

LESSON EIGHT

THE EIGHTH MARK

GIVE

DEFINITION

I give my time, talent, treasure to Jesus and others.

LIFESTYLE

I make sacrifices in my schedule, use my talents, and give financially to my local church to serve others.

KEY QUESTION

How am I giving my time, talent, and treasures to others in tangible ways?

OVERVIEW OF THIS LESSON

Every lesson has the same three steps: new learning, new practices, and new commitments.

Every lesson takes about four weeks to complete—if you work at a moderate, consistent pace.

- Complete **Step One: New Learning** in the first week.
- Complete **Step Two: New Practices** in the second-to-fourth weeks.
- Complete **Step Three: New Commitments** in the third and fourth weeks.

Step One: New Learning

In this step, you'll explore what it means to give your time, talent, and treasure by reading an overview and answering follow up questions.

When you're done, you'll understand what it means to give to others and be able to explain it.

Write down your start date for this step (complete in the first week): _____

Step Two: New Practices

In this step, you'll integrate new practices to equip and empower you for a life of giving. These practices include the Bible, prayer, and journaling.

When you're done, you'll know how to use the Bible, prayer, and journaling to cultivate the spirit of generosity and giving.

Write down your start date for this step (complete in weeks two through four): _____

Step Three: New Commitments

In this step, you'll discover how you can bless others by giving your time, talent, and treasure.

When you're done, you'll know how to give using your strengths.

Write down your start date for this step (complete in weeks three and four): _____

STEP ONE

NEW LEARNING

STEP ONE: NEW LEARNING

GIVE

Following Jesus Means We Give

Jesus rescued us from sin and death with loving intention. In his eternal wisdom, he chose to reconcile us to his Father to show how amazing and gracious he is (Ephesians 1:3-10). **We were saved on purpose.**

Jesus rescued us with something in mind. From the beginning, we were to embody his image and extend his life in the world. His redemptive work restores us to our identity and call. **We were saved on purpose, for a purpose.**

The primary reason God saved us was to replicate his life on the earth. Trusting Jesus means we are shaped and sent to multiply his life throughout creation. Originally, humans were made for this purpose. Then, we fell into death and darkness. In Jesus, God rescues us so we can be restored to his original intention.

We were saved on purpose, for a purpose.

We receive the gift of life to give the gift of life. We were saved to give. Like Jesus, we give our life away so others can taste his life. This isn't a religious idea to be known or spiritual experience to be had. Rather, it's a tangible commitment to give Jesus' life to others, motivated by what we've received.

To understand our call to give as Jesus gives, we'll explore three biblical themes.

We give from the overflow of what we receive.

Giving is rooted in character.

Giving is expressed through our time, talent, and treasure.

We Give From the Overflow of What We Receive

In Jesus' death and resurrection, we received God's life, a gift beyond imagination and measure.

Jesus' gracious gift of life to us is to overflow to others. As he gives his life away freely, he invites us to give our life away. Rooted in his giving heart, we leave behind old attitudes and habits of selfishness, greed, and self-interest. And we learn to give as Jesus gives.

Our giving can't be rooted in or motivated by anything human. Many humans give, some heroically. But human giving isn't redemptive. Nor can it overcome the chasm between heaven

and earth. Though often beautiful, humans who give from their own resource or wisdom are limited by their broken, diminished humanity.

And this leads to the inevitable conclusion that we can give only what we've received. To give abundant, eternal life to others, we must continually receive God's life in Jesus.

Only when we taste God's forgiveness can we give God's forgiveness to others.

Only when we receive God's vision can we share God's vision with others.

Only when we walk in God's grace can we extend God's grace to others.

Only when we stand in faith against our enemies can we impart faith to others to do the same.

Only when we allow the gospel story to reorder our story can we help others learn a new story.

Only when we respond to God's correction can we bring gentle, gracious correction to others.

Giving Flows from Character

We give like Jesus only when we **are** like Jesus. The degree to which we're renewed in Jesus' image is the degree to which we can give his life away to others.

