

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides** **(March 13<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> )**

### **Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. Think back to the home that you grew up in. What were you taught about money? Where you taught to save? Taught to enjoy life? Was the issue avoided?

### **Bible Study Questions**

1. Read 1 Kings 17:7-16
  - Imagine that you were the widow. How would you react to Elijah's request? What would you be thinking?
2. Pastor Michael talked about people often not being generous because it is a threat to their security. Do you agree or disagree with this?
  - Where do you find yourself holding back on generosity in order to protect something?
  - Do you believe that security can be an idol? How so? Why is this so damaging to us?
  - The Bible does teach the wisdom of saving money and caring for ourselves. When is saving and protecting yourself wise, and when is it harmful?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 8:6-11
  - What does God promise in these verses?
  - What kind of blessings do you believe that God often gives to generous people?
4. We are told to live generous lives and trust that God would provide. Why is this so hard for us to do?
5. What changes do you need to make in your life to prevent security from being an idol that prevents you from obeying God?

March 20<sup>th</sup>

### How to be Generous: The Obstacle

Most people want to be generous, but they struggle with doing it. There is an obstacle that often gets in the way and only by removing that obstacle can we enjoy the blessings that God wants to give us through a generous life.

- I. **The obstacle:** : In 1 Kings 17:7, Elijah is sent to a widow in the village of Zaraphath. The region is in the midst of a severe drought and the woman only has enough flour to make one final meal. Elijah asks her to share that meal with him.
  - **Generosity is a threat to our security:** The woman is confronted with the knowledge that if she shares, it will cause her to starve. For many people today, we are conditioned to save what we can and to make sure that we are never dependent on anyone else. Even spending money on luxuries is a part of securing a comfortable standard of life. To live generously, means that we would have to give up things that give us security.
  - **Security becomes a idol in our life with the illusion of control:** When we commit to security instead of following God's commands, we are elevating security above God. It becomes an idol in our life. Even though we think we are controlling it, it begins to control us making us more and more self centered people.
- II. **The answer:** Elijah tells the woman not to fear and that if she obeys him, then God would provide for her needs. She does so and God does a miracle ensuring that the flour never runs out.
  - **Obey God's prompting for generosity:** We remove the obstacle by choosing to obey God. We decide that he is lord over our lives and even if it seems unpractical, to follow his lead.
  - **Trust that God is our security:** In 2 Corinthians 8:6-11, Paul tells the church in Corinth that if they choose generosity, then God would bless them. That doesn't mean that he would give them luxuries, but that God would care for their needs and make their sharing well worth it. When we obey God and risk losing our security, a shift happens. We go from trying secure ourselves by our own means, to placing ourselves under the protection of an all knowing, all powerful, and loving God.

### Conclusion

In life, there are two ways that we can live. We can walk through the day doing what we can to alleviate fear and to provide for our own security. Or we can go through the day with eyes open looking for God inspired opportunities to us the resources that he has given us. The result

of taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> approach is to join God in his work and to share in his generous heart.