



Ignore Your Inner Judas

Tim Ross

Focus When God speaks to us about giving an extravagant gift, our inner Judas can produce arguments that sound prudent and practical, but they can rob us from the blessing we receive when we give.

Fun Would you rather cook an amazing meal, or eat one someone else has cooked? What is the best meal you've ever cooked or eaten?

Review Key Scriptures: John 12:1–8

1. Judas sounds prudent.

Whenever you get ready to give an extravagant gift, you will always have a “Judas” inside you speak up. When Mary poured out oil on Jesus’ feet, Judas told everyone it was worth a year’s wages. When Judas added up the amount of the gift, he tried to use reasoning and logic to explain why Mary’s offering wasn’t a good idea. When God gives you an opportunity, don’t let arguments in your mind keep you from giving.

2. Judas sounds practical.

In John 12:5, Judas comments that if Mary would have sold the oil (for one year’s wage) she could have used that money to give to the poor. This sounds like a generous thought to take care of the poor, but Judas’s heart was bad—he was not actually concerned about the poor. When Mary looked at Jesus and thought about her offering to Him, her heart said, “He is worth this.” When Judas looked at Jesus, his heart said, “He isn’t worth that.” When we are preparing to give a generous gift, think about the value of Jesus and how He is always worth it!

3. Judas is a thief.

The Bible says Judas was a thief. He was in charge of the money basket, and often he stole from it. Not only did Judas betray Jesus, but he took a lot of money and used it for himself. If you don't pay your tithe, you are robbing God; but if you don't give, you are robbing yourself. When you give, it opens up the floodgates of God's blessing in your life. If you don't give, you are robbed of the blessing you would receive. The key to giving is to do whatever Jesus says. Giving is living.

Group Dynamics Idea If people are new to Gateway, they may not be familiar with the Heart for the Kingdom offering. It may be worth talking about it in your group and sharing the heart behind it. Gateway is a very generous church, and people who have attended for a while have usually caught that heart as well. A small group is a good place to talk about and process what a blessing it is when you give generously.

Discuss

1. Read John 12:1–3. If you were sitting at dinner with Lazarus after Jesus had raised him from the dead, what questions would you ask him?
2. Mary poured oil on Jesus' feet that cost the equivalent of one year's wage. How do you think Jesus felt in that moment? How do you think the Lord feels when we lavish Him with offerings and expressions of our love?
3. Judas began to talk about other things that money could have been used for. What are some of the excuses that may come into people's minds as they plan to give generously?
4. The Bible says it is more blessed to give than to receive. Why do you think that is?
5. Have you given a gift to God over and above your tithe? How was that experience a blessing to you?
6. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you? When we give an extravagant gift, the key is to listen to the Holy Spirit and give what He is telling us to give. Have you

taken time to ask the Holy Spirit about giving an extravagant gift for Heart for the Kingdom? If not, take time to quietly wait on God and ask Him to speak specifically to you.

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- When preparing to give, don't let your inner Judas give you excuses that sound prudent and practical.
- Don't be a thief and rob yourself of the blessing of giving.

Prayer Heavenly Father, You are worthy of all our praise! In the same way Mary poured out a lavish offering on Jesus, we want to give a lavish offering to You. Please help us silence our inner Judas who makes excuses and robs us from the blessing of giving. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Conversations and connection are important for building relationships in your group. Providing snacks and drinks either before or after your group can create a more relaxed atmosphere where people will talk. Make sure to build this connection time into your group plan.