We become like Jesus as we practice repentance, which means we have a **change of heart and mind to go another way**. In repentance, Jesus gives us a new heart. Our inner life is transformed to look like his. Then, our outer habits shift to reflect his ways.

As repentance becomes a lifestyle, it means our character is being shaped into Jesus' image. By character, we mean the habits of the heart that show up in the habits of our life. Character is how we describe the inner and outer life working together to reflect Jesus.

As we practice repentance, our character becomes more and more like Jesus.

And as our character becomes more like Jesus, our giving becomes more like Jesus.

So, what aspects of character need attention so we can give like Jesus?

Faithfulness. **Faithful** means we make commitments and keep them. To give like Jesus, we must learn to make commitments and then follow through with them. If we say we're going to bring a meal to others, we need to do it. And show up on time. If we say we'll pray for someone, then we must set aside time to do it. If we're committed to a group, we show up when they gather.

Availability. **Available** means we know how to prioritize what matters and respond with action. To give like Jesus, we must learn his priorities and then respond practically. Others' needs are usually inconvenient. Often, we must adjust when something comes up that we didn't anticipate. Last minute changes are normal. The Spirit's work doesn't always fit into our agendas and schedules.

Teachability. **Teachable** means we're willing to grow and change in response to others' input. To give like Jesus, we must learn to listen to new ways of being and doing. We don't see everything, know what we need to know, understand as well as we'd like to think. Others have resources, ideas, and wisdom we need. None of us have everything. A teachable spirit is a growing heart.

Service. **Service** means we're committed to meet others' needs, even if it costs us something valuable (Matthew 20:20-28). To give like Jesus, we must give others what they need. Sometimes, we give from abundance. Sometimes, we give in our lack. Either way, service means we do what need to be done knowing it will cost us something.

Give Our Time

One of our most valuable assets is time. What we do with our time reflects our allegiances and affections. The devotion and desire of our heart shows up on our calendars and schedules.

If we want to give like Jesus gives, then we must devote our time to his purpose.

This is why Moses prayed, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). We only have so many days. To "number" our days is to realize our days are limited. By God's grace, we can use them wisely, to do what matters for eternity. When we walk in wisdom, we consider the outcome of our commitments and priorities and invest our energy in eternal pursuits.

Practically, how to do we dedicate our time to God's kingdom?

- Take time every day to spend in God's word and prayer.
- Learn to clarify the desires of your heart and then pursue them with single-minded focus.
- Learn to identify Jesus' priorities and then execute them on a daily basis.
- Learn to how develop new habits and break old ones.
- Invest in family relationships. Daily.
- Invest in your local church.
- Invest in relationships with those who don't follow Jesus.
- Disciples others.

Give our Talent

Every human is made in God's image. We share the God-given ability to be fruitful, to multiply what matters, to plant good seeds and reap a good harvest. This is part of what it means to be human: to use our energies to create, build, expand, invest, and grow.

Every follower of Jesus can meaningfully contribute to God's purposes in the world. None of us is without some capacity to build God's kingdom on the earth. In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus tells a story and in it, he teaches that he's given every believer the ability to multiply his life in the world. Some have more abilities. Some have less. Some have more opportunities. Some have less. No matter what, Jesus isn't going to judge us on the number of abilities or opportunities before us. Instead, he will judge us on what we did with what we were given.

We've all been given gifts and talents, and they all matter. In I Corinthians 12:14-26, Paul teaches us that every member of Jesus' body has something significant to contribute. Like the physical body, every part is essential and meaningful. Rather than condemn or criticize others for their differences, Paul teaches us to celebrate the distinct contribution we bring to Jesus' people. Not only are we to value others' gifts and talents, we're to value our own.

Not only have we been given gifts and talents, but they're unique in shape and function. In I Corinthians 12, Paul discusses how the human body has different parts, each performing a distinct function. Every believer has a unique set of gifts and talents, perfectly shaped to fulfill God's purpose for them. To walk in God's purposes, we must discover and cultivate the gifts and talents we've been given by God's Spirit.

Practically, how do we dedicate our talents to God's kingdom?

