developed. Someone might have the gift of teaching but that gift needs to be developed, maybe by seminary studies or by simple teaching opportunities but certainly by some kind of training and much experience. What did Paul tell Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:6?
- Because we don't have a particular gift, that does not excuse us from our responsibilities. Every gift relates to a function that is the responsibility of every Christian. Although some are gifted to give, all Christians are to give cheerfully to the Lord. While some are gifted to be leaders or administrators, every man is to be a leader in his home, and every woman needs to lead as well. While our spiritual gift necessitates that we establish priorities, we are never excused from the responsibilities of all Christians. We would be foolish to spend great amounts of time as the chairman of a committee if we aren't gifted as an administrator. Our time would be spent much more profitably in the area of our gift. But we must be careful about excusing ourselves from tasks for which we are responsible. We may not be gifted at leading people to Christ, but the Bible makes it clear that we are to be witnesses for Christ. Can you think of examples where responsibilities may be different than an area of giftedness in your life?
- Are some gifts more important than others? What does 1 Corinthians 12:28 say? All the Gifts are needed, all are essential because they all are designed to edify the Church and glorify God. The church is a body, and while all parts of the body are important, some are more essential, like the brain versus a foot.

### **Application:**

(1) Discuss your previous serving examples:

- Have you ever taken a spiritual gift test prior to this one? If so, were the results the same or different? For all, were the results of the test a surprise, or predicted?
- Have you served in an area at your church based on your spiritual gifts?
- Have you served in an area at your church that is outside your top-resulted spiritual gifts?

(2) Discuss using your gifts within this life group:

- Has anyone taken a lead role within the group based on your spiritual gifts (i.e. teacher, hospitality, encourager, etc)?
- Is there an area of serving needs within your group that matches someone's spiritual gifts?
- Is there an area of serving needs within your group that is over-stocked with too many people who have that same gift?

(3) Discuss interdependency of gifts within the Body of Christ and how we can be dysfunctional if we are not all engaged and using our gifts:

- Are there one or two "abundant" spiritual gifts in your group? Are there one or two spiritual gifts that are "in short supply" in your group?
- What does it mean to be "stewarding" your spiritual gifts in this group, now?

### **Taking it the next step:**

What to do this week?

- Take a few minutes and figure out what areas of ministry your church has that can benefit from your spiritual gifts
- Discuss with others and pray about taking the next step and serving in a ministry.

**Prayer focus:**

God give me the guidance on where to best use the gifts you have blessed me with and to help those around me with those gifts.

**What's next for your group to continue on "GIFTS"?**

- a. Further study on Spiritual Gifts, either all or one in particular
- b. "1<sup>st</sup> Serve" in a servant group at church
- c. Serving as a group in one ministry at church
- d. Experiment with delegating and living out unique gifts in this life group

# Give: my relationship to my finances

*\*Start by dividing up the passages below for everyone to read and then draw out what principles it reveals about God, us and our resources.*

## Foundation

Your relationship to your finances starts with understanding God's plan. God created the universe and owns all things.

- Genesis 1:1
- Psalm 37:21

The Bible describes us as stewards or managers and we are charged with being wise with the resources entrusted to us.

- 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
- Matthew 25:21-28

*Q: If you knew you were managing someone else's resources, would you manage them differently?*

God designed us to be givers. The same way He sacrificially gave His son at the cross, He desires us to sacrificially give, so that money doesn't have a hold on us.

- Genesis 1:26-27
- Matthew 6:24

*Q: In what way(s) can money have a hold on us? How have you wrestled with this?*

The act of giving is an expression of worship. It pleases God when we embody the spirit of giving. Consider these verses:

- Numbers 18:11
- Hebrews 5:1
- Matthew 2:11
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 and 10-14

*Q: What do you think the church would look like if we all worshiped in this way?*

## Why is it such a big deal?

Giving is a big deal because God knew resources like money would compete with Him for our love (Matthew 6:24) and because money affects every aspect of our lives from work to school and even our relationships. That's why He mentions money in the Bible so much because He knew we would struggle with it.

- The number one cited reason for divorce - money
- 8 out of 10 people in America live paycheck to paycheck
- 60% of Americans who retired last year retired on less than \$10,000 a year (Social Security)
- 20% of bankruptcies in America were college graduates
- 66% of teenagers do not know how to balance a checkbook
- \$10,637 is the average credit card debt for families with at least 1 card
- 3% of Americans who call themselves Christians tithe
- If evangelical Christians in the US tithed, the church would have an additional \$100 billion each year, which would be enough to provide clean water, necessary food and outreach to the entire third world.

But He also knew would lead a more fulfilling life if we managed resources the way He intended. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Q: So what does it look like to worship in my stewardship of His resources in a manner that is systematic, proportionate, and sacrificial? What changes would be required for that to be a reality in your life?

