

REACH



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A NEW SEASON

Welcome to this exciting new season in the life of Covenant! Since the Spring of 2023, the elders and I have been praying about the future. This was prompted by a vision question:

Where is the Lord leading us?

Every church has a unique set of gifts and a special set of opportunities: What is it that the Lord is inviting us to pursue together? Where is the Lord calling us as a church in the next 2 years? ...in the next 10 years?

In one sense, what we're doing is super simple.

We are going to have another sermon series on the rhythm of discipleship known as Generosity and Stewardship. (We'll do another rhythm of discipleship later in April: Sabbath and Rest.) Let's seek to grow in this area just like we seek to have the Gospel shape us in other areas of life.

In another sense, this season is very new. The elders and I are going to present some vision that we are really excited about, 2-year targets and 10-year dreams! We want the Gospel of Jesus to reach more people! We are asking the Lord to lead us and do a deeper work both IN us and THROUGH us together.

Inspiration for this next season

There is a church in the New Testament that can inspire us to grow in our desire see the love of God REACH more people. The church of Antioch is exemplary in a few different ways:

The Antioch church becomes a community where all kinds of people meet Jesus, "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21).

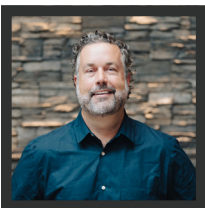
The Antioch church becomes aware of a famine and decides to send help. “So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.” (Acts 11:29).

This church prayed for God’s direction and leading. “Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:1-3)

Because the Antioch church was a praying church, they become a sending church. The Holy Spirit guided them and called them to send out some of their best and most beloved leaders. Not only were Paul and Barnabas blessed to go, but the church was blessed when they reported what God had done. “And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.” (Acts 14:27)

Covenant let’s pray.

Let’s pray that more people in our own community come to know Jesus. Let’s pray that we too can send more relief to those who are suffering. Let’s pray that we get to participate in what God is doing in the world by sending leaders to plant churches and strengthen churches. Let’s bless our community, region, and world. Let’s pray that we become like Antioch!



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, flowing 'S' and 'H'.

Steve Huber,
for the staff, elders, & deacons



At Covenant Church, our vision is clear:

Build a community to REACH a community, so that together we enjoy and share the freedom of Jesus.

In an era where faith faces many challenges, we are committing to raise up more leaders, strengthen more churches, and deepen discipleship like never before. REACH is a bold step to enact our vision in faith by investing our prayers, energy, and resources to further reach our community, region, and world.

PRIMARY GOAL: PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP GROWTH

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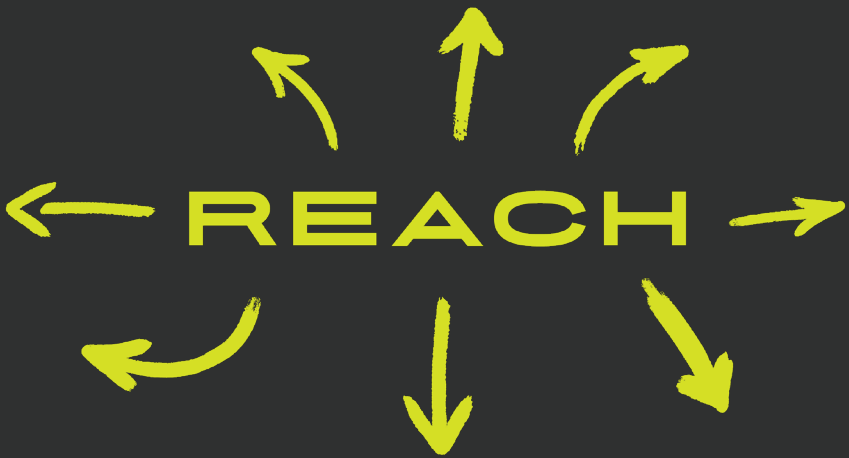
The primary goal of REACH is that all of us would have an encounter with Jesus and take steps in the discipleship rhythm of Generosity. We are hoping that 100% of us would participate and take some further steps in obedience and faith— let’s pray for a deeper work IN us. Let’s pray together that our practice of gospel stewardship would be transformed for the rest of our lives!