- Discover our gifts and talents through personality assessments, experiments, and obedience.
- Learn to use our gifts and talents through education, training, and mentoring.
- Find ways our local church needs our gifts and talents and use them to bless God's people.
- Find ways our gifts and talents can do something our local church isn't currently doing.
- Serve in ways that utilize your gifts and talents, but be ready to serve in any way necessary.
- Find needs in our neighborhood or network and use our gifts and talents to meet them.

Give our Treasure

Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). Houses, clothes, and food are ours as we seek God's kingdom and purpose above all else. Jesus is a good provider. All we need is found in him and his purposes. If we seek him above everything else, he said we'll have everything we need.

This is why Jesus said that where our treasure is we'll find our heart (Matthew 6:21). What we love is displayed in how we use our money. And how we use our money shapes the allegiances and affections of the heart. How we spend our treasure matters. In fact, our life depends on it.

This means spiritual gain is more valuable than financial gain. When life is over, how much money we made won't matter. In the end, all that matters is whether we followed Jesus with all our heart, soul, and strength. Life's ambition isn't wealth—it's Jesus (Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 12:16-21).

This is why we need to grasp the biblical truth that money is a gift and test. Money enables us to experience many of life's blessings (Ecclesiastes 10:19; Philippians 4:10-19). At the same time, money is a test because it's not ours in the first place. God gave us all we have to test our loyalty to him. Money makes us ask: **do I want Jesus to rule over my entire life** (Luke 14:25-35)?

We can be faithful to use our money for God's purpose (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:16-21). How can we do this?

We tithe.

Tithing is a biblical word that means **tenth**. When we tithe, we devote the first ten percent of our increase to God (Genesis 14:18-20; Deuteronomy 26:10-15; Proverbs 3:9,10). Tithing is an act of worship because we show our allegiance to God when we tithe. And tithing is an act of obedience because we're instructed to give the first ten percent of our increase.

The tithe is to be given completely to the local congregation we attend (Galatians 6:6-10; I Timothy 5:17,18). This is how God supports the work and ministry of the local church and provides for pastoral leaders (I Corinthians 9:9-14).

Remember, our discipleship journey is a process. Giving ten percent of our income is a step of faith and, for many people, it can take time to learn how to do this. Commit yourself to move in this direction and God will give you the faith and provision to do it.

Beyond tithing, we give.

In the Bible, God's people gave of their financial resources through something called **offerings** (Deuteronomy 12:1-15; Malachi 3:8). Beyond the tithe, God's people were encouraged to give offerings. Usually, offerings are money or material goods. Unlike the tithe, we can decide where our offerings go. We're free to give offerings to our local church or we can direct it to other individuals, families, ministries, or purposes as the Spirit directs.

Tithing tests our obedience; offerings test our generosity. When we give the tithe, we don't display a generous spirit. The tithe is God's money in the first place and when we tithe, we display obedience. When we give an offering, we develop generosity and give sacrificially from our personal resources.

QUESTIONS FROM THE READING

1. In your own words, summarize the big ideas about following Jesus.
2. What are some of your key take-aways from reading?

3. As you read Psalm 90:12-17, what do you discover about your time? How does Jesus view your time in Matthew 6:33-34?
4. In I Corinthians 12:14-31, Paul talks about the importance of every part of Jesus' body. Like every part of your body matters, every part of Jesus' body matters. What does this passage tell you about your talents, gifts, and contributions.
5. After read II Corinthians 9:6-15, what do you discover about God's generosity in Jesus? How might this shape your view of your money and giving?
6. Based on what you've discovered, how does Jesus want you to obey this week?

Supplemental Videos

The following videos may be helpful for you to watch as you think about this lesson and respond to the questions. You can find these videos on YouTube by searching for a YouTube channel called

The Bible Project.

- Biblical Themes: Generosity
- Biblical Themes: Justice

STEP TWO

NEW PRACTICES

STEP TWO: NEW PRACTICES

BIBLE–PRAYER–JOURNALING

Introduction

In this step, you'll integrate three new practices: listen to Jesus in the Bible, talk to Jesus through prayer, and journal. It's best to spend most of your time in the Bible and in prayer (about 80%) and then follow up with journaling. If you spend the bulk of your time in the Bible and prayer, you'll experience the biggest impact toward growth.

