

**CONVERSATION GUIDE**

1. Take 5-10 minutes to discuss last week's sermon.
2. Discuss the topic of generosity. What does a life of freely giving look like? What characteristics must be in place before we can respond to others with genuine generosity?

In this passage, we read about Jesus' interactions with different people at a Sabbath meal gathering in the home of a Pharisee. If we divide this passage into three sections, it is easier to see what He is teaching in each scenario. In verses 1-6, Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath and challenges the Pharisees' hypocrisy. In verses 7-11, Jesus notices how the guests strive for the best seats at the table. Using a parable, He calls them to live a life of humility over self-seeking or prestige. In verses 12-14, Jesus invites His host to live generously by extending kindness to less fortunate guests - those who are unable return the favor.

**READ** Luke 14:1-14

**DISCUSS and REFLECT**

Luke 14:1-6

- Who invited Jesus to this meal and what is significant about when it occurs?
- Who is Jesus' audience in this passage? One character seems a little out of place; who is it and why?

It's clear from other Gospel accounts that Jesus accepts invitations from all types of people: from culturally despised tax collectors to highly regarded Jewish leaders. He welcomes all who approach him regardless of their motives. The Pharisees have been a constant source of criticism and hostility for Jesus, and yet He still accepts the invitation to break bread with them on the Sabbath. Given the Pharisees' judgment and obsessive law following (think Levitical rules regarding clean vs. unclean), it is unlikely that this Pharisee host would have invited a man suffering from dropsy to attend his dinner party out of the kindness of his heart. In setting the scene, it is helpful that Luke, the physician, diagnoses this man's illness for us. Dropsy causes disfiguring swelling from abnormal, excessive fluid accumulation in the body. In fact,

the disease derives its name from the Greek words for "water" and "face." The first verse of this chapter tells us that "[Jesus] was being closely watched," so it is quite possible that the afflicted man was planted by the Pharisees with the sole intention of entrapping Jesus. Of course Jesus knew their hearts, so He posed the question "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" In response to their silence and in spite of their judgment, Jesus proceeds to heal the man and send him on his way.

The Pharisees considered Jesus a rule breaker because He continued to heal on the Sabbath, and by their human standards this constituted "work." The Gospels record seven instances of Jesus' Sabbath miracles: healing a demon possessed man (Mk. 1:21-28), healing Simon's mother-in-law (Mk. 1:29-31), healing a lame man by the Bethesda pool (Jn. 5:1-8), healing a man's shriveled hand (Mk. 3:1-6), healing a crippled woman (Lk. 13:10-17), this account, and healing a man blind from birth (Jn. 9:1-16). In verse 5, Jesus references another Jewish law to expose their hypocrisy (Ex. 21:33). His reasoning is this: if one will rescue an animal that has fallen into a pit on the Sabbath, why not help a brother or sister made in God's own image? Unable to defend their faulty logic, the Pharisees were speechless. Time and again, Jesus questioned the Pharisees' legalism, condemning their rules based on human pride and tradition but with no regard for God's overarching law of love.

- Read the account of Jesus healing the crippled woman in Luke 13:10-17. How does Jesus respond to the synagogue rulers? What similarities to this account do you notice?
- Accusing Jesus of "working" by healing on the Sabbath was likely a cover for what the Jewish leaders really despised about Him. What do you think is at the root of the Pharisees' desire to entrap and discredit Jesus?

Luke 14:7-11; 12-14

- Who does Jesus address in verses 7-11? Who does Jesus address in verses 12-14?
- What is the main theme of each lesson He presents?

In the next two sections of this passage, Jesus takes the opportunity to teach based on his observations of the guests and the host, respectively. Upon

“noticing how the guests picked the places of honor at the table,” he frames his first lesson with a parable about a wedding feast. Culturally it was standard to seat guests based on social status. He paints a vivid picture (maybe more so to His listeners than to our modern ears) of a self-important man who plops himself down in the best seat at the table, only to end up in the worst seat when a more prominent guest arrives.

- Read Luke 11:43. Who is Jesus addressing and how does it relate to this passage?

This seems to be a common trait of the Pharisees, but Jesus is addressing more than just social graces here. He is pinpointing a heart issue of pride and encouraging servanthood over status, humility over ambition. Jesus, having given up His own seat of honor at the right hand of God the Father to fulfill His mission on earth, is the ultimate example of humility.

- Read Phil. 2:6-11. How does it parallel Jesus’ parable? What is the result of this type of humility in both the parable and the Philippians passage?

We find the core idea of the parable in verse 11: “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Notice how it is similar in grammatical structure to the kernels of wisdom we find in Proverbs. Just as the host moved the guest who chose lowest seat to the most favorable seat, so God exalts the humble who choose genuine servanthood and consider others better than themselves.

Now turning to His real-life host in verse 12, Jesus brings up the topic of generosity. Generosity and humility go hand in hand. The proud hearted are self-focused and therefore not inclined to give to others. If they do give, it is for the wrong reasons: obligation, recognition, praise, superiority, etc. The host’s pride, which appears to be multifaceted given the possibility that he was trying to entrap Jesus, also manifested itself in his exclusive guest list of wealthy, prominent religious leaders. Jesus is not saying we should never serve our friends, relatives, or wealthy neighbors, (“do not invite” in verse 12 can also be translated “do not *habitually* invite”) but He is calling us to examine our motives. Do we only serve those who can serve us back? Or do we give freely to those who cannot repay us, expecting nothing in return? In verses 13-

14, Jesus explains that you will be blessed when you bless others less fortunate than yourself. Even if you don’t receive blessing in this life, your reward is eternal. Giving liberally out of love and selflessness will likely come at a great cost, but it is the only way to truly give.

- In 2 Cor. 9:6-15, Paul gives us further insight on the practical how-to’s of generosity. What are some ways we can be a giver who pleases God? What are some of the benefits of giving with a kingdom mindset?

### APPLY

1. Do you ever catch yourself thinking or acting like the Pharisees? How do pride and legalism prevent us from living God’s best for our lives?
2. What is the equivalent of “picking the places of honor at the table” in your own life? Are you driven by success, wealth, acclaim, etc? Who do you find yourself trying to impress? What are some spiritual antidotes to these desires and behaviors?
3. Consider Jesus’ words to his disciples in Matt 10:8 “Freely you have received, freely give.” In what ways have you freely received? How do you freely give? Do these scriptures change your perspective about generosity, and if so, how?

### MEMORIZE

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 14:11

In order to serve others and give generously, we must start with a spirit of humility. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the pride in your heart and how it manifests itself in different areas of your life. Pride is often a secret sin that can crop up when we least expect it. Confess your pride to the Lord before it erupts, bringing your thoughts into captivity, (2 Cor. 2:5) and ask Him to replace it with true Christ-like humility (Phil. 2:1-11).

*References: Life Application Study Bible (NIV), Zondervan; Study Guide for Luke 14, David Guzik, blueletterbible.com; Matthew Henry’s Commentary; Calvin’s New Testament Commentary; Daily Bible Study Series: The Gospel of Luke, William Barclay*