SECONDARY GOAL: INCREASE OUR GENEROSITY

A hand-drawn number '2' in black, with a rough, textured appearance, positioned to the right of the secondary goal text.

Our secondary goal is faith-filled and ambitious: raise an extra \$3 million dollars over the next two years. With our regular budget of \$3 million, this would be a total of \$9 million over the next two years that we could release in order to advance the Gospel’s reach in our community, region, and world. Let’s pray together for God’s provision and ask God to do a deeper work THROUGH us.

**WE ARE ASKING THE LORD
TO MULTIPLY THE GOSPEL'S**



COMMUNITY

\$5,400,000
Status Quo

\$6,800,000
With REACH

REGION

\$400,000
Status Quo

\$1,400,000
With REACH

WORLD

\$240,000
Status Quo

\$800,000
With REACH



REACH IN OUR COMMUNITY

Covenant's vision statement is "Build a community to reach a community so that together we enjoy and share the freedom of Jesus."

Building up Covenant Church

Covenant will continue our mission to disciple children and adults, faithfully preach the gospel, and enjoy a life of worship, learning, and spiritual growth. This includes training leaders, groups ministry, ministries to children, students, young adults, men and women, all the many deacon's ministries, care and bereavement ministries, and so on.

REACH will allow us to additionally pay down a substantial portion of the mortgage over two years, freeing up future dollars for our mission. An exciting outcome of REACH for Covenant is that we will be able to train many ministry residents and interns who will enrich our ministries here while preparing to bless churches for decades to come!

Reaching Bucks County

Our ministries aim to grow us as disciples that bless the people where we live, work, and play. REACH will put funds behind local evangelism efforts in Doylestown, Buckingham, and Central Bucks. Many funds are also designated to alleviating poverty in our region, you'll see more details in the next section "Reach our Region."

KEEP COVENANT GOING STRONG (\$5,400,000)

This is all our current ministry programs, facility and staff

RECRUIT 10-15 RESIDENTS & INTERNS OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS (\$300,000)

Passing the gospel to the next generation is our calling and privilege. These interns/residents would greatly enrich Covenant, training and serving in all different kinds of ministry areas.

MORTGAGE TO MISSION DEBT REDUCTION (\$1,000,000)

Our current mortgage is \$4,300,000. Our current goal is to pay down \$1,000,000 in the next two years, and then continue on a path to eliminate the remaining mortgage over the next 7-10 years. This would save money long term, and would free up more funds in the future for ministry, enabling Covenant to go from “mortgage to mission!”

ADDITIONAL LOCAL OUTREACH TO OUR CORNER OF BUCKS COUNTY (\$100,000)

We desire to increase our presence in Bucks County by showing up to events such as farmer’s markets, Doylestown Arts Festival, and other similar opportunities. We also hope to offer micro-grants for members of our church who have a passion and a solid plan for evangelizing our neighbors. We desire to show up in intentional and thoughtful ways to have an even more visible presence in Bucks County.

\$5,400,000
Status Quo

\$6,800,000
With REACH



REACH IN OUR REGION

The regional impact of our church might be the most overlooked of the three areas. Most of us are more familiar with needs in Central Bucks than in surrounding counties or Philadelphia. It can be hard to care about communities that are just outside of our daily lives.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus instructed the disciples, “... you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Jerusalem was their immediate community. The “ends of the earth” was their global mission field, but “all Judea and Samaria” was their “regional mission” and in many ways the most difficult part of their mission.

For the disciples, “all Judea and Samaria” was a challenging mission because of who it contained. There were Samaritans, rural Galileans, and pagans of various kinds. Despite different beliefs, dialects and lifestyles, the Lord called his followers to reach those people. He calls us, too, to care about our region.

Is it harder to look on the sick, the poor, and the unbelieving in Philly, Jersey, and other regional areas with the same compassion as the nations? Would God not have us feed the hungry in Philadelphia, the poorest large city in America? We pray God would REACH our region by providing opportunities to serve, give generously, and partner with other churches to raise up workers and gospel witnesses in this corner of the globe.

CURRENT REGIONAL MINISTRIES (\$400,000)

Last year Covenant funded 23 regional and national missionaries and organizations. Examples include homegrown missionaries, Barclay Elementary Food Bank, church plants in Florida, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, regional Presbyterian Church in America ministries, and more. Under REACH we will continue to fund these existing ministries.

CHURCH PLANTING IN OUR REGION (\$250,000)

Expand the gospel's reach by planting a new church. The goal is to bring the message of Jesus to a place in need of a gospel-center church.

STRENGTHEN CHURCHES & MINISTRIES IN OUR REGION (\$200,000)

- Partner with 20 regional churches for ministry training and church strengthening
- Work with the Liberti Communion of Churches, Philadelphia Gospel Movement, the Brainerd Institute, and other regional partners

POVERTY ALLEVIATION (\$550,000)

Stack hands with regional organizations dedicated to serving the underprivileged

- Central Bucks Farmer's Market at Barclay which helps hundreds of local families with groceries monthly
- Small Things Philly which serves 7,000-9,000 families each week in over 50 regional distribution centers
- And others

\$400,000
Status Quo

\$1,400,000
With REACH



REACH IN OUR WORLD

Jesus gave his disciples this Great Commission:
¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:19-20)

Covenant’s heart is to share the gospel message to those who have not heard and to carry out mercy ministry to those who have great physical needs. We have partnered with specific people and organizations who share our vision. The goal of the REACH initiative is to greatly increase the amount we give to poverty alleviation and mission ministries around the world. We want to be able to support more projects that come our way, including church planting and ministries that provide basic needs like food, water, and shelter. Let’s continue to pray for our missionaries and indigenous partners, working together to be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus in the world!

COVENANT'S CURRENT WORLDWIDE MISSIONARIES (\$240,000)

- **Bold Hope** We join this key partner through donations and by sending short-term teams to several nations. Our own Matt and Andrew Jones started this missions organization in 2010
- **Domboshava Children's Home** Meeting the physical and spiritual needs of orphans in Zimbabwe
- **Jeph and Kudzi Chifamba** Domboshava, Zimbabwe
- **Pam D'Andre** Kiev, Ukraine
- **Peter & Tsitsi Kanetsa** Domboshava, Zimbabwe
- **Rachel Hart** Ukraine
- **Sbusiso & Sihle Mlotshwa** Church planting in Mamelodi Township, South Africa
- **Water Is Basic** Water is Basic provides clean water in South Sudan, the world's newest country
- And others around the world

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS (\$560,000)

Covenant is committed to developing deep relationships with those on the front-lines of ministry throughout the region, nation, and world. REACH will allow us to support these and even more future global partners.

\$240,000
Status Quo

\$800,000
With REACH

2-YEAR TARGETS

In addition to maintaining all of our current ministries and partners...

- Train 10- 15 interns/residents for ministry to the next generation
- Reduce Covenant's debt by \$1,000,000
- Plant 1 regional church
- 20 regional churches strengthened
- \$550,000 in regional poverty alleviation
- \$800,000 to global partners
- \$100,000 to new local outreach & evangelism

10-YEAR DREAMS

- Train 100 interns/residents for ministry to the next generation
- Eliminate all \$4,300,000 in debt
- Plant 3 regional churches
- 100 regional churches strengthened
- Give millions more to regional poverty alleviation and global missions partners

DISCIPLESHIP GROWTH LEVELS IN GIVING

FIRST TIME GIVER

Someone who has recently begun to be a disciple of Jesus with their finances.

REGULAR GIVER

Someone who gives consistently to exercise the discipleship rhythm of Generosity. Often, this person has a giving plan. These givers experience the regular privilege of putting Jesus' words into action (Matthew 7:24).

SACRIFICIAL GIVER

Someone who recognizes that Christ surrendered his whole self for us, and therefore we can safely surrender our whole self to him (Eph 5:1-2). They see giving as not only something that changes their spending and saving, but something that changes them. This informs how they use everything they've been blessed and entrusted with. They give regularly and often decide to give sacrificially over and above.

KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE GIVER

Someone who is captivated by the knowledge that the more they are led to "do good, to be generous and ready to share," the more they, "take hold of that which is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:19). They make all decisions (big purchases, savings, giving, relationships, areas of service, retirement and inheritance) considering how it will affect their eternal impact. These people often have a "life giving plan," even blessing kingdom purposes through estate planning.

2-YEAR GIVING PLAN

\$

What I give normally per year

+

\$

My expanded next step in faith

=

\$

My new yearly commitment

New yearly commitment
amount x2 years

=

\$

+

Gifts from my stored resources
or extra gifts

\$

=

TOTAL 2-YEAR COMMITMENT

March 2024 - February 2026

\$

NAME

EMAIL

PHONE

MY RECORDS

\$

What I give normally per year

+

\$

My expanded next step in faith

=

\$

My new yearly commitment

New yearly commitment
amount x2 years

=

\$

+

Gifts from my stored resources
or extra gifts

\$

=

TOTAL 2-YEAR COMMITMENT

March 2024 - February 2026

\$

Bring your 2-Year Giving Plan on February 25th, Commitment Sunday! We'll also be collecting these cards the next two weeks for those who can't make it.

We invite you to use this space here to write out your commitment and a personal prayer that you want to remember.

FIRST TO THE LORD

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-7

¹We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ⁶Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

GROUP QUESTIONS - WEEK 1

Main Idea: Financial generosity in the church is an act of discipleship.

1. Let's be honest about the emotions that come with a discipleship series on giving. What are the first impressions you feel? Anxiety? Hope? Guilt? Excitement?
2. How could we begin by bringing all these emotions to the Lord? Small group is a great place to process those emotions (Galatians 6:2).

Take a few moments to pray, offering each revealed emotion to the Lord. *"Lord, please accept that where we are is where we are until you do some new work in us. Please renew our hearts to give ourselves first to you, fully and without reservation. We can't overcome the reservations in our own hearts by our own power. Would you remove these obstacles and help us to join you wherever you would lead us. Amen."*

3. Examine the example of the Macedonian Christians from vv. 1-5. List all the dynamics of their generosity that you can identify. What conditions led to their generosity?
4. How was God involved in their generosity? How is it clear that they were not acting alone?
5. How would you apply their example to us today?
6. Turn to vv. 6-7 and read these again. The example of the Macedonian (northern Greece) churches is applied to the Corinthian (southern Greece) believers. What areas of discipleship are the Corinthians already excelling in?

7. Perhaps there is an ancient spiritual impulse revealed in v. 7 that mirrors a modern spiritual impulse. The Corinthians are eager to discuss faith, speaking skills, Bible knowledge, zeal, love... but not so much financial discipleship. Why would we rather study topics other than generosity? What conditions of the heart might contribute to this struggle?

8. If we feel resistant to teachings on generosity, what might this reveal about the false gods of our age? What is the spiritual struggle beneath the surface of our hearts and minds when it comes to the discipline of generosity? Whose kingdom are we building?

“First to the Lord” is ultimately a statement and mindset about priorities and about worship. Notice how God’s grace is an ongoing work in us and through us in this passage. **Let’s pray** that just as we seek to grow in other rhythms of discipleship, we grow in “this act of grace also.”

THE HEART OF GENEROSITY

2 CORINTHIANS 8:8-15

⁸ I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. ¹⁰ And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹ So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹² For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. ¹⁵ As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”

GROUP QUESTIONS - WEEK 2

Main Ideas: The heart of generosity comes from meditating on the gospel; the practice of generosity involves planning and following through.

- 1.** Pastors Bob and Hunter are friends of our own Pastor Steve and joined our church this weekend to share how generosity has born fruit in their churches. What are the similarities with 2 Corinthians 8:1? Notice how these 1st century churches are encouraging each other and inspiring each other in generosity.
- 2.** What from their stories encouraged you or challenged you as Covenant begins the REACH initiative?
- 3.** Looking downstream from Covenant, how might future churches and gospel works be blessed if we excel in the grace of giving in our generation?