To incorporate these new practices, you'll need to make some decisions: when, where, how much, and how long. In other words, when you know **WHEN** you'll do these practices, **WHERE** you'll do them, and **HOW** long you'll do them, you have a much better chance of integrating these practices into your lifestyle.

Here are two questions to help you decide.

Where will I fit these practices into my weekly schedule/routine? Consider working your way up to four times each week.

How long will I spend each day doing all three practices? Any amount of time is good to start with but consider working up to thirty minutes at a time.

Although not necessary, it will help you to spend time in the Bible, prayer, and journaling at the same time every day, in the same place, for the same length of time. Of course, if you can't do that, then do what you can.

The important part is this: **make a commitment and keep it.** When we make and keep our commitments, we increase our ability to hear and obey Jesus.

Use this chart to record your decisions.

| | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| What Day? | | | | | | | |
| When? | | | | | | | |
| How Long? | | | | | | | |
| Where? | | | | | | | |

On the next page, you'll find a helpful worksheet to direct your time in the Bible, prayer, and journaling each day.

NEW PRACTICES WORKSHEET

Listening to Jesus in the Bible

Each week, you'll learn to listen to Jesus through the Bible. To do this, you'll read, think about, and answer questions about a passage. For this lesson, you'll spend multiple days in EACH of the following texts.

- Psalm 90:12-17
- I Corinthians 12:14-26
- II Corinthians 9:6-15

As you spend multiple days in each passage, journal the following questions.

1. Who is God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)?
2. What is God doing?
3. Who are God's people—and as a result, who am I?
4. What is God inviting me to do today?

This Week's Bible Text: _____

Talking to Jesus through Prayer

For the first six lessons, you explored **The Disciple's Prayer** found in Matthew 6:9-13. In the last four lessons, you'll explore how to pray using a Psalm.

In this lesson, learn to pray using Psalm 103 as a guide.

Use **Praying Psalm 103** in **The Disciple's Prayer Guide** to pray this week.

Reflect through Journaling

As you read and pray, it's helpful to journal your thoughts, feelings, and insights. Consider journaling to one or two of the following prompts:

- What I learned today was...
- What I discovered about Jesus was...
- What I discovered about myself was...
- What I sense I need to do is...
- What doesn't make sense is...

STEP THREE

NEW COMMITMENTS

STEP THREE: NEW COMMITMENTS

GIVING TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE

Introduction

In this lesson, you were introduced to the eighth mark of a disciple: giving your time, talent, and treasure.

Now, you'll learn to how you can practically give throughout your daily life. When you give, you participate in reconciling the world to the Father by emulating Jesus' lifestyle. In fact, giving is one the most life-changing practices disciples can engage. Not only does giving bless the one who receives the gift, it blesses the one who gives.

There are three ways you can start to give your time, talent, and treasure: serve others in your sphere of relationship, join a corporate ministry, and give financially. Each of these three areas are outlined in the worksheets that follow.

To figure out how you can best give, you might consider accessing the following resources.

StrengthsFinder 2.0

Gallup's Clifton StrengthsFinder 2.0 assessment is a helpful tool to help people identify their operational strengths and how to discuss and develop their unique combination of skills, talents, and knowledge—also known as strengths.

- Go to: www.gallupstrengthscenter.com
- Take the assessment entitled "Top 5 Strengths Access"
- The cost is \$15.

Enneagram Assessment

The Enneagram Assessment provides feedback about your temperament, how you perceive and interact with others, how you approach life, and how you can assess of your personal health.

- Go to: <https://tests.enneagraminstitute.com/>
- Take the assessment entitled "RHETI" assessment.
- The cost is \$12.

SERVING WORKSHEET

Relationships are the context of discipleship because we have a variety of opportunities to serve others in personal and practical ways.

This list outlines categories of service to help you think about the best way you can serve.