### **Earning**

Work like you are working for Him. (Colossians 3:23) Be content. (Ecclesiastes 5:18-19)

Q: *What would that look like in your life?*

### **Tithing and Giving**

- Give a tenth of all you earn to the Lord. (Leviticus 27:30)
- Give beyond your tithe to bless others. (Genesis 12:2-3)
- Give systematically. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7 and 10-14)

Q: *What is keeping you from giving God what is His and giving to people in need?*

### **Saving**

The wise save and the foolish devour all they have.

- Proverbs 21:20
- Proverbs 6:8

Q: *Do you save regularly? Why do you think we need to save? What is keeping you from saving? How would it feel to have a large savings to cover an emergency?*

### **Spending**

Know the condition of your flocks the scripture says. In other words, make a plan for your money or budget. (Proverbs 27:23-24)

We tend to aim and spend our money on things we care about. God warns us to beware of idols though. Things aren't inherently evil – they have no morals. It's what we do with them that God warns us about. (Deuteronomy 5:8 and Romans 1:25)

Q: *Respond to this statement: "How you spend your money tells me who you are and what is important to you."*

Q: *Do you have idols in your life when it comes to spending money? How can you begin to take down the idols that have come between you and God? Can anyone think of a good practice when spending money?*

Q: *Do you need help in this area?*



## Debt

Avoid it and repay it. (Proverbs 3:28) The Lord uses some strong language here. He says that the borrower is slave to the lender. (Proverbs 22:7) He also says if you're in debt deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter. (Proverbs 6:1-5)

*What's your initial response?*

*How would it feel to have absolutely no debt? Do you know how to aggressively get out of debt?*

*Do you need help in this area?*

## What's next for your group on "Give?"

If you desire peace in your life when it comes to your personal finances then contact the Give Ministry. We can help you unpack the financial burden, experience freedom, establish a plan and understanding that aligns with God's design for our stewardship of resources.

- Does everyone know how to create a budget and live on it?
- Does everyone have a plan to get out of debt?
- Are people saving regularly?
- Is there anyone in your group in the middle of a financial crisis (i.e. laid-off, bankruptcy, foreclosure, etc.)? If you sense this or know this then get with this person on the side (not in the middle of the lesson) and encourage him/her to seek counsel from the Give Ministry.  
[giveministry@gracepoint.org](mailto:giveministry@gracepoint.org)
- FPU semester is starting up in a few weeks
- Need to do a study that dives deeper into stewardship matters?

# Go: my relationship to the world

## Opening discussion:

What do you think is God's ultimate passion? Not His only passion, but what is His chief end? When everything is eliminated but one, what is His central motivation?

Read Eph. 1:4-6. According to this verse, what is God's purpose, *Missio Die*, the mission of God?

## Teaching:

The Bible is the story of God's ultimate purpose, that all nations know him so that the **glory of the grace of God be known**. From the fall of man to the glorious culmination as we see in Revelation 7:9-10, God's mission is woven through out in the stories of the lives of individuals and nations.

In Genesis 12:1-3 we see that God's desire is that all nations, all people be blessed and that God blesses individuals so that all may be blessed in order that the greatness of the glory of God's grace be revealed. Palms 67

That Jesus was sent to suffer for us was the perfect display of the greatness **of the glory of the grace of God**. The fact that Jesus was the "sent one" is the one of the most fundamental identifications of Jesus. Jesus said, "As the father sent me, I am sending you". John 20:21

The Father sends the Son to accomplish His redemptive work; the Father and Son send the Spirit to incorporate his people into that redemption; the Son sends the church to continue his mission and to participate in the reconciling work of the Spirit. The mission is God's but He includes the church; the mission of the church is participation in the sending of God.

Christ is the embodiment of the mission of God, the Holy Spirit is the power of that mission; the church (you) the instrument of God's mission, and the culture is the context in which that mission occurs.

Read:

- Matthew 28:18-20
- Matthew 9:35-39
- Eph. 2:10
- Acts 1:8

**Discussion:** Spurgeon wrote, "There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission to the world". What is your reaction to this statement? How does knowing that you are part of God's plan and purpose make a difference in the way you live your life?

God not only sends you, but gives you the power. Acts 1:8 You don't have to be an expert or a theologian to be used by God.

**Discussion:** Share a time when you felt inadequate for the job you were asked to do.

In Matthew 10 and Mark 6 we see Jesus sending out the disciples. He gave them specific instructions and sent them on their way. They had little training and not a lot of theological knowledge.

- Read Mark 6:12-13 where you see the results.

The apostles were ill-equipped to be sent out. Their effectiveness came from:

1. Prayer (power)
2. God's commissioning/presence (vision)

### 3. Willing hearts (obedience)

We sometimes think thorough training is the key ingredient. It helps, but, many poorly equipped people have done a marvelous work as they have sought God in prayer, been commissioned by God and been willing to follow the Lord.

**Discussion:** Do you look for these key ingredients, or lots of training as your marker for readiness? What excuses do you see others using to avoid going? What excuse do you find yourself exploiting most?

**Application:**

Where is God calling you to go out of your comfort zone to serve others in His name? Spend some time deciding where you can go as a Life Group together this week to serve and take part in the Missio Dei.