Take a moment to pray for pastors Bob and Hunter and the churches they lead. Thank the Lord for their encouragement and help to us. Pray also for those Christians and ministries downstream of Covenant in the future. Pray that we would become examples and inspiration for future faith in future believers.

- 4.** A heart of generosity comes from meditating on the gospel. What elements of the gospel are highlighted in v. 9? Compare Mark 10:45.
- 5.** What motivates your current giving? Are there any negative factors such as guilt, shame, or regret? How is the gospel good news for all of our mixed up motives? Compare Psalm 50:10.

6. How often do you wish for God to do something *for* you? How often do you think about what God wants to do *through* you? What does it mean for you to be a steward of what God has entrusted to you?

7. Generosity is realized when we take steps to carry it out. Check out vv. 11-15 again. Based on these verses, what outcomes do you think would have been an encouragement to the Apostle Paul? Which do you think would have disappointed him?

8. Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. Here Paul gives some instructions to help the Corinthians have a plan for giving according to their commitment. What are some steps you could take to have more of a plan in giving?

9. Do you find yourself looking at giving through the lens of *how much should I give to the Lord? Or how much of what the Lord gave me should I spend on myself?*

10. Ask God to help you in your plan for giving. Pray for his help trusting the gospel and begin making a plan according to what he has put on your heart.

GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER/SOWER

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-9

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written,

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

GROUP QUESTIONS - WEEK 3

Main Idea: Our giving is precious to God, especially when given cheerfully.

1. What is the Christian vocation (calling)? Or in other words, what is the purpose of Christian life after receiving salvation?

Based on the answers to question 1, you may want to have a short discussion about the connectedness of worship (vertical) and good works (horizontal). Our Christian life is caught up in loving the Lord with all our heart... and our neighbor as ourself. So, good works are not done to earn salvation and God's love, but are a natural and even necessary outcome of salvation coming to a believer. We love him, so we love what he loves, and so we learn to love doing concrete good in his world.

2. Jesus often used agricultural metaphors and here Paul takes one up as well. A sower scatters seed. In what various ways (besides monetarily) is the Christian life like a sower?

3. What mentality must a sower have to have to set aside good seed that could be consumed, and instead scatter it for planting? What are the hopes of a sower? What do they look forward to? What is the concern of a sower?

4. Before you were a sower, you were God's harvest based on the sowing of some other believers. List ways that the gifts of other Christians has benefited your faith journey.

5. What does it mean, "Whoever sows sparingly, reaps sparingly?"

6. When you think about sowing cheerfully, what are the prerequisites? Look especially at vv. 7-8. What role does “deciding in the heart” have in cheerful giving?

7. In this week’s sermon, Pastor Steve gave four types of givers: First Time, Regular, Sacrificial, and Kingdom Perspective givers. Which would you consider yourself to be today? What is keeping you from taking your sowing to the next level?

8. Take another look at v. 9. This is a quote from Psalm 112:9. The Psalmist and Paul are highlighting that when the people of God sow freely, their good works outlive them. How would it impact your giving if you trusted, beyond doubt, that God would make eternal difference from your generosity?

9. How does this eternal perspective impact your hope and cheer in giving?

10. What do you need to trust God with in order to be able to give cheerfully? (Ex: Retirement? Job security? Education? What else?)

THE FRUIT OF GENEROSITY

2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-15

¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

GROUP QUESTIONS - WEEK 4

Main Idea: God increases the harvest of our generosity beyond our imagination.

- 1.** Think back to the harvest time of year. What are your favorite things to see or eat at that time of year? What brings you joy?
- 2.** Building off of last week's agricultural metaphor, vv. 10-15 is like the fall festival of all the good things God brings into the barn, nurtured by our giving but brought to full fruit by his hand. List every good outcome from these verses that God brings about.
- 3.** Which of these makes you the most excited? Is it the thanksgiving and worship God will receive? Knowing that the needs of God's people will be met? The prayers that others will pray for you? Some other fruit? What REACH initiatives are particularly exciting to you?
- 4.** Last week we looked at how our cheer in sowing increases based on trusting God's eternal purposes and having a plan "from the heart." Verse 10 also promises that those who sow generously will have even more to sow. How have you witnessed this truth in the past? Has your past giving shown you to be trustworthy for the Lord to put even more in your hands?

