



## **Crazy Like Us Week Four**

**Opening Prayer:** God, sometimes it's more natural to hold on tight to what we have, but we are open to the idea that you have a different way for us to live. We want this group to be a place we can honestly talk about the things that are holding us back from living generously. Please transform our hearts to align with your best, and help us to practice whatever steps you have for us.

### **Talk It Over:**

Two of the big key reminders of this series have been:

- 1) Some things, even good things, don't always come easy and natural to us.
- 2) With intentional practice, humans have an amazing capacity to learn, and even relearn, new skills.

- What is something you have had to intentionally practice at to become proficient at?
- Have you ever been terrible at something, but after intentional practice became really good at it? Share about that journey.
- Have you ever had to relearn something a new way? Meaning you knew how to do something one way, but later realized you actually should have learned it a different way. What was that experience like for you?

**To better understand the invitation God has for us, we have looked at the following path throughout this series: God's Generosity → Our Proper Response → What Hinders Us → How We Change**

- What part of the path trips you up or challenges you the most?
- What part of the path has resonated with you most throughout this series?
- What are some simple adjustments you have made, you want to make, or you're considering making to help your financial situation? Remember, a little adjustment can result in legitimate change down the road.
- For those of you who have made adjustments already, tell us about that process. When did you make the adjustment? How difficult or easy was the change? When was the change hardest to stick with? What was gained by the adjustment? What tips can you share with the group?

### **Read [1 Timothy 6:17-18 \(New Living Translation\)](#)**

Most Americans are in the top 2% of wage earners in the world. But, unfortunately, we often don't feel rich. For many Americans, somewhere along the line, our expenses grew too much — in turn, margin was lost and financial pressure increased. Along these same lines, studies show that as the average American salary increases, the percentage they give decreases. Studies also tell us that salary increases don't equate to more margin and less pressure. All in all, it's as if most Americans are simply not that good at enjoying the money they have in freeing ways, recognizing their wealth, or being generous .

However, the verse we looked at reminds us that God has given to us generously for our enjoyment, that we should use our money for good, and be positioned ready to share.

- Do you ever buy into the lie that more money would automatically equate to more margin and generosity, and less pressure? When and where did you first buy into this lie? Where did this idea come from? And when are you most vulnerable to believe this lie?
- What are some steps you can take to better recognize and appreciate your wealth? Think of little or large gestures, and remember there are no wrong answers. Each of our lives look different, and God may be nudging each of us in different ways.

**Read [John 13:34 \(New Living Translation\)](#)**

In this verse Jesus takes The Golden Rule and pumps it with steroids by saying our behavior towards others should both reflect and be measured by how God has treated us personally.

- When is it easiest and hardest for you to treat others in a way that reflects how God has treated you?
- Who do you know that does a good job at treating all people, even difficult people, in a respectful and kind way?
- Have you ever had to apologize for someone because you recognized that despite their behavior you did not treat them in a fashion that reflected God's love for you? Tell us about that process.
- Is there someone in your life currently that you aren't treating in a way that reflects how God treats you? Have you ever considered apologizing to them for how you have treated them? You may need to implement boundaries with this person by all means, and in no way should you own their part of the problem, but the Bible is clear that we should treat all people with grace, love, and respect.

**Read [James 1:27 \(New Living Translation\)](#)**

James tells us that true and genuine religion is two fold: We should be part of the solution and we shouldn't contribute to the problems of this world. In other words, religion that doesn't move or challenge our behaviour, heart, eyes, or way of thinking towards more loving ways is likely missing something or diluted in some way. Pure and genuine religion should make us more loving people and impact the world around us in a positive way somehow.

- Consider your past religious experiences — or your past opinions or ideas about religion — and share what you would have said pure and genuine religion equated to? In other words, in what ways did you once think a religious person could gain credit or approval? What were the proper practices, traditions, and attitudes you expected from a religious person?
- In what ways has Jesus changed you to be more loving?

The bible teaches us that we are transformed best when we remain connected and sensitive to God.

- Looking back on this month how are you doing at connecting with God? When do you feel most connected to him?
- Share about a time you recently heard from or experienced the Holy Spirit.
- How are you doing at listening and being sensitive to the Holy Spirit this season?

**Closing Prayer:** God, we know that doing things in new ways is often difficult and uncomfortable. Soften our hearts to what your leadership and invitations. Help us to be mature and committed in our practices and adjustments.