

## **Growing Deeper**

*Next: Lean in, Step up, Break out*

### **Week Four – Take Our Campus to the Next Level**

**Leviticus 19:30-34**

#### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day One**

1. In a church mission statement, which would you prioritize more: strengthening believers or reaching unbelievers? How would you support your answer?
2. Depending on how you answered the first question, how would the church allocate its financial resources?
3. Read Leviticus 19:33-34. In the midst of God's instructions for holiness, how do these commands about foreigners relate?
4. Who do you think is the equivalent of foreigners in our own day?
5. This command is an example of the Bible's focus on hospitality. In what ways is your church hospitable to new visitors?
6. How has church hospitality affected your church experience?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN by thanking God for always having a focus on foreigners because, without that focus, most of us would not be believers today. Ask Him for His help on paying His graciousness and hospitality forward to others.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two**

8. If you suddenly find that guests are coming to visit your home in 15 minutes, which room do you clean first and why?
9. Why do you think there is such a strong connection between hospitality and the attractiveness of your home?
10. When hosting at home, we want to put our best foot forward. It's sometimes hard to see that church operates the same way. Andy Stanley says, "Every Sunday people walk onto your campus and determine whether or not they will return the following week before your preacher opens his mouth. And that's not fair. But it's true." What would be the church equivalent of cleaning up your living room before guests arrive?

11. Skim Exodus 40:1-33. How much care and energy did Moses put into setting up the tabernacle, the place of worship? How does that compare to the effort we put into setting up our church to receive people for worship?
12. Think about some of the aspects of a church service that routine worshipers no longer notice. What are some of the little things that help contribute to a smooth and hospitable worship environment?
13. Brainstorm a list of ways that you could help contribute to a thoughtful and welcoming worship environment at your church.
14. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking God to use your church as a welcoming and hospitable environment for people who are searching for Him.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three**

15. If you've ever seen cathedrals in Italy, they're gorgeous, with interiors covered in gold and fine art. This means the doors are generally locked to prevent thievery. What problem would this present for a church's mission to the lost?
16. In our country, churches often go to the other extreme; they're plain, undecorated warehouses. What problems might that pose for being a welcoming place for unbelievers?
17. Take a few minutes to reflect on Psalm 84:1-12. What feeling about the place of worship is evoked in this psalm?
18. What guiding principle for decoration or luxury does this passage give for designing the place of God's worship?
19. The psalmist "faints with longing" to enter the place of God's worship. How often do you feel that way? How does the design of a sanctuary hinder or enhance that feeling?
20. What could be different about your own place of worship to help evoke that feeling for a guest who has come to worship God?
21. As you finish your FIFTEEN, thank God for the desire that He has placed in His people to worship Him. Ask Him to help you "shout with joy" in your worship of Him.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four**

22. Start today by reading John 2:14-17. For background information, the temple courts from which Jesus drove people was probably the Court of the Gentiles, a part of the temple designated for non-Jews to worship. Knowing

this, what might have been Jesus' problem with using those courts for money changing?

23. If the Jewish believers at the time were no longer concerned with welcoming foreigners into worship of God, how would this have interfered with God's stated plan? (See Isaiah 49:6 for help answering this question.)
24. In the temple of Jesus' day, there was a wall of hostility dividing the places where Jews and Gentiles could go. How do you think that made foreign believers feel about being part of God's people?
25. Now read Ephesians 2:11-14. What major change did Jesus' death and resurrection make in the worship of God?
26. How can we break down any perceived walls of hostility in our church environment that might keep people from becoming part of the body of believers?
27. Close your FITEEN in prayer, thanking God that He broke down the barriers between Him and us because of our sin. Ask Him to use you to break down any barriers between people struggling to find His grace and mercy.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five**

28. When you have people in your home, how do you want them to feel about their experience when they leave? How does that goal drive the actions you take while hosting?
29. One of Stephen Covey's habits of effective people is to "begin with the end in mind." What do you think this expression means?
30. For Christians, what do you think is the end in mind?
31. What things in church do you think we do out of habit or tradition, rather than because we've evaluated them with the end in mind?
32. One possible answer is 2 Corinthians 5:11-15. Read the passage. In your own words, summarize what Paul is describing as a Christian's goal? What benefit is Paul talking about in verse 13?
33. What is Paul willing to do to achieve that benefit? What might that look like, specifically for him? For us today?
34. How can we rethink some of the ways we do church in order to persuade others of our sincere belief that Christ

will raise those who believe in Him from the dead?

35. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking God to help you be intentional in your goal of being an ambassador of reconciliation to people who need to experience His love.

## **Week Five: Generosity's Best Kept Secret**

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What aspect of the scripture caught your attention?
2. By the world's standards, are you a wealthy person? What criteria would you use in answering this question?
3. By America's standards, are you considered poor, middle class, upper middle class or affluent? FYI...the mean income in America (half live over this amount and half under this amount) was determined to be \$54,000. Does this number surprise you? Does knowing this change your answer?
4. How would you define a generous person?
5. Do you consider yourself generous? Why or why not?
6. Who was the strongest influence on your life in the area of generosity? Explain his or her impact.
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray that you would hold material possessions loosely, using them to support your Christians values.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 says those who are rich in this world, should not be arrogant nor put their hope in wealth. What does it mean to be arrogant about your possessions? What makes that so bad?
9. What makes riches uncertain? What could happen in your life that could devastate your financial standing? Have you suffered financial setbacks in your life? Explain.
10. What should be the focus of our attention, according to 1 Timothy 6:17-19?
11. For what purpose does God give us things, according to this passage?
12. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12. What additional reasons does Paul suggest for God to provide us with financial resources?

13. List three reasons for your gratitude to God.
14. Finish your FIFTEEN by confessing those times you have not always been as grateful as you ought to have been. Pray for a more grateful spirit.

### **Spend Fifteen – Day Three**

15. What does this phrase mean -, “Do for one what you wish you could do for all?” Is that an important concept for you? Why or why not?
16. What does 1 Timothy 6:18 suggest is the attitude that can keep the value of possessions in proper perspective?
17. Define that last time you were “rich in good deeds?” Be as specific as possible.
18. Define a good deed. What is required for something you do to be considered a good deed in the sight of God?
19. Read Hebrews 11:6. What does the author of Hebrews suggest is required for an act to be pleasing in the sight of God? Is it possible for people to perform good deeds for others which would not be considered good deeds using the qualification of Hebrews 11:6?
20. Read Matthew 10:41-42, Luke 14:13-14, 1 Corinthians 3:7-9 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. Although we know that we are all saved by grace through faith ALONE, what do these passages suggest about God’s recognition of good works in heaven?
21. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more aware of the needs of others around you and for compassion to step up when needed.

### **Spend Fifteen – Day Four**

22. Have you known relatively poor people who had a great life? Have you known relatively affluent people who’ve not had a good life? How little or much do possessions play in the quality of life? Do you think most people believe that?
23. In your opinion, what factors determine the quality of a person’s life?
24. Read 1 Timothy 6:19. What does this mean to you?

25. Read Jesus' own words from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:19-21. How can you lay up treasures in heaven? What are treasures in heaven, anyway?
26. Does Jesus say your treasures follow your heart or your heart follows your treasure? What's the difference?
27. Verse 19 in the assigned reading speaks about laying up a good foundation for your future. Is that a reference to heaven, your future on earth or both? Explain.
28. Finish your FIFTEEN by praying for a more Godly perspective on the purpose and value of so-called riches (possessions.).

### **Spend Fifteen – Day Five**

29. Reread 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Explain the progression of God's instruction. Which come first, second and third in this directive?
30. Describe, in your own words, what you think God means when He describes a life that is truly life.
31. In your mind, is a life that is truly life, as God defines it, illusive? Does it come and go or is it one of those things that, once you know, you can never be the same?
32. Describe someone you know who lives a life that is truly life more often than not. Why did you choose him or her? Is that someone you aspire to emulate? Why or why not?
33. Do you think most Christians understand this principal of life? What criteria do you use to answer this question?
34. Does your church teach this principal adequately? Why is it important? How is your view of possessions reflective of your faith?
35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray a prayer of gratitude for all of your material possession and for a wiser understanding of their purpose.

## **Week Six – *NEXT is Now***

### **1 Chronicles 29:1-9**

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Solomon is preparing to construct his famous temple to the glory of God. According to 1 Chronicles 17:1-12 and 1 Chronicles 22:7-8, why didn't David build the temple?
2. Had David done anything wrong? How does this Scripture compare to 1 Corinthians 3:5-9? How does this truth apply to us?
3. How does the proverb “It's to your credit if you don't care who gets the credit” apply?
4. Was David upset that God had rejected his request to build the temple? What did David do to help the cause anyway?
5. Why do you think God wanted a man of peace to build His temple? What does that say about God?
6. Ecclesiastes 3 states that there is a time for war and a time for peace. In the Jewish culture, the word for peace is shalom. Would you define God's peace as the absence of hostility or does it mean more than that?
7. Read Matthew 5:9, then finish your FIFTEEN by using these words to pray to be one of God's peacemakers.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Have you ever been a part of something important? Explain.
9. Read 1 Chronicles 29:1-9. How does verse 3 describe the attitude of David when making his offering to God?
10. Read verse 6. What's the connection between David and the elders? Between the elders and the people? What principle applies?
11. Consider similar advice in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Why does attitude matter so much to God?
12. Read Hebrews 11:6. Explain it in your own words.

13. What does the phrase, “Equal sacrifice, not equal giving”, mean to you? What’s the problem with excusing people of modest means from being generous in service to the Lord? What does that attitude suggest?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer by asking God to give you a generous spirit in all things.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. Read 1 Chronicles 29:5. What question does David ask?
16. Read 1 Chronicles 29:14-16. What is the source of all gifts given to God for His work?
17. The theme for this week is NEXT IS NOW. What does that imply?
18. Do you do a good job of living in the moment or are you more inclined to live in the past or eagerly wait for the future?
19. God loves to do uncommon things through common people so that the power of His blessing might be seen. Read Paul’s words on this point in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. What was he saying?
20. Is this your moment to do something important in the kingdom of God? Explain.
21. As you conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray that God would grant you faith to take action.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

22. David gave his entire life and all his energy to serve the Lord. Why was it important that he also contribute his money?
23. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:19-24. How do you lay up treasure in heaven?
24. What does the Bible mean when it says, “But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness”? How important is the right perception?
25. Read the concluding words of Matthew 6:33-34. What is the solution to the potential problem of misplaced

priorities?

26. Were you raised in a generous home? What effect has the attitude of your family had on your generosity now?
27. Are you more or less blessed in the things of this world than you anticipated when you were young?
28. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for your eyes to be opened to the goodness of the Lord in your life.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

29. Re-read the 1 Chronicles 29:1-9. What observation is the most prominent to you?
30. It is important that we pass on the lessons we have learned in life to the next generation. How are you helping the next generation understand that all good things come from God?
31. Read James 1:17-18. Have you ever felt that God played favorites? What made you feel that way?
32. God made us all different. Why do so many believe that everyone has the same right to affluence, certain talents or opportunities?
33. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-11. According to this passage, what's the key to a full life?
34. Continue reading 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What is uncertain in life? What is the key to life that is life indeed?
35. Conclude your final FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a life that is content while pressing forward to greater achievement. Pray for a greater measure of God's perspective about possessions.