SERMON: A New Way of Keeping Score

Series: Back in the Black

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January 31, 2016

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. What was your main take away from Pastor Brian’s sermon about generosity and giving?
2. Read **John 6:5-13**. Most of us are familiar with the story of the loaves and fishes. Why does Pastor Brian call attention to the role and experience of the little boy with the five small barley loaves and the two small fishes?
3. Generally, we are encouraged to remain quiet and humble in our giving, but for the sake of this conversation, it would be very helpful for a member (or several members) to share the feelings associated with a specific instance of sacrificial giving. How did it honor God and bless others. How was he/she blessed by giving?
4. Read **Matthew 6:19-21**. Pastor Brian pointed out that we spend so much of our resources on our children because we love them so much. Take a quiet moment to (privately) list in your mind the other major channels for your resources. The big idea from the sermon was “if you want to grow, you have to give.” Yet, the statistics are clear, only 3-5 percent of believers give their first fruits back to the Lord. Have you ever chosen this level of generosity? Do you agree that you grow when you give? In light of this sermon series will you evaluate your generosity to the church?
5. Read the following scriptures: **Matthew 4:5-7** and **Malachi 3:10**. Through satan’s temptation of Christ in the desert, we learn that we should not put the Lord our God to the test. And yet, in this singular instance regarding our church giving, God, through Malachi, encourages us test the faithfulness of the Lord through sacrificial giving. Why, in this instance, might the Lord encourage our test?

**APPLICATION**:

Have a conversation about the challenge to committing 90 days of giving “first fruits” to the Lord. How will this honor God and bless others? Perhaps Life Group members that have embraced and incorporated the tithe into their faith walk might encourage other members with the strategies they employ to commit to sacrificial giving.

**PRAYER THOUGHT**:

Lord, help us to honestly review our generosity and our gifts to our church. Help us to fully grasp the truth that our money, resources, skills and abilities are your gifts entrusted to us so that we may serve you well. Help us to step out in faith and give so that we may experience the joy that you have planned for us.