

GENEROSITY, RESPECT, MENTORING *Inside Out—Session 5*

Servant leaders invest in potential successors as they honor others with respect and generosity.

Before the session: *Read chapters 13, 14 & 15 of Inside Out by Rich and Robyn Wilkerson*

Introduction:

Begin by discussing the following questions together.

Today we'll look at the servant leader traits of generosity, respect, and mentoring.

- What does generosity mean to you?
- How do you appreciate the diversity in your life? Do you make a point of getting to know other people who are different from you?
- Name someone who has mentored you in some way. What did you learn from that person? Have you had a chance to pass along what you learned to someone else?

Video: Let's watch this session's video from Rich and Robyn Wilkerson.

- What is one thing that stood out to you in the video?

GENEROSITY

The first trait in this session is generosity. Let's look at some statements based on what Rich and Robyn shared. Do you agree or disagree with each statement? Explain.

- Generosity is a challenge for almost everyone.
- Generosity is more for wealthy people because they have more to give.
- Some may feel that if they can give only a small amount, it's too small to be significant.
- Wise management of finances should be expected of servant leaders.
- Generosity isn't about what's in your wallet; it's about what's in your heart.

One of the best illustrations of generosity can be found in Luke 21:2–4. Read it together. Rich and Robyn share a modern-day example of this illustration in the life of their Aunt Marie.

- Which example of generosity in her life most stands out to you?

Rich was especially touched to discover that the monthly gift he and Robyn gave to help Aunt Marie during her retirement years wasn't going to her expenses at

all. While they could have been frustrated with her decision, instead Rich shares, “What hit me like a ton of bricks that day is that it’s important for every one of us to keep our commitments. Auntie-Rie couldn’t have kept her commitment unless I had kept mine” (p. 146).

- How has your generosity helped someone else keep their commitment?
- What is one thing you have learned about generosity that surprised you?

RESPECT

Rich and Robyn interchange the terms *respect* and *honor*. They outline seven areas of respect and honor that servant leaders need to incorporate. (See page 150.) They remind us that no matter how close we are to someone, there will still be differences.

- How do you appreciate the diversity in your life? Do you make a point of getting to know other people who are different from you?
- Think of someone you know very well. In which of these areas do you have differences with this person? Which is the easiest?
- How do you deal with a situation when the person you are talking to has drastically different opinions or values?

Because we are all different, working with other servant leaders can sometimes be difficult. Rich and Robyn remind us that mutual respect and honor is important. We need to remember that everyone has a special role to fill, and everyone can make a valuable contribution.

MENTORING

The last trait to explore in this session is mentoring. In Mark 10:45, Jesus summarized this trait by reminding us, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.” Rich and Robyn note that mentoring is both passing along wisdom and knowledge to someone less experienced.

- Has your role as a servant leader been shaped by a mentor? How?

On page 160, Rich and Robyn identify five essential things a mentor does: teach, coach, engage, praise, and correct. These skills progress as the student gets more involved and has hands-on experience.

- Choose one of these five essentials that a mentor has led in your life. How did it help you grow?

Like Moses and Joshua in the Bible, mentors recognize the need for successors who will carry on the vision.

INSIDE GOD'S WORD

Artaxerxes—God's instrument of generosity

Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, teacher of the Law of the God of heaven: Greetings. Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who volunteer to go to Jerusalem with you, may go. You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand. Moreover, you are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. With this money be sure to buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem. You and your fellow Israelites may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, in accordance with the will of your God (Ezra 7:12–18).

Sometimes God uses people who haven't chosen to follow Christ to model character traits for believers. It can be jarring to see extreme Christlike behavior where you least expect it. The Persian King Artaxerxes is one such example.

The Israelites had been taken captive by the Persian Empire, and had largely been resettled far from home. After Artaxerxes assumed the throne, God moved his heart, and he was ready to permit the Israelite people to return to their homes and rebuild their temple. But not only did Artaxerxes return the Jews to Israel, he paid them on the way out. He gave them significant amounts of gold and silver—except he didn't technically give it the people. He gave it to the "God of Israel." God also moved on the hearts of the Persian people to generously share with the Israelites as they left, adding even more treasures to their bounty.

Artaxerxes did not worship the God of Israel, yet he recognized the undeniable power of God, and he didn't want to be on the wrong side of the Hebrew God. He chose to show honor to God, and in the process set an example of generosity that continues to make an impression. He had no obligation to help God's people. He simply was moved to generosity. If such a spirit can be found in an idolatrous king, how much more clearly should it be seen among servant leaders in Christ's kingdom?

- What can we learn about servant leadership from this example?

RESPONSE

Reflection: Think back over the traits discussed in this session: generosity, respect, and mentoring. Each of these can be challenging as we grow as servant leaders.

- Reflect on this past year. In which one of these traits have you grown the most?
- Have you ever encountered a situation where your preconceived notions and opinions actually got in the way of being an effective servant leader? What did you do to rectify the situation?

Leading Inside Out: Ultimately as servant leaders, we should be preparing someone else to be our successors, to carry on the vision and ministry that God has given to us.

- Who are you mentoring to take over your leadership role?

In the mentoring chapter, Rich shares a moving letter he wrote to his dad. Think about those who have invested in you. Choose one and write a letter to that person.

PRAYER

Close in prayer. Record prayer requests here and continue to pray for these needs throughout the week.