OPENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that people can actually change?
2. The idea of transformation sometimes seems rather grandiose – as if God needs to radically change who we currently are in order for us to be more like Him. The truth is that sometimes transformation comes through multiple small transformations within us. Are you averse to transformation? Do you feel like you have already been transformed?
3. What do you believe about transformation? Do you believe that we are transformed by the renewing of our mind in Christ?
4. What does transformation look like as it relates to our giving?

KEY POINTS

- The widow’s decision was transformative for her and for those who heard of her gift. - Mark 12:41-44
- Some of our money practices are sinful, but they are redeemable. - Romans 6:3-14
- Generosity has the power to transform how we relate to others and how others relate to God. - Acts 2:42-47
- When we are new in Christ, we no longer live for ourselves; we live for Him. - 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

FURTHER DISCUSSION FROM SCRIPTURE

Read each Scripture passage and discuss the questions as a group. You may want to have each group member journal their answer first in the lines provided before discussing together, as a means of encouraging all to participate more deeply.
THE WIDOW’S DECISION WAS TRANSFORMATIVE FOR HER AND FOR THOSE WHO HEARD OF HER GIFT

Mark 12:41-44

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.”

1. The widow’s decision was transformative for her and for those who heard of her gift. It’s not as much about what the woman did give; rather, it’s about what she didn’t give. She didn’t give nothing! That is what’s so remarkable about this story. She kept nothing for herself and gave all she had to live on. Most of us are not being asked by God to give 100% of our resources back to God. However, we are ALL asked to honor God with 100% of our resources. As you think about what you’re not giving and why, does this cause you to want to rethink some of your spending? What areas immediately come to mind that you would not feel comfortable “explaining” to someone when asked why you didn’t give that portion? Are you truly honoring God with everything He has given you?
SOME OF OUR MONEY PRACTICES ARE SINFUL, BUT THEY ARE REDEEMABLE

Romans 6:3-14

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

2. Some of our money practices are sinful, but they are redeemable. This may sound like a strong statement; but in order for us to truly be transformed in our giving and embark on an Uncharted path God might have for us, we must first recognize there are ways we spend our money that are not honoring to the One who gave it to us. Is there a pattern you have in your spending or your saving that comes from a place that isn't based on Scripture? What transformation do you need to ask God to make in you in this area?
Generosity has the power to transform how we relate to others and how others relate to God.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

3. Generosity has the power to transform how we relate to others and how others relate to God. This passage is potentially one of the most profound and transformative points in Scripture in sharing with us what a church community could and potentially should look like. As you hear Paul talk about these behaviors of the Early Church - how generous they were, how devoted they were, and how transformative their generosity was, what thoughts and aspirations come to mind for you? Are there some goals you want to make for your generosity in response to this?
WHEN WE ARE NEW IN CHRIST, WE NO LONGER LIVE FOR OURSELVES; WE LIVE FOR HIM

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

4. When we are new in Christ, we no longer live for ourselves; we live for Him. There is hope in this truth, as well as challenge. Are you truly living in Christ and boldly trusting Him, or might you need to renew your commitment to Him? Is the old self truly gone? If Christ’s love truly compels us, we therefore should be responding accordingly in our devotion to Him. Falling more in love with Him makes us more generous. Is this true of your life?

5. Have you ever thought of your giving as having the ability to transform you, to keep you centered and grounded in what you truly value? If you were to make a significant Uncharted commitment in your giving, how would that transform and change other things that you currently spend your money on? What would that do to your “spending portfolio” of sorts? How might that change you spiritually?