



YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO

WHEN YOU KNOW WHO HE IS

STUDY GUIDE

Deuteronomy 15:7-15

Series: Open Handed

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VERTICAL TAMP A

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide walks back through Sunday's message, "You Don't Know Who You're Talking To," so you can dig deeper on your own or with your group. Read each section, sit with the Word Study and Key Line boxes, and let the questions move you from information to reflection. You do not have to answer every question in one sitting.

A suggested rhythm: read the Opening on day one, then one Movement per day across the next four days. On day six, return to the Big Idea and When You Remember Who He Is to reset before moving forward.

BIG IDEA

When we understand who God is, it changes what we are willing to surrender.

Generosity is not a transaction we use to get something from God. It is a response to who He is and what He has already done.

CENTRAL TENSION

My hand is closed because my heart has not fully seen who I'm talking to.

DEUTERONOMY 15:7-8, KJV

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.

Heart before hand. Notice the order: hardened heart, closed hand. God addresses the heart before He addresses the hand.

Sometimes the hand is closed because the heart needs attention.

REFLECT BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. When the subject of giving comes up, what is your honest first response: openness, defensiveness, or guilt?
2. If your giving were a portrait of how you see God, what would it say about Him?

OPENING · THE MEASURE YOU USE

MATTHEW 7:1-2, NIV

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

LUKE 6:37-38, NIV

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

These passages address judgment, condemnation, forgiveness, and generosity. They are not a formula for giving money to get more money. Jesus is confronting what comes out of our hearts and how we treat people.

Giving affects every area of life. A marriage struggles when nobody gives love, attention, or patience. A job suffers when we refuse to contribute effort. A car eventually stops working when we refuse to invest in its maintenance. A community suffers when everybody wants to receive and nobody wants to contribute.

You cannot continually withdraw from what you refuse to invest in.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

מעשר (*ma'aser*) "tithe"

Literally “a tenth,” or 10 percent. In Israel’s covenant law, a tenth of agricultural produce and livestock was set apart for the Lord. Biblical tithes supported worship, the Levites, and care for vulnerable people. Christians differ on how those laws apply today, but generous, willing giving is clearly taught in the New Testament.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where in your life (marriage, work, friendships, church) are you trying to withdraw more than you invest?
2. Why do you think God deals with the heart before He deals with the hand?
3. What has shaped the way you think about tithing and giving: Scripture, family, past church experience, or fear?

MOVEMENT 1 · CONFRONT THE HEART THAT WITHHOLDS

DEUTERONOMY 15:9, KJV

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

Deal with selfishness. God established a seventh-year release of debts among fellow Israelites. Someone might refuse to help because the approaching release made repayment unlikely. God calls out the selfish calculation that allows a neighbor to suffer.

Selfishness asks, “What will helping you cost me?” Compassion asks, “What will happen if nobody helps?” The heart can find an excuse for what it does not want to release, and God cares about the motive behind the money.

We do not give to get. We get to give.

Why does God call us to give? To meet needs. To support His work. To develop generosity and confront greed within us. Giving does something for the recipient and something in the giver.

HEART QUESTION

Am I practicing wise stewardship, or protecting selfishness?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you have hesitated to help someone, which question was louder: “What will it cost me?” or “What happens if nobody helps?”
2. What excuses does your heart tend to reach for when it does not want to release something?
3. Where is the line for you between wise stewardship and protecting selfishness? How would you know if you crossed it?

MOVEMENT 2 • RELEASE THE GIFT WITHOUT RESENTMENT

DEUTERONOMY 15:10, NKJV

You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand.

Deal with the grieving heart. You can release something from your hand and still resent it in your heart. You gave, but now you keep rehearsing what it cost. You helped, but now you make the person feel indebted.

Sacrifice can hurt without becoming resentment.

God wants generosity that does not punish the person who received it. Give thoughtfully. Give willingly. Trust God with what obedience costs. His blessing is not a financial return we can purchase.

HEART QUESTION

Can I release it without regretting that I helped?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of a time you gave and later replayed what it cost you. What was happening in your heart?
2. Have you ever made someone feel indebted after you helped them? Have you been on the receiving end of that?
3. What is the difference between a sacrifice that hurts and a sacrifice that turns into resentment?

MOVEMENT 3 · OPEN YOUR HAND TO WHAT GOD HAS PLACED IN IT

DEUTERONOMY 15:14, NKJV

You shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the LORD your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him.

Develop a generous heart. God is now addressing the release of a Hebrew servant after six years. They were to provide generously for the person's new beginning. Their freedom was to be accompanied by practical help.

Give from what God has blessed you with. Recognize the connection between what you have received and what you can share. Generosity begins when we acknowledge that we have been helped.

