



## Week 4 // Capital Campaign – Exodus 35:4-29 // Generosity Beyond Reason: Living the Sacrificial Life

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper to write or draw on, crayons or markers, scissors, a basket

### Opening Activity

- Have the kids write or draw their talents and things they're good at. (They can draw a symbol for that talent if that's easier.) For example: Good in math, like to cook, enjoy helping dad in the yard, painting, listening, etc.
- Cut these "talents" out and have the kids write their names (small) on the back of each talent.
- Have the kids place their talents in the basket and explain that God has gifted them with these abilities and that in response to Jesus' love for them, they can use these talents for His glory. Placing the talent in the basket symbolizes that they're giving it to God.

Set the basket aside and we'll revisit this activity as we wrap up this evening. Let's dive into tonight's passage to get started:

### Read Exodus 35:4-5, 10, 20-29

Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "This is the thing that the Lord has commanded. Take from among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution . . . Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the Lord has commanded . . ." Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the Lord's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. So they came, both men and women. All who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the Lord. And every one who possessed blue or purple or scarlet yarns or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins brought them. Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the Lord's contribution. And every one who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. And every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. All the women whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. And the leaders brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastpiece, and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.

### Discussion

In this passage, the Israelites are preparing to build the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting that God had instructed them to build. The Tabernacle was to be the portable dwelling place (kind of like a divine tent) for the presence of God so that He could dwell within their midst (Exodus 25: 8); not that God exclusively lived in that place, but that was the specific place where men would go to meet God.

It may seem strange that God would ask them to build the Tabernacle. He had the power to do it Himself or even cause the money and materials to just appear by a miracle, yet He chooses to almost always do His work through the willing gifts of His people because He wants them (us included) to be a generous people.

The money and list of supplies that God asks for in this passage are a *freewill offering* to God, an act that he commands us to do, out of reverence for who He is and His faithfulness in our lives. Offerings can supply the needs for ministry and other needs, but are also "overflowing in many thanksgivings to God" (2 Corinthians 9:12). As followers of Jesus, giving an offering to God is



something that we should *want* to do because of His greatness and the grace that He has given to us through His son Jesus Christ. It's an act of worship and an outward expression of our inward gratitude toward Him.

Nothing that we have really belongs to us anyway – it 's all God's. He simply calls us to be good stewards, or to do the best we can with what he gives us, so that we can use them effectively to build His kingdom here on earth – both physically, as we build into our church building and city around us, and spiritually, as we build into the hearts of people who do not know Jesus yet.

**Question One:** As we look at the passage, what is the “thing” that the Lord has commanded the Israelites to do in verses 4-5? *To have a generous heart and bring the Lord's contribution.*

**Question Two:** What does Moses mean when he says, “. . . the Lord's contribution”? *As we mentioned earlier, it was an offering to God because He commanded it and because He is worthy of it. In this context, the Lord's contribution was the riches (equivalent to our money), treasures, and people's talents the Lord needed to build His Tabernacle.*

**Question Three:** Why did the Israelites come with *stirred* and *willing* hearts to give what the Lord asked of them? *Because they were responding to God's goodness in their lives. This is generosity.*

As followers of Jesus, we should respond in the same way. Jesus has been extraordinarily generous with us: His death on the cross, which saved us from our own death and brokenness, is beyond what we deserve. Generosity begins by understanding what Jesus has done for us, believing that His work on the cross and resurrection is true, and then it plays out in our lives as we respond by giving according to what we have and beyond with a willing heart (2 Corinthians 8:3).

In some instances, giving money, supplies, and talents to build a church building, like the Israelites, will be a way in which we can give generously. Other times, we might need to give our coat to a boy or girl in our class because they don't have one. Or, what if a neighbor is having trouble in math and you understand the problems well? Wouldn't you be able to give generously to her if you were to use your knowledge to help? Yes!

In some of these instances, it may not seem as if we'd actually be giving to the Lord; maybe we'd just be giving a coat to someone or helping our neighbor with their math homework. But Jesus says in Matthew 25:40, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” So when we use our gifts and talents to help others in the name of Jesus Christ, we truly are giving to God!

### Wrapping Up

The Israelites gave what they could; not all could give gold or precious gems, but some gave their talents and even gave goat's hair! But they were all valuable offerings to God because they were given with a *willing heart*. In what ways can we be generous with the money, possessions and talents God has entrusted to us and use them well to allow others to see Jesus in our lives?

Let's get the basket that we used earlier tonight and find the talents that belong to you. Think about these talents again and write down (on the back of each talent) ways that you can use them to give generously for God's glory.

Let's close our time together by praying that we would truly understand Jesus' generosity toward us and that He would soften our hearts and show us how to generously give to others as a response to the overwhelming generosity He showed us on the cross!