

LESSON 57

God Loves a Cheerful Giver

2 CORINTHIANS 9



BIBLE TRUTH

EVERYTHING WE DO, INCLUDING OUR GIVING, SHOULD SPRING FROM GRACE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 2 Corinthians 9 from the Scriptures or read story 135, “God Loves a Cheerful Giver,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

God’s Greatest Gift

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard, dry-erase marker

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Fresh Cookies

SUPPLIES:

fresh-baked cookies (Make a cookie that does not contain nuts and be aware of other food allergies of the children in your classroom. Chocolate chip cookies or gingerbread cookies work well. If you can use an on-site oven and have a volunteer bring them warm into class, the aroma will add to the exercise.)

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 57—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

A Giving Christmas

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Cheerful giving is grace-motivated giving—Paul had written earlier to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:1–3) and asked them to give an offering for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. In his second letter, Paul wrote to remind them to complete the work of giving they had begun and cheerfully offer the gift they promised (2 Corinthians 9:5). Paul reminded them that everything comes from the Lord by his grace. Even the act of giving is the result of a work of grace. It was Paul’s desire that their faith be stirred so that their giving would bring them joy and be offered cheerfully.

Generous giving flows out of God’s generosity to us—When we understand that everything we have comes from God, it is much easier to share what we have with others. God supplies both the seed and the harvest. He is the one who makes us rich so that we might be generous on every occasion. Our giving is a demonstration of thanks to God. We thank him for what he has given us by giving it away! When we give to others, we are actually participating in God’s generosity to them, which results in their giving thanks as well. Our giving is an expression of thanks toward God, resulting in others giving thanks toward God!

Grace-motivated giving results in praise to God—When we give to others, we can expect two wonderful responses. First, they will be grateful and thankful to us for our gift. But even more important, they will be grateful to God for the gift he gave to them through us. Isn’t it amazing that our gift toward others can result in glory to God (2 Corinthians 9:13)!

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Paul was excited about the cheerful giving of the Corinthians. He was excited because their giving flowed out of their "confession of the gospel of Christ" (2 Corinthians 9:13). Jesus gave the greatest gift of his life by dying for us on the cross. It is out of our great thanks toward God that we should be motivated to give toward one another.

Although giving to others is a work, God intends our giving to always be motivated by grace. By remembering the gift God gave us in the cross, our hearts are stirred by the Holy Spirit to give. Paul said it like this, God is able to make "all grace abound" (2 Corinthians 9:8) to us so that the treasures of this world no longer have a grip on us and we become cheerