

MY GENEROUS LIFE  
FOR CONNECT GROUPS  
WEEK 5



# THOMPSON STATION CHURCH

2 COR. 8:1-15; LUKE 10:29-37

WEEK 5

## PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; Luke 10:29-37. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for our pastor, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**BIBLICAL EMPHASIS:** God is a lavish and abundant giver, and His people are called to be the same.

**TEACHING AIM:** I will become intentional to be generous beyond the tithe.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Luke 6:38, NIV).

## GENEROUS ATTRIBUTES

**Cause Giver.** A person who is faithful to respond to a need when God calls.

**Consistent Giver.** A person who is faithful by giving monthly.

**Committed Giver.** A person who is faithful in their generosity by tithing to their home church.

**Courageous Giver.** A person who is faithful by giving beyond the tithe.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

- 1 What does it mean to be courageous? Can you think of any recent examples of someone who was truly courageous?
  
- 2 What would giving courageously look like? Put another way, if you had a blank check to use in any way you wished, for any amount, what would you do with it?

When we hear the word “courageous,” we usually think of someone who is especially brave or exceptional in some way. If we are thinking about our obedience to Christ, we desire to be courageous. In terms of our relationship with Christ, being courageous in our giving reflects precisely what Christ has done for us. Think back to the blank check. For the Christian, a blank check is what Jesus requires of our lives. We are called to give up everything to follow Him. The blank check is His to write, and it can be written for anything He chooses. Because Jesus gave everything for us, we can give courageously to Him.

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

- > Have a volunteer read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.
  - Notice the phrase Paul used in verse 1 to describe the Macedonian Christians’ generosity—“the grace that God has given.” What is the connection between courageous generosity and grace?
  
  - How have you seen this proven true in your own life? How has a deeper appreciation for God’s grace motivated you to give?

- What had the Macedonian believers experienced? How did this impact their participation in the offering Paul wished to send to Jerusalem?

Notes:

We take steps in Christian growth when we begin to view giving not as something being taken from us, but as opportunities to act with godly grace. When we choose to have a grace-centered view of giving, we will become bold in our giving. The Macedonian churches did not give from a status of wealth, but from a time of testing and poverty. Sometimes giving to God's work involves making courageous sacrifices. Despite the Macedonian churches' limited resources, their giving resulted in an abundance of joy and wealth. These churches participated in spite of their struggles, and that proved to be a special blessing to them.

- How do you account for the Macedonian believers' generous spirit? What was their attitude toward financial giving?

In a consistent theme of this section, Paul underscored the motive of the Macedonians. They saw giving as a privilege. Giving should not be a duty we grudgingly perform, but a privilege in which we joyfully participate. The Macedonians' participation in the offering proved to be more than Paul had hoped. They exceeded his expectations perhaps in both the attitude and the amount of their giving. Before they gave their money, they offered their lives. Giving money was not their only, or even their primary, sacrifice. The Macedonians offered up themselves. What is more courageous than that?

- Generosity goes beyond giving money. In what other ways can we express our generosity in a bold fashion?

- Why does God expect us to act with grace toward others? How does this help you understand why overflowing generosity is such an important value for our church?

Notes:

Although giving is one concrete expression of our faith and commitment, we also can be generous in our prayers for others and in the way we use our gifts, talents, time, and other resources. Genuine giving involves sacrifice. We are certainly to give financially, but the greatest giving is to offer ourselves completely to God and His purposes as we see in the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan.

> Have a volunteer read Luke 10:29-37.

This well-known parable begins with a question from a Pharisee: “Who is my neighbor?” The Pharisee asked Jesus this question to shirk his responsibility in caring for other people. As we see from Jesus’ words, true generosity involves giving ourselves to God and others.

- What did this question tell us about the man’s heart? What ways do you barter with Jesus to avoid giving “too much”?
- Why do you think the man wanted to justify himself?

Obviously, some people are easy to love. Others are more challenging. Like people, there are certain disciplines in the Christian life that are easier to obey than others. Giving is harder for some because it costs us our money and our time. As we grow into courageous givers, we will freely give of both, like the man Jesus was about to describe.

- Without dishonoring anyone, what types of people are most challenging for you to love? Do you find it easier to love people who are similar to you? Why or why not?

Notes:

- What types of obedience do you find more difficult?

Jesus told a parable to answer the question. The parable begins on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho that was notoriously dangerous. This road was one Jews traveled on often, so the wounded man would've been assumed to be a Jew. It's possible that the priest and Levite passed by on the other side of the road because they assumed the wounded man was dead and they would become ritually unclean by touching him. But it's also possible they were fearful of being attacked by the same robbers who had wounded this man. Either way, they didn't want to be bothered with an inconvenience.

- Have you ever witnessed someone refuse to help another person in need in a manner similar to this parable?
- Re-read verse 33. Who stopped to help the wounded man? Why is this person's identity significant in Jesus' story?

A Samaritan stopped to help the man who was suffering. Jews considered Samaritans to be ethnically and religiously unclean. Samaritans were sworn enemies. For a Samaritan to show compassion on an injured Jew while two Jewish religious officials passed him by is a scenario that would humiliate all Jews.

- How does verse 33 describe the emotion the Samaritan had for the wounded Jewish man? How did being alert lead to action for the Samaritan?

- What did the Samaritan do to help? Do you think this is excessive? Why or why not? For whom would you go to this length to show care?
- What did it cost the Samaritan to care for the injured man? Why does love call us to obedience?

