

WEEK 5: A REACH OF SURRENDER AND COMMITMENT

****Note: some of you have likely turned in a commitment, others may still be considering what a commitment to REACH will be.*

Making a commitment to something causes that decision to become a priority amongst all other distractions and areas of focus, good or bad. There are seasons where we have to make a commitment to one specific area of growth or healing. In order to make a commitment to generosity, we have to place it in higher priority than our other commitments. This REACH initiative is all about leaving behind fear and setting our earthly priorities to the side so that we can help our friends/neighbors discover life with God. Putting faith over fear and - instead - reaching for impact within the Kingdom of God. What will this mean for you?

DISCUSS:

- Who is the most “committed” person you know? To what are they committed? ☒
- What does commitment mean to you? To what are you committed? ☒
- When has commitment cost you or caused you to rearrange things? ☒

Further Discussion from Scripture:

Read each Scripture passage below and discuss the questions as a group. You may want to have each group member journal their answer first in the lines provided below before discussing together, as a means of encouraging all to participate more deeply.

LUKE 18: THE TAX COLLECTOR SURRENDERED WITHOUT HOLDING BACK

Jesus told this story to some people who thought they were very good and looked down on everyone else: “A Pharisee and a tax collector both went to the Temple to pray. The Pharisee stood alone and prayed, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people who steal, cheat, or take part in adultery, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I give one-tenth of everything I get!’ “The tax collector, standing at a distance, would not even look up to heaven. But he beat on his chest because he was so sad. He said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you, when this man went home, he was right with God, but the Pharisee was not. All who make themselves great will be made humble, but all who make themselves humble will be made great.”

Luke 18:9-14 (NCV)

➤ Be as honest as you can. Who do you most resonate with in this passage - the Pharisee or the tax collector?

➤ Do you feel that you have surrendered *everything* over to God and are going before Him in this REACH initiative with open hands, or are you holding something back?

➤ What makes you nervous as you think about making a two-year commitment to generosity for the REACH initiative. How can your Small Group be praying for you to help you overcome this?

LUKE 12: COMMITTING TO A LIFE OF GENEROSITY IS NOT THE AMERICAN DREAM. IT'S THE HEAVENLY CALL.

Someone out of the crowd said, "Teacher, order my brother to give me a fair share of the family inheritance." He replied, "Mister, what makes you think it's any of my business to be a judge or mediator for you?" Speaking to the people, he went on, "Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot." Then he told them this story: "The farm of a certain rich man produced a terrific crop. He talked to himself: 'What can I do? My barn isn't big enough for this harvest.' Then he said, 'Here's what I'll do: I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll gather in all my grain and goods, and I'll say to myself, Self, you've done well! You've got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!' "Just then God showed up and said, 'Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods—who gets it?' "That's what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God."

☞ Luke 12:13-21 (MSG)

➤ Some people struggle with spending too much, and other people struggle with saving too much. Both are indicators of our desire to want to live the American dream and control our situations rather than to

turn them over to God in surrender. Do you resonate with this passage and struggle with excessive saving or excessive control over the future?

MATTHEW 6: WHAT YOU ARE COMMITTED TO REVEALS THE NATURE OF WHO YOU ARE

“Don’t store treasures for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and thieves can break in and steal them. But store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is.

“The eye is a light for the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. And if the only light you have is really darkness, then you have the worst darkness.

“No one can serve two masters. The person will hate one master and love the other, or will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches.

Matthew 6:19-24 (NCV)

➤ Have you ever totaled up the total investment you have made in the Church - not just to Christ Church, but any Kingdom of God organization? Have you ever thought about your cumulative giving like that? God sees it like that. As you make your commitment to the REACH initiative, see this as an extravagant investment into a lifetime of giving that you are making into the Kingdom of God. How does this change how you think about your giving?

Exercise and Reflection to do at home prior to Commitment Weekend:

List out the financial commitments you currently have – those that go beyond a one-time payment but that do have a time duration to them. Examples would be a home mortgage, a lease agreement, a car loan, a cell phone contract, your child’s tuition for school, your own tuition for school, etc.

Now write out the commitment you are planning to make for the REACH initiative. Where does it fall in the priority of these other commitments? Do you need to change or modify one or more of these other commitments in order to be able to fulfill your REACH commitment? What if you wanted to raise your REACH commitment? What would that require? Is there a financial commitment you currently have that appears to be prioritized above your ability to make a truly surrendered giving commitment to help move God's mission forward and jump in to make missional waves?

If someone who didn't know you looked at your financial commitments, what would they say you value?

Would that statement be true about you? Or is there something that needs to be modified?

If you keep this commitment over the next two years, what type of spiritual growth can you see happening in you?

How will you leverage this change to influence others to live their lives more closely with Jesus and express more love such as your children, your co-workers, your friends, your family, others in your circles of influence?

Pray over your commitment as you prepare to surrender your card on Commitment Weekend. Prayer is the most important thing in this whole process, and prayer is what gives us the heart of Jesus within us. Now let's do this, Church. It's time to REACH!