

Icebreaker:

Growing up, did your family talk about money? What did you learn about money or generosity from your family?

Read Mark 12:38-44 and discuss:

1. Share a time with your group either when someone else's abundance and generosity provided for you or when sharing your abundance helped someone else in their need.
2. Jesus contrasted self-important religious leaders with a poor widow. How does that challenge us as a church? How does that challenge us as individuals?
3. How can those who have wealth still emulate the poor widow's example?
4. If everything is a gift from God then we are not owners of our property but stewards or managers of God's property. How does seeing yourself as a manager of God's property change the way you approach your daily life?
5. Author Annie Dillard says, "A life without sacrifice is an abomination." Do you agree or disagree? How do you respond to this statement?
6. If money was no object, what is something you would like to see ZPC do to further God's mission?

Homework:

What "small" thing (like the widow's two small coins) of yours could God turn into something great if you gave it to God? Would it be money, time, or talent? Think of something specific this week and report it back to your group.

Prayer:

- > Prayers of healing for Donna Bahler, Wanda Baker, and Jolene Fuhrmann.
- > Prayers of comfort for Carolyn and Jay Maddox and family in the death of Carolyn's sister.
- > Prayers for the Kairos Team serving this weekend at Pendleton Correctional Facility.

Reminders for your group:

> Christmas is coming! There are many opportunities for you and your Home Group to get involved including Operation Christmas Child and Shepherd Totes. More information at zpc.org

Leader's Notes:

Today's passage from Mark 12 challenges us. Jesus condemns religious leaders who walk around in flowing robes and "devour widows' houses." Jesus lifts up a widow who gives two small coins in the offering. In a nation and a church where we are very blessed materially and financially, what does this mean for us? It is healthy for us to study what Jesus says about money and giving and to push ourselves to think about how we can be more faithful with our money – and our time and talents.

[Question 1] Consider specific examples when someone blessed you with an unexpected gift – or helped you pay for something you needed. You might also share around your group how each of them has blessed others in need. Try to be specific.

[Question 2] In Mark 12, the religious leaders were very concerned with how they looked – whether they were known in the marketplace or had important seats at dinner – but they misused widow's money or homes. The widow gives just 2 coins. These examples are extreme. Many of us are blessed like the religious leaders and some of us are in positions of authority. How can we be less like these leaders and more like the widow – as a church and as individuals?

[Question 3] Wealth: Several studies say that if your family income is more than \$50,000 a year, you make more than 99% of the people in the world. As many as a billion people live on \$1 a day or less. Knowing that most of us are wealthy relative to the rest of the world, how can we be more like the poor widow?

[Question 4] James 1:17 says, "Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." How can we transform our thinking to managing God's property and not our own property? Think in terms of homes, cars, clothes, retirement accounts, vacations. Being grateful and thinking critically about how we can use the money God has given us is a good place to start.

[Question 5] Annie Dillard makes a strong statement meant to provoke. Feel free to wrestle with this statement and discuss what sacrifice looks like for your group members.

[Question 6] Dream a little here. The key is to dream to further God's mission for the church. Sally, Jerry, and Scott would love to hear some of your dreams and answers to this question.

Homework – Strongly encourage your group members to be specific and think of a time, talent, or treasure – even a small one – they could dedicate to God. Ask them to report back next week or start a group email or group text for responses.