What God has placed in my hand can become help in somebody else's life.

Our church. Approximately 250 people attend weekly. Based on our current figures, approximately 50 give consistently through tithing. That is about 20 percent of average attendance, though attendance includes children and guests. The question is: What part can I faithfully contribute? We share a mission. We share responsibility. We contribute according to our ability. We also care for those among us who need help.

JOHN 12:4-7, NIV

But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial."

Mary pours expensive perfume on Jesus' feet. Lazarus has already been raised from the dead, and her brother is sitting at the dinner table with Jesus. Jesus connects her offering to His approaching burial.

Judas could calculate the price. Mary expressed costly devotion. Judas's objection concealed greed; John tells us he was stealing. Mary had personally witnessed Jesus' power in her family. John does not explicitly name Lazarus's resurrection as her motive, but it is the setting of her worship.

Before you question what she poured out, remember who Jesus brought out.

JOHN 4:10, KJV

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman at the well. Jesus asks her for water. She does not yet recognize who is speaking. He explains that knowing Him would change what she asked of Him. The passage is about receiving the life Jesus gives.

She knew what was in the well, but she did not yet know who was standing beside it.

Our understanding of who God is shapes our willingness to trust Him. Knowing who He is changes how we respond.

HEART QUESTION

What does my response to God reveal about my understanding of Him?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has God placed in your hand right now (resources, time, skills, influence) that could become help in someone else's life?
2. When it comes to giving, are you more often calculating like Judas or pouring out like Mary? What makes the difference?
3. What has God "brought out" in your own story that should shape how you respond to Him?
4. Prayerfully consider: what part can I faithfully contribute to the mission of our church?

MOVEMENT 4 · REMEMBER THE GOD WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT

DEUTERONOMY 15:15, NIV

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

פדה (padah) "redeemed"

To ransom, rescue, or buy back; to release someone by paying the price for their freedom. Israel did not free itself from Egypt. God paid the price and brought them out. Now He ties their generosity to that memory: the people who were bought back are called to open their hands to those still waiting on release.

Develop a grateful heart. God connects their generosity to their memory. Remember when you needed help. Remember when you could not deliver yourself. Remember who brought you out. Your freedom should influence how you treat somebody still needing help.

Forgiven people have a reason to forgive. Helped people have a reason to help. Redeemed people have a reason to respond.

Do not become so familiar with the blessing that you forget the One who blessed you.

HEART QUESTION

Have I forgotten how much mercy it took to get me here?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe a season when you could not deliver yourself. Who did God use to help you?
2. Where have you become so familiar with a blessing that you stopped thanking the One who gave it?
3. Who in your life right now is still waiting on the kind of help you once received?

CLOSE · WHEN YOU REMEMBER WHO HE IS

PSALM 103:2-5, NIV

Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Remember His goodness. He forgives: He knows the whole story and still offers mercy. He heals: we bring our sickness to Him, including while we are still waiting. He redeems: the pit does not place you beyond His reach. He crowns: He meets His people with love and compassion. He satisfies and renews: we depend on Him for life and strength.

Do not let what you are still praying for make you forget what He has already done.

ECCLESIASTES 8:8, NIV

As no one has power over the wind to contain it, so no one has power over the time of their death. As no one is discharged in time of war, so wickedness will not release those who practice it.

Remember your dependence. We can manage resources. We can make plans. We cannot guarantee another breath. This life is an opportunity to respond to God.

You can have authority over people and still have no authority over your next breath.

NUMBERS 23:19, NIV

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Remember His faithfulness. Balak wanted a curse where God had declared a blessing. God would not be manipulated into abandoning His word. We can trust what He has actually promised.

My circumstances can change without His character changing.

REVELATION 5:12, NIV

In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Remember His worth. Heaven declares the worth of the Lamb who was slain. Jesus gave Himself before we ever brought an offering. His sacrifice reveals His love. His resurrection gives us hope beyond loss.

Before I ask what I should give Him, I need to remember what He has given for me.

Final landing. He is worthy of my trust. He is worthy of my obedience. He is worthy of my resources. He is worthy of my surrender. I'm not giving to purchase His goodness. I'm responding because He has already been good. With God, loss does not have the final word. The Lamb who was slain is alive.

THIS WEEK

1. Read Psalm 103:1-5 every morning. Name one benefit from your own life that you do not want to forget, and thank God for it specifically.
2. Answer each Heart Question honestly in writing. Circle the one that hits hardest and talk to God about it.
3. Take one step of open-handed obedience: a gift, an act of help, or a decision about faithful giving. Do it willingly, without resentment, and trust God with what it costs.

When I understand who He is, generosity becomes a response to His worth. He is worthy of it all.