

Scarcity

1. Warm-up Question: As we ease ourselves into the subject of scarcity, tell us about something not-too-serious that you wish you had more of in your life. ☺
2. After King Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel divided in two. In the aftermath, God raised up a prophet named Elijah to call the Israelites back to God. These were tough times. At one point, there was a terrible drought that caused famine. God told Elijah that, to survive, he needed to leave Israel and go to a town in the area we now call Lebanon, where a widow would take care of him. On Sunday we focused on the story of what happened next. Read I Kings 17:8-16.
 - a. Things had become so desperate, Elijah had to leave his own country and throw himself on the mercy of a foreigner to survive. How do you think Elijah felt as he approached the widow to ask for help?
 - b. Look again at how the woman responded in verse 12 when Elijah asked her for some bread to eat. What emotions do you think she felt when Elijah asked for help? What words might capture what was going on inside her?
 - c. The woman believed the next meal she and her son ate would be their last, then they would die. When in your life have you felt really desperate?
 - d. Look again at the challenge Elijah lays before the woman in verse 13. Why do you think Elijah asked the woman to feed him first? One possible explanation is selfishness. But if we assume the best about Elijah, why was it important for the woman to feed him (a mere stranger) first?
 - e. Because of the woman's faith, God miraculously provided for her and her son until the famine ended. Jeff noted that, given the way verse 12 is worded, it could have been either a supernatural or natural miracle. In your mind's eye, how do you imagine this miracle occurring?
3. Jeff summed up his perspective on our Bible story this way: "This is a story about faith – about what we believe to be true. Specifically, it's a story about what we believe to be true about scarcity and sufficiency. The main point seems to be that having enough is a state of mind. If I act as if there is enough, miraculously there will be. If I act as if there's not, there won't be." How does that summary sit with you? What do you like about it? What do you dislike? Overall, do you think it's true?
4. There are various areas where we may experience scarcity in our lives – places where we're tempted to say, "I don't have enough." For example, many of us look ourselves in the mirror and say, "I don't look good enough."
 - a. Why is our perception of our appearance so important?

- b. Think back to your childhood. To the extent you're comfortable, tell us how, growing up, you learned to feel about your appearance.
 - c. As an adult – again, only to the extent you're comfortable saying – is there an aspect of your appearance that you feel insecure about?
 - d. How do you think God wants us to think about our personal appearance?
 - e. Jeff told a story of a teenager in his church youth group who was very unattractive by conventional standards, but carried himself with such humble confidence that all the other kids experienced him as an attractive person and even elected him president of the youth group. Jeff said, “When we looked at Randy, we didn't see Sacrticy; we saw Sffiuciency. Because Randy believed he was enough, so did we. In the same manner, each one of us gets to choose how we see ourselves, which in turn influences how others see us.” Do you agree or disagree?
 - f. In our Bible story, the widow had to act as if she had enough before she could have enough. What are some practical ways we can, by faith, act as if our appearance is enough, so as to live into abundance in that area of life?
5. Money is another area of life where we're often tempted to say, “I don't have enough.”
- a. In the back of your mind, when you're not really thinking about it, do you live with a sense that you have enough money? What's your typical state of mind about your financial situation – Sffiuciency, Sacrticy, or somewhere in between?
 - b. Jeff told the story of someone who's poor, but nevertheless decided to retire early. Yet somehow that person has enough to get by, and though he has to skimp, he's happy. Jeff also shared Matt Fitzgerald's story about the “losers” who worked in the kitchen of a fancy restaurant and had a blast, while all stars and prosperous people who dined there seemed dreary by comparison. When it comes to money and material things, given the way you see it, how much is enough for you to experience Sffiuciency? To what extent is Sffiuciency simply a matter of perspective?
6. Jeff summarized the lessons he draws from I Kings 17 this way: “If what I have in some area of my life is not enough, I believe God will give me more. If God doesn't see fit to give me more, then I choose to believe that what I already have is enough. And if I lack in one area, I believe I'll experience a compensating abundance in another, so that in the overall equation, I will have what I need.” Do you agree with these principles? Have you ever experienced one of them in action?
7. Nancy Ortberg tells a story about a teenage girl whose leg was amputated below the knee. When showing Nancy her amputated leg, the girl said, “Look how much I have left!” Where in your life right now are you tempted to say, “Look how much I've lost – or lack”? What might it look like to deliberately reframe that area of your life through the lens of Sffiuciency?