

Bible Study 1.2

ENCOURAGING GENEROUS GIVING

Generously Giving

The Bible study is not lecture based but designed instead for group discussion. This time is designed to allow the members of your congregation to begin internalizing the teaching from Sunday and begin learning to read and use the Bible in a practical way. The study questions are designed to be read just as they are written, however feel free to express them in your own words if needed.

Encourage everyone to speak. Your discussions will give you, the leader, the opportunity to get to know what your congregation is thinking and learning as they begin to reflect on what generosity means to them personally.



READ .....

Read the following Bible verses and then discuss the following questions with your midweek group.

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

[1] And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. [2] In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. [3] For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, [4] they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. [5] And they exceeded our expectations: they gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. [6] So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. [7] But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you – see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

[8] I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. [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 through his poverty might become rich.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Some people are too poor to give an offering. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.

2. How were the Macedonians able to generously give in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances?

3. The Macedonians "gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability." They gave freely, pleading for the privilege to share in giving to the needs in Jerusalem. What would it look like today if we focused on what we COULD do rather than on what we are UNABLE to do?

4. Read Luke 21:1-4 "As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'Truly I tell you,' he said, 'this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'" What did the widow do with her coins? Why do you think she gave all her coins instead of keeping one for herself? Who noticed her generosity?

5. Do you think the Macedonians and the widow from Luke 21 expected a reward for their generosity? Why or why not?

6. Should giving be done without expectation of payment or reward in return? Why or why not?

7. Paul uses the word "grace" four times in this passage. What part does grace play in giving?

8. We read in verse 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 through his poverty might become rich." What does Paul mean when he mentions that "you through his poverty might become rich."? Is he talking about wealth or something else?

9. In 2 Corinthians 8:7, Paul commands the church in Corinth that, "... since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you – see that you also excel in this grace of giving." What are some practical steps you can take to excel in the grace of giving—giving freely, generously, and without any expectation of payment or reward?