Notes:

If we are honest, most of us probably think the Samaritan's care for the stranger was excessive. After all, for whom have we gone to that extent of care? But the truth is, this care was just common courtesy. We extend this type of care to our friends and family all the time. The good Samaritan gave because he saw a need. This episode shows us the lifestyle of a giver willing to take risks with regard to generosity. The Samaritan did not help to receive a pat on the back; he did it for the good of the injured man. He stopped in his tracks to give freely of himself to someone in need. When staying alert to the needs in front of us, we earn the chance to become just as bold and courageous in our giving as he was.

## APPLICATION

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passages apply directly to their lives.*

- 1 What is the most challenging aspect of this passage for you? How does this passage help us understand what it means to be a consistent giver?
- 2 Who is another believer that challenges and encourages you with their generosity? How could you model their faith?

- 3 Have you ever laid everything you had on the table to God? Why is this a scary proposition for us? In deciding what to give, what does Jesus ask of us?

## 90-DAY ACTION STEPS

*Use these steps to help your groups process the truth from this lesson in an ongoing way.*

- 1 **Learn:** I will journal each time God has prompted me to be generous and develop the habit of being responsive. I will read *The Blessed Life*— Robert Morris.
- 2 **Pray:** I know You are my total source and I trust You to lead me in living generously. “Thank You, Lord, for blessing me in all ways at all times with more than I need. Lead me to live faithfully, give generously, share joyfully, and look expectantly toward my future.”

- 3 **Respond:**

I will live in gratitude for every opportunity that God gives.

Partner with TSC in vision meetings and step up to mentor others in the generous culture.

Join a “Giving Group” to bless the ministry God has called TSC to do locally and around the world.

Go through *Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn individually or as a family. You will discover how joyful giving brings God maximum glory and His children maximum pleasure!

## PRAY

Pray that in response to the extravagant grace of Jesus, you would give courageously to His church, including your life, talents, and resources. Spend some time laying all you have before God and asking Him what He would have you do with it.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-15

8:1. The churches of Macedonia were congregations in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (Acts 16-17). These churches had been born in affliction (Ac 16-17). Moreover, they were limited in financial resources; yet these factors had not impeded their giving.

Notes:

8:4. The same word (ministry) previously used to describe Christian service (4:1; 5:18; 6:3) is now used to describe Christian giving. Financial stewardship is ministry.

8:5. Here is the key to understanding giving as a ministry. When believers offer themselves wholly to the Lord, they have no difficulty in offering their wallets to Him.

8:6. Paul's collection for the Jerusalem Christians had been a long-term project. He had evidently put Titus in charge of at least part of it. The Corinthians had "been prepared since last year" (9:2) to give, but had not completed the task. The recent trouble in Corinth, causing Paul's sorrowful visit and the severe letter, had surely been the major factor. Now that the Corinthians were restored, it was time to finish the task, but it would only be done the right way if it was prompted by God's grace (v. 1).

8:7. The Corinthians were more affluent than the Macedonians; therefore, they could give more generously, and this is what Paul expected to happen ( excel also in this grace).

8:8. The generosity of the Macedonians set a challenging standard for giving. Only love for God by His grace would enable the Corinthians to pass this test.

8:9. Jesus' self-sacrifice is an even higher standard of giving. He willingly exchanged all the wealth of His deity for the poverty of the incarnation.

8:12. God is more concerned with the quality of giving than with the quantity, as with the widow who gave two coins (Lk. 21:1-4).

8:13-14. A congregation that has been generous may later find itself in need of help from others.

8:15. The quotation from Ex. 16:18 comes from the Israelites' first experience with gathering daily manna. Paul drew an analogy. The person who gathered much was a strong Israelite (like the wealthy Corinthians), while the person who gathered little was a weak—sick or aged—Israelite (like the impoverished saints in Jerusalem). Just as there had been an equitable distribution of manna among the Israelites, so there should be a fair sharing of resources among Christians.

Notes:

## LUKE 10:29-37

10:29. Having correctly answered the first question, this man asked for an important clarification. Certain kinds of neighbors are of course easy to love, while others, being argumentative or of different religious and moral persuasions, can be very hard to love. It seems that the man hoped Jesus would justify his bias against certain kinds of neighbors.

10:30-32. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho, a distance of 17 miles with a descent of more than 3,000 feet in elevation, was a dangerous route through desert country. It had many places where robbers could lie in wait. It is possible that the priest and the Levite ... passed by on the other side of the road because they thought the wounded man was dead and they would become ritually unclean by touching him, but it is more likely that they were afraid of being attacked by the same robbers or simply did not want to be bothered with the inconvenience of helping the man.

10:33-35. The Jews considered the Samaritans to be physical half-breeds who had intermarried with foreigners and who were guilty of false worship. For such a sworn enemy of the Jews to show compassion on an injured Jew and pay the expenses of his recuperation, while two Jewish religious officials did not, would deeply humiliate a Jew.

10:36-37. Now Jesus got back to the question with which this story began: Who is my neighbor? (see note at v. 29). His point was that the Samaritan proved he was a good neighbor by his gracious actions toward the man who had been attacked by robbers. It was impossible for the scribe to avoid acknowledging that

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it was the Samaritan who showed mercy. Jesus' reply to go and do the same emphasized that Jews should love their Samaritan neighbors even as the good Samaritan in the story had acted in love toward a Jew.

Notes: