

1. What do you think it means to help somebody grow spiritually in the Lord?

Ephesians 4:17-32 (NIV)

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

2. What do you think it means to have a darkened understanding?

3. What's the process for hardening a heart, and how does a hardened heart keep us from growing.

¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. ²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. *Ephesians 4:19-24*

4. We are told to put off our old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires. How does the old self, deceive us and keep us from accepting others.

5. What are the standards by which we measure others, which come to us from the world and not from Christ?

6. What are the things that influence our minds, and in return influence our walk in Christ?

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Ephesians 4:25-28

7. How do practice falsehood in our walk with each other in the church? How important is honesty in our relationships with each other?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would others rate you on your ability to hold on to a grudge? What causes us to hold onto grudges?

9. How do grudges keep us from helping others to grow in Christ?

10. Do you think its stealing from the church, when you receive the benefits of the church, but do not give to the church even when you are able to do so, but make choices to spend your money on other things.

²⁹ *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29*

11. Some Christians think nothing of cursing or using profanity. Do you think there are situations to justify using cursing/profanity for a believer? Why or why not?

12. What are some other forms of unwholesome talk that we are willing to tolerate more easily than cursing? How do we help each other grow with this problem?

³⁰ *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* ³¹ *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Ephesians 4:30-31*

13. What do you think it means for us to grieve the Holy Spirit?

14. How does verse 31 confirm that we are a constant work in progress in our walk with the Lord?

³² *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32*

15. Are you willing to make a pledge to practice vs 32. Each time you come to New Life At Calvary? What are some practical things you can do to make the verse a reality?

**Life-Sharing Lesson 2 40 Days Of Community—Serving Together Acts 6:1-7 |
Thessalonians 5:12-15**

1. When was the last time you had to make an accommodation in order to serve someone else?

2. What is usually involved when you make an accommodation? What accommodation have you made at New Life At Calvary?

Acts 6:1-7 (NIV)

¹ *In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.*

² *So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."*

⁵ *This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

3. How do you think this unequal treatment in this merger between the Grecian Jews and the Hebraic Jews had come to be?

4. What was the goal of the ministry that was taking place in verse 1?

5. What and who was needed in order to accomplish the ministry?

6. Why did the apostles not jump into taking care of the distribution situation themselves?

7. What main image does the bible use to describe believers that indicate we are to work together in meeting the needs of others?

8. Do you think it was necessary to choose people of full of the Spirit and wisdom just to serve widows food? Why or why not?

9. What happens when we see what we do in the church as simply a task to be filled on our part instead of as ministry that is building the cause of Christ? Should we install people publicly into different ministries in the church, rather than simply letting them join a ministry?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15 (NIV)

¹² Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

10. Teamwork involves dealing with people. We see that there are different kinds of people in the church that we must deal with in the passage above. What do you think Paul means when he tells us to warn those who are idle in the church?

11. Why are people idle in the church? Is every member in the church, called to be active in a ministry in the church? Why or why not.

13. How are we to accommodate those who are timid in the church?

14. What comes to your mind when you hear help the weak?

15. How do you make the distinction between being patient with everyone, but not being patient with everyone's sin?

16. What are subtle ways in which we pay back wrong for wrong in the church that hurts the ministry of Christ.

Life-Sharing Lesson 3 40 Days Of Community “Living A Generous Life”

Matthew 6:24 Luke 19: 1-8 | Timothy 6:16-18

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 outside of your family, how would you rate your level of generosity?

2. What do you think Jesus actually meant when he said “**Matthew 6:24 (NIV)**

²⁴ *"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*

3. What factors in life contribute to how generous we are to the kingdom?

Luke 19:1-8 (NIV)

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."

⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

4. In the passage above in Luke 19:1-8, why made Zacchaeus so generous with his wealth. Do you think you could do what Zaccheus did, if tomorrow you were asked to give away ½ of your possessions to the poor? Why or Why Not?

5. Why is it, that often the more we have, the more difficult it becomes to be generous?

6. For those of us who do become wealthy (Remember if you make more than \$1500 a year, you are in the top 20 % of the world income) how do you feel about Paul's instructions to the rich in this passage. **1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NIV)**

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

7. What are some of the ways we put our in wealth, without realizing that is what we are doing?

8. Do you think it's possible to command people to be generous and willing to share? Does our money ever really become God's money? How can we tell?

9. Why are people who are generous usually are happier than those who are not?

10. What are some of the signs that you control your money, rather than your money controlling you?

11. How do possessions become chains in our lives?

1 John 3:16-18 (NIV)

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

11. How do you reach a balance between “God wants us to enjoy the good things in this life.” with “if your brother or sister has a need, how can you close your heart to their situation.”

11. What does it mean for a church to be a generous church? Do you want our church, New Life At Calvary to be known as a generous church? Why or Why not?

12. The easiest way for us to become a generous church is for people to tithe. Why do you think so many of us resist the idea of giving God a dime out of each dollar we earn?

13. How may we have to change our lifestyles of mindsets if we are to become more generous? Can generosity be learned or do you have to be born with it.