



Family Discussion

GUIDE





There's a word that's on my heart right now as we prepare to take more big steps in the life of our church.

That word is found in Luke 2:52. It describes a very specific season in our Savior's earliest years on earth.

The description – as you will see – also fits the bill when you think about where The Church at BattleCreek is at today and what we're called to do in the days ahead.

The verse says, "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people."

As a church, we've grown all right – maybe faster than any of us dared to dream or imagine. We've already gone from 120 people to more than 3,000.

And we have definitely found favor with people, both with believers and with seekers – people who are exploring faith, God and spiritual things for the very first time.

Now we need to go deeper with God. Just like Jesus did, it's time for us to learn and mature. It's about growing in our understanding of His word, His love and our response to Him.

We're giving you a couple of tools to help you start. Please walk through the 14-day devotional guide that accompanies this packet. The devotionals are designed to spur your closeness with Jesus Christ.

We're also providing a family discussion guide on the inside of this brochure. It will help you make a decision about how to participate in the Next Step offerings for our campus expansions and mission projects.

Once you reach a decision, please complete a confidential commitment card and bring it to church on Sunday, November 16. Together, we'll lay our commitments at the altar during each service that day.

Sincerely,

Pastor Alex

reflecting

I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing. 2 Samuel 24:24

The Bible tells us that God commanded King David to build an altar for the Lord – a place of worship – on a specific piece of ground. David paid the owner of the land for that privilege so that he could offer God the sacrifice He required.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was sacrificed in our place (Hebrews 9 & 10). Through Christ's death on the cross, God doesn't demand that kind of sacrifice anymore. What God does require are living and holy sacrifices.

In Romans 12:1, we're told to offer ourselves as living and holy sacrifices because of all He has done for us.

For Discussion

1. What has the Lord already done for us?

Let each family member list all their blessings: spiritual, physical, material, etc.

2. What do we have that wasn't given to us by God?

Even the things we have acquired by working have come to us as a result of the time, strength, health, skills and intelligence God has gifted us with.

responding

What can I offer the Lord for all He has done for me?

Psalm 116:12

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Our church is taking steps to learn to trust God more and obey Him better. That should also be the goal for each person and family.

It's important to understand that what we choose to do with our offerings will NOT be done as a way to win God's acceptance by how much we give or what sacrifices we choose to make.

When we give our lives to Christ and trust Him to save us, the Bible says that God places us "in Christ," and that being "in Christ" makes us acceptable to God. No matter what we do or don't do with our giving, nothing can ever change that fact.

Our offerings are simply a way for us to say "thank you" to God.

For Discussion

- 1.** In 2 Corinthians 5:14, the Bible says that "the love of Christ compels us." In other words, the great love of Christ and what He has already done for us should be enough to motivate us to do whatever God wants us to do.

Does it? If we say that we love Jesus and appreciate all He has done for us, should that make a difference in what we are willing to do?

- 2.** What can we do to show God our gratitude?

The reality

When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through.
Ecclesiastes 5:4

Here are some simple principles to remember as you make a decision on your offering.

■ **Do what you can.**

God wants us to do what we can with what we have. He only expects us to give back to Him what He has already given to us – He expects no more.

■ **Do that much.**

Will we give God our best or will we hold back the best for ourselves?

■ **Do it now.**

Psalm 95:7 says, “Oh, that you would listen to His voice today.” There will never be a better or an easier time to step out in faith. If we are ever going to do it, the time is now.

For Discussion

1. Ask God to reveal to you, as the leader of the family, what is in your heart. Confess any sin that is keeping you from being the leader God wants you to be, or that stands in the way of hearing from God about what He wants you to do.
2. Ask God to show each member of your family what He would have them give during this time in the life of the church. Lead them to ask God to show them anything in their lives that's more important than Jesus. Make sure you allow plenty of time for silent prayer, for each family member to pray aloud, and for God to speak.

Doing what you can

Here are some fun and simple suggestions for “Doing What You Can” when it comes to finding a way to fulfill your commitment to bring offerings:

- Children can make and sell things.
- The whole family can go through their things and have a garage sale.
- Families can give up going out to the movies and do a “family movie” night at home with a rental instead. Game night works, too.
- Parents who work outside the home can “brown-bag-it” at lunch.
- Families can cut down on eating out or when they do eat out, limit their spending by eating at less expensive places, or by drinking water with their meals instead of soda pop to save money.
- Families can give up their cable for a pre-determined length of time.
- Families can collect and sell aluminum cans.
- Each member of the family can use paper money during the day and save all their coins each evening in a common jar.

These are just a few ways that each person in the family can get in on reflecting God's heart for giving.