

**STUDY GUIDE FOR THE WEEK OF: March 16, 2008**

THE NEXT CHAPTER

STEVE SCHIBSTED

WEEK 8 OF THE SERIES

**“CORE VALUE: EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY”**

**Scripture**

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” Mark 12:41-44

**Core Value Statement**

Grace is the outpouring of God's unlimited goodness, and generosity is our heartfelt response to God's gifts. Generosity involves a stewardship of all that we are and have. We therefore commit to using our gifts of time, money, skills—our whole lives—in service to God and those around us.

**Study Notes**

The familiar story of the widow's mite is part of a larger section of scripture that deals with some very important issues. Read 12:28-44 to set today's passage in context.

**Questions For Further Reflection and Small Group Discussion**

1. Think of someone you know who is generous. What is it about this person that makes you think they are generous? Do you know many people who are generous?
2. In contrast to the teachers of the law and the rich, what motivates the widow's behavior?
3. Jesus uses the widow as an example of generosity. What do we learn about the kingdom definition of generosity from this great story? Our society often defines generosity by the size of the gift. Jesus defines generosity by the sacrifice that is made. What's the difference? What's the good news in this kingdom definition of generosity? What is the challenge?
4. In his message, Steve said that extravagant generosity is always marked by three things: sacrifice, trust in God and love. Why does generosity involve sacrifice? Why does it lead to a deeper trust in God? Why must it be based in love?
5. Our core value statement says that God grace and our generosity are related. Is there a direct relationship between God's grace and our generosity? What is this relationship?
6. Generosity involves our whole lives, not just our financial resources. As a church, what are some ways we can be generous to each other? Our community? Our world?
7. How do we become more generous? What steps can you take in your life to become a more generous person?