

# Blessed<sup>2</sup>

## Our Heart Matters

**God's abundant blessing as we live generous lives is tied to our hearts (Mark 12:41-44).** Jesus makes it clear to His followers, when He highlights a poor widow who gave all she had (two copper coins) into the temple treasury, that the amount of our giving is significantly less important than the condition of our hearts when we give. In seeking to live a life of generosity, it is not just the act of giving that we need to focus on. The position of our hearts as we give matters. If we practice generosity on any level (i.e., relationally, financially, in serving, etc.), we will experience blessing. This is the law of sowing and reaping, and it is undefeated and irrefutable. But *how* we reap, and the totality of *what* we reap is intricately tied to the heart behind it. God calls us to be a cheerful giver, not a bitter or reluctant giver (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). God offers more blessing, or fuller blessing, when we are generous with the right heart.

### GET THINGS STARTED

Do you tend to be financially looser and more openhanded, or are you stricter and more tight-fisted? What would you define as *extravagant* in spending, or in giving, versus what is reasonable?

### GO DEEPER

1. In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus compares the gifts of the rich to the gift of a poor widow. What is the difference in their heart postures as they give to the temple treasury, and why does Jesus praise the poor widow?
2. From 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, why are we challenged to not give reluctantly or under compulsion? Why do you think Paul uses the word *cheerful* – of all the words he could have chosen – to describe the kind of giver God loves? Does giving cheerfully always mean giving extravagantly (beyond what seems reasonable)? Where is the place, or when might be the occasion, for extravagant or sacrificial giving like the poor widow?

### MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. How reluctant or cheerful are you in your generosity? When you think about Jesus' teaching in Mark 12:41-44, who do you identify with the most, and why: the rich who give out of their abundance, or the poor widow who gave all she had? What would you say your heart attitude or heart posture is right now towards generous giving?
2. Where might God be calling you to give extravagantly or sacrificially?
3. Has your once cheerful giving drifted into reluctant or even simply routine, mundane giving? If so, how might you regain your cheerfulness? If you only know reluctant, obligatory giving, how can you foster a better, more cheerful heart in giving?

### PRACTICE IT NOW

**As a group, take time in prayer to ask God for the right heart in giving.** Ask Him to show you where your heart truly is when it comes to generous giving of your time and finances. Ask God to show you what your next step in generosity might be and invite Him to shape your heart in preparation. And ask Him if there is a place He is calling you to give extravagantly or sacrificially in this season.