**1. Motivate**

When has giving to someone been a fun experience for you?

* special party for graduating child/grandchild
* giving to Operation Christmas Child
* filling an Operation Christmas Child shoebox
* surprised spouse with Christmas present
* helped at local mission/food bank
* church got together and gave for a Holy Land trip for the pastor
* contribute to building fund for local church camp
* volunteer with Samaritans’ Purse to help victims of tornado/hurricane

**2. Transition**

Elisha receives and gives blessings.

* God blesses us as we bless others.

**3. Bible Study**

A video introduction to the Bible study is available. View it at <https://tinyurl.com/ynb8dh5u> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, you must download the video file to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/pdxw9kmy>

3.1 Look for Opportunities

Listen for a blessing given.

2 Kings 4:8-10 (NIV) One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. 9 She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. 10 Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us."

Who and in what way did someone act hospitably toward Elisha?

* woman in Shunem supported his ministry
* her family was well-to-do
* had a room built Elisha could stay in when he visited the city

Who did the Shunammite woman perceive Elisha to be and how did that influence her action?

* he often comes this way
* he is a holy man of God

Why do you think she went beyond offering a meal and built him a room?

* believed he had an important ministry
* she was hospitable, had the gift of hospitality
* wanted to assist him by giving him a quiet place to meditate and rest
* felt this would help his ministry

How does the Shunammite woman’s hospitality reflect selfless generosity?

* she had nothing to gain by providing the room
* she just wanted to be nice
* she didn’t expect or feel she would get any reciprocal favor
* she had the resources to bless someone and used them to do so

How can we develop the same kind of generous, open-hearted attitude the Shunammite woman showed, especially when there’s no guarantee of being "rewarded"?

* be friendly
* get to know folks around you … neighbors, workmates, people where you do business often
* ask how they are doing, what’s happening in their families
* offer to pray with them, for them

What steps can we take to actively meet the needs of others?

* volunteer to help when you see a need
* actively look for ways to be of help to others around you
* be praying for folks you know have a need and God may show you what you could do to be the answer to your own prayer
* look for people in your life right now you could "make room" for, like the woman did for Elisha — not just physically, but emotionally or spiritually

3.2 God Just May Surprise Us

Listen for how God responded to her sacrifice.

2 Kings 4:11-17 (NIV) One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. 12 He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. 13 Elisha said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?'" She replied, "I have a home among my own people." 14 "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked. Gehazi said, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old." 15 Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. 16 "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms." "No, my lord," she objected. "Don't mislead your servant, O man of God!" 17 But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.

In a subsequent visit, what question did Elisha pose to the Shunammite woman and what was his reason for doing so?

* seems like maybe God prompted him to respond in kindness to the blessing she had been to him
* so he asked her if there might be something Elisha might speak on her behalf to the king or the commander of the army

She seemed to respond that she had a happy home among her own people, didn’t need much else. But what suggestion did Elisha get?

* from his servant, Gehazi
* he points out the woman has no son
* her husband is old … implying their biological clocks might be winding down

Eventually what did he promise her? What was her response? What was the surprising result?

* about this time next year
* when I come back you’ll have a babe in arms
* her response seemed to say that that he shouldn’t mislead her
* he shouldn’t tempt her to hope for the impossible
* but … it turned out to actually happen!

What does this passage tell us about the kind of heart God honors?

* someone who is generous
* someone who acts as a blessing to others
* acts with agape type love … no expectation of reciprocity

How do you think blessing others changes **us** on the inside, even before God blesses us in return?

* we receive the motivation from God
* we have been given the resources to bless others
* we are motivated by love, not by selfish intentions

How has God used someone to bless you an unusual way?

* helped when you were in financial straights
* encouraged you when you were down
* loaned you a vehicle or drove you someplace when you were temporarily without transportation
* faithfully prayed for you, your family
* sat with you at the hospital during a family member’s operation
* babysat your kids when you were called away for an emergency

3.3 So, Trust in Him

Listen for her response when the unthinkable happened.

2 Kings 4:32-37 (NIV) When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. 33 He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. 34 Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. 35 Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. 36 Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite." And he did. When she came, he said, "Take your son." 37 She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.

How does this part of the story show that God had not forgotten the Shunammite woman’s kindness?

* she knew who to call
* Elisha was willing to come
* he came quickly
* God guided him as what to do
* God provided her with the solution to her problem

What actions did Elisha take when he arrived in the room where the dead child lay?

* shut the door, prayed to the Lord
* laid on top of him – sounds like CPR
* warmed the boy’s body
* repeated the process

What stands out to you about the way the child is brought back to life? Why do you think the Bible gives us the details?

* seems strange – the laying on top of the body – mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands
* details suggest to us it was something like what we know as CPR
* how would Elisha have known such a process was a good thing to do
* also suggests something like infusing warmth and life through the contact

How do you see the connection between the woman’s earlier generosity and this miracle?

* they had made the connection,
* they continued to keep their relationships, Elisha and the family
* Elisha had responded to her wish for a child
* he also responded quickly to the child’s injury and death
* the ongoing relationship and contacts motivated the response of each party

What does this teach us about God’s ability to give us blessings that go beyond what we could ever expect — even in impossible situations?

* seems like the whole thing began with an original kindness
* the woman and her husband had the resources and saw a way to further Elisha’s ministry
* this continued as they hosted him when in town, he responded with kindness and blessing
* then when they had a most urgent need, he was able to call on God in their behalf
* God was at work in both parties to accomplish His purposes and bless those who responded to His guidance

The Shunammite woman didn’t bless Elisha expecting to one day need a miracle — but God met her deepest need. How does this challenge or encourage your attitude about serving and giving to others?

* be faithful in following God’s suggestion and guidance in ministering to others
* trust God to bless the ministries you do participate in (teaching a Bible study, hosting neighbors, involvement in Operation Christmas Child, faithful tithing and giving, etc.)

Application

Motivation.

* Remember circumstances when others met your needs and blessed you.
* Review the emotions you experienced: relief, love, hope, joy, etc.
* Thank God for His provision and for those who helped you.

Investigation.

* Spend some time investigating the needs of those around you.
* Pray and ask God to help you see the needs of others.
* Make a list and plan ways to meet those needs.

Implementation.

* Determine who you need to assist and make a plan.
* Depending on the circumstances, you may want to involve others in the process and make this a group project.

Cryptogram Puzzle

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

While doing an archeological dig in Gaspu Radines, we found the guinographic inscription you see below. We have the key that was derived from a previous dig. Note the “HELLO WORLD” decryption to show how it works. This was found in the cave of a Christian catacomb, so we know it is a spiritual admonition. Pass the encryption along to your Bible study chairman. Tech help and other Family Activities found at <https://tinyurl.com/pdxw9kmy>