



LC STUDY GUIDE

Growing in the Grace of Giving

The Passage: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:6-11

For Life Community usage the week of 1/25/15

Tips for the LC Leader

- a. Use these questions as a guideline. You best understand your LC—so lead accordingly. Be flexible in the discussion while helping people to grow in the grace of giving.
- b. This is part of our series *NEXT: Following a God Who's Always on the Move*. It's about Grace Chapel coming together around a vision for bold ministry that flows from grace-based generosity.
- c. We will be using the model of "The Generosity Journey," which is a progression, summarized in these four phases: New Giver—Regular Giver—Proportionate Giver—Abounding Giver
- d. We recommend 45-60 minutes for this study, including a solid 15 minutes for application, discussion, and prayer.
- e. Complement the "content" questions below with "process" questions (what else? what more? what do you see/think?).

Today's Big Idea: We grow spiritually when we give thoughtfully, generously, and joyfully.

Possible Starter Question: Aside from height (unlikely) or waist (really?), what is one area in which you're hoping to grow this year? Why?

Read the first Scripture passage (aloud, individually, or both): 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

1. (vv 1-5) What were some of the ways that the churches in Macedonia provided a good model?
Note the historical context: In the mid-first century (40s and 50s AD), Jewish believers around Jerusalem had been hard hit by famine and persecution. The largely Gentile church in Antioch was quick to send relief and commissioned Paul and Barnabas to seek aid from other churches. By 56 AD, churches in Macedonia and Corinth were joining in this collection.
2. (vv 6-7) What are Paul's hopes for the Corinthians, to whom he is writing?
3. In our excessively materialistic culture, which of these principles and actions can guide us in our giving?

Read the second Scripture passage (aloud, individually, or both): 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

4. What do we learn about God's character? His activity? Our relationship to Him, as our ultimate source?
5. What wisdom and insight about giving does Paul add in this series of challenges?
Realize that Paul wrote this letter to the relatively well-off Corinthians. If he'd been writing to an impoverished group, he might have emphasized something else.
6. Which of these insights most help or challenge you?

Application/Discussion: The 4-step model of "The Generosity Journey" (Pastor Bryan will be explaining this in his sermon this week)

New Giver — Regular Giver — Proportionate Giver — Abounding Giver

7. Where do you think the Corinthians were on this generosity journey? Why?
How about the Macedonians?
8. What were some of the reasons Paul was trying to help them take the next step?
9. In what way would taking the next step possibly help others? How might it grow you?
10. Anyone willing to share how you are thinking about taking the next step? Are there concerns you're struggling? Guidance and confidence that God's giving you?

Pray together

- For one another to grow in the grace of giving, and ultimately in our trust of God
- For our church's redemptive presence and influence here, near, and far

2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:6-11 (NIV)

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.

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. **7** Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **9** As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. **11** You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.