



*Women of Excellence Bible Study*

**BLOCK 5: LESSON 2**

**Wednesday, May 11, 2022 6:30 pm**

## BLOCK 5 LESSON 2 – GENEROSITY: THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN

In contrast to the widow who gave “all she had to live on”—just two coins—in this study we see the example of a wealthy woman who also modeled generosity. But the two women, one poor and the other rich, are similar in that the Bible does not tell us their names. Across the centuries we know them only by their stories.

**Read 2 Kings 4:8-10.**

Not knowing her name, we call her the “Shunammite woman,” reflecting the village, Shunem, where she lived. Besides naming the place she lived, the Bible also tells us that she was wealthy. Notice the words used to describe her (v. 8) in different Bible translations: “prominent” (CSB), “well-to-do” (NIV), “prominent and influential” (AMP), “notable” (NKJV), “wealthy” (ESV).

If we feel our resources are limited and money is tight, we might miss opportunities for generosity because of fear we don’t have enough. If our resources are plenty and money is not a concern, then what excuses might we give for missing opportunities for generosity?

### ***HABITS OF GENEROSITY***

The Shunammite woman must have viewed her wealth as something she could share with others. In the story told in 2 Kings 4, the woman saw God’s prophet Elisha passing by her house, so she invited him to stop and eat.

There was nothing spectacular about what she did. It was just a simple act, but it met a need. The seeds of generosity are planted in our hearts when we see the needs around us and then think of ways we can step in to help meet those needs. Verse 8 tells us that the Shunammite woman was soon feeding Elisha “whenever he passed by.”

How can you cultivate your initial actions of generosity into habits of generosity, like the Shunammite woman did in feeding Elisha?

In what ways do your habits of generosity build a legacy of generosity in your life?

The Shunammite woman’s habit of feeding Elisha whenever he passed by led to an even greater opportunity for generosity.

**Review verses 9-10.** What was the Shunammite woman’s generous next step?

This story is an example of generous giving that didn't involve just giving money. Sure, this woman was wealthy, but she also had food and created a room to share. Plus, she gave her time—time to cook, build the room, furnish it, and clean it in between the times Elisha would have stayed there.

In what other ways could you be generous besides giving your money?

The Shunammite woman saw Elisha and considered his needs—he was hungry and he needed a safe place to sleep. She thought of his comfort.

**Read Philippians 2:3-4.**

Sometimes our natural inclination is to look out for our own interests first. But we reflect a more Christ-like character when we look out first for the interests of others.

In practical ways, how can you look out for the interests of others?

How does generosity get easier when you put the needs of others ahead of your own?

### ***GENEROUS AQUEDUCTS***

In Old Testament times, aqueducts were built to bring water from places where it was plentiful to other places where the water supply was limited. These aqueducts could be very simple in construction—just troughs or ditches dug out of the rock and soil. The city of Jerusalem received its water through a system of aqueducts that brought the spring water from the mountains into the city.

A generous person living a generous life works a lot like an aqueduct—simply being a channel where the blessings God provides are shared with those who have needs. God gives us wealth so we can share it. We are to be channels of His generosity.

How does seeing yourself as an aqueduct of God's blessings challenge your generosity?

### ***SOURCE OF ALL OUR GOOD STUFF***

“Sometimes I struggle with generosity because it's hard to let go of my \_\_\_\_\_.”

Just fill in the blank with whatever it is you hold too tightly—your money, your time, your energy, your talents, your stuff.

Maybe the key to generosity is found in remembering who owns it all.

**Read James 1:17.** Who is the source of “every good and perfect gift” in your life?

How does it help you to be more generous when you know in your head and in your heart that everything you have comes from God?

In what ways does fear keep you from being a more generous person? How can you change that?

How can greater thankfulness in your life move you toward greater generosity?

As we mentioned yesterday, Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross is the ultimate example of generosity. We can never out give or repay the generosity on display through His sacrificial death.

How did Jesus’ words and actions speak generosity to the people He encountered during His life on earth?

How does the cross stand as a stark reminder of Jesus’ generosity toward us?

At the end of the Introduction for this week you wrote down the name of someone you considered to be a generous person. There’s a good chance the person you hold in such high regard is not considered wealthy by the world’s standards. They may not own houses and land, but they are full of the love of Christ. May that be said of us also. Let’s remember we follow and serve a God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10). In fact, He owns it all (Ps. 24:1) and freely gives to us according to His riches in glory (Phil. 4:19). May we reflect His heart as we establish our legacy of generosity.

**IN YOUR OWN WORDS:** How would you explain to someone else that generosity is about more than just money?

**IN YOUR OWN LIFE:** Following the Shunammite woman’s example, where do you have opportunities to show generosity in your actions toward others?