5. What is the relational harvest of generous sowing?
6. How are both the giver and receiver blessed? In what different ways?
7. What is the spiritual harvest that comes from material generosity?

BUILDING THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD

EXODUS 36:2-7

² And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose mind the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work. ³ And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, ⁴ so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task that he was doing, ⁵ and said to Moses, “The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do.” ⁶ So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, “Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing, ⁷ for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more.

EPHESIANS 2:17-22

¹⁷ ...And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

GROUP QUESTIONS - WEEK 5

Main Idea: As we give to the work of the gospel, we are contributing and helping to build the temple of living God, the people of Jesus!

1. What inspired or convicted you in these passages?
2. When have you seen a godly person or group give in an overwhelmingly amazing way?
3. What's the connection between the Old Testament temple and the New Testament followers of Jesus?

[Hint—In the Bible, the presence of God moves from a place (the tabernacle/temple) to a person (Jesus) and then to a people! Because of the gift of the Holy Spirit, believers in Jesus ARE the temple of the living God!]

4. What are the implications of this passage for giving to ministry? What would you say to someone who said “It’s too bad we don’t have the chance to give to something cool like the Old Testament temple?”

(Hint—Actually, we give to and are part of a new and better temple, the church of Jesus Christ)

5. What are your biggest take-aways from the REACH series?
6. Spend some time together praying for you, your group, and Covenant Church.
7. Let's pray again for the 2-year targets and 10-year dreams! Pray that the Lord blesses, guides, and provides.

A WHOLE-CHURCH DISCIPLESHIP INITIATIVE

By Josh Bundy

One deformation of the modern free world is the hyper-materialization of our lives. Frankly, we all own too much stuff, worry about how to keep it, and worry about how to get more. It does not take a religious perspective to realize this. A few years back a popular decluttering method arose in which the basic move was to touch an object you possess and ask, “does this spark joy?” If yes, keep; if no, pass it on. Similarly, a discipleship move might be to consider a possession or financial holding and ask: is this making me more like Jesus?

Generosity is often stifled by materialism, by greed, and also in the anxious working of a mind and life to “have enough” to “be secure” in the future. What is a disciple of Jesus to do in these realities?

Covenant’s discipleship rhythms were selected to address some of the most common deforming realities of our culture, reexamine them in light of scripture (especially the Way of Jesus), and apply the gospel to those realities in such a way that we experience new obedience and joy, while enjoying the Lord who gracefully transforms us. One of the seven rhythms is Generosity. The Reach sermon series aims to shine scriptural light and faithful perspectives into this area of our lives.

An introduction to Jesus’ Way of Generosity could include his famous summary statement in the Sermon on the Mount: “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 7:12).” A key principle in Jesus’ Way is loving others and acting generously towards them. In fact, his Sermon is full

of such references: Mt. 5:3-12 contain the Beatitudes which are God's generous gifts to humankind; 5:43-48 contains Jesus' radical teaching on loving enemies; 6:1-4 assumes his followers will give alms to the needy and contain instructions on how to do so humbly; in 6:12-15 the Lord's prayer exemplifies generosity in forgiveness; 6:19-24 deal more directly with materialism and treasure and encourage dependance on God with material and monetary simplicity; 6:25-34 deals directly with the anxiety that materialism causes and commands a life of contemplation and seeking God's kingdom and righteousness in place of materialism, and the rest of the Sermon contains other reminders and enjoinders to depend on God and seek his counsel.

There is more to say from Jesus, the apostles, and the Old Testament scriptures as well, but for now it might suffice to remind us that Jesus' central teaching on his Way of life (Sermon on the Mount; Mt. 5-7) largely hinges on the competition for our hearts that is waged by money and material things. Let's obey him in "seeking, asking, knocking" that the Lord would help us discern his call for our lives in this season.