- Tangible: This is a need that can be met through service or action.
- Relational: This is a need that can be met by building or reconciling a relationship.
- Emotional: This is a need that can be met by empathetic listening.
- Mental: This is a need that can be met by talking together.
- Financial: This is a need that can be met by financial or material goods.
- Spiritual: This is a need that can be met by the Word, prayer, and gospel community.

Here are practical ways you can think about serving others and the lost.

- Help moving.
- Childcare/babysitting.
- Transportation.
- Visiting the sick and imprisoned.
- Share a specific area of expertise.
- Help with home or yard projects.
- Vehicle repairs.
- Pet sitting.
- Meals and cleaning in sickness, loss, and times of transition.

To take the first step into service, discuss these three questions with your Life Group leader.

1. What is one way I can serve others in my life: family, friends, and Life Group members?
2. What is one way I can serve those who don't know Jesus?
3. When can I start serving?

Date I will meet with my Life Group leader to have this discussion:

Going Deeper

If you want to learn how to prioritize your time and discover your talents, consider attending our workshop called **Discovering Purpose**. It usually takes place three to four times a year. For more information, look at our website (www.268church.org) or talk to your Life Group leader.

JOIN A CORPORATE MINISTRY WORKSHEET

The phrase “corporate ministry” are the opportunities you have to help coordinate our larger church gathers. Like on Sabbath or during a special holiday. These gatherings take place only because people give their time, talent, and treasure. And you can make a significant impact.

Listed below are a variety of spiritual gifts, talents, and skills. Please mark ALL that apply. Take it to your Life Group leader to talk about your responses. Then, your Life Group leader will help you determine your next step.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Gifts, Talents, and Skills

- CPR/First Aid Training
- Musician/Singer
- Art/Dance
- Audio/Sound System/Video
- Security/Law Enforcement
- Technology/IT/Web Design
- Communications
- Business/Entrepreneurial
- Leadership/Management
- Non-Profit Experience
- Prayer: Intercession/Prophetic Gifts
- Interior Decorator
- Writing/ Speaking
- Kid’s Ministry
- Teacher/Teaching
- Landscaping
- Social Work/Counselor
- Trade: Electrician, Construction, Plumber, etc.
- Special Skills Not Listed: _____

Date I will meet with my Life Group leader to have this discussion:

FINANCIAL GIVING WORKSHEET

God is a great giver. Not only did he create us in love, he saved us in his love. In the greatest act of love in the history of the world, he sent his son, Jesus, to die so we could be reconciled to him.

It's this love that defines and redirects our financial resources. Because we're loved so much and have received so much from the Father, we're invited to give to others.

Here are three ways you can step into financial giving.

Start by Giving Something

In the Bible, God instructs us to give ten percent of our financial increase to our local congregation. In fact, God's perspective on the matter of our money is this: he gives us **everything** we ever receive and then generously lets us keep ninety percent. Since all the wealth in the world is his anyway, letting us keep ninety percent is generous (1 Chronicles 29:12).

That said, obedience is a journey. It takes time for our allegiances and affections to fully embrace God's instruction. If we do what we can in faith, we position ourselves for blessing.

So, start giving by giving **something**. Then, commit to increase your giving to ten percent of your total income over a period of time.

I will start giving something by the following date:

Give Consistently

Because Jesus wants to change our habits so they reflect his priorities, it's better to give **something** consistently than it is to give once in a while. The practice of habitual giving will have a deeper impact on your growth than an occasional financial gift.

I commit to give consistently in the following way: weekly—twice monthly—monthly (circle one).

Get Equipped

Many don't know how to manage their money, budget, prioritize spending, pay off debts, or use your money for God's kingdom. If you want to learn how to manage your finances so you can give generously, then consider taking the seminar entitled **Financial Peace University**. For more information, look at our website (www.268church.org) or talk to your Life Group leader.

Take the Plunge

Maybe Jesus has already been speaking to you about giving. Maybe you're excited to use your finances for God's kingdom. If so, and you think you're ready, take the plunge. Commit to give ten percent of your increase to your local church. Just do it. And then watch God work wonders.

I will start tithing—giving ten percent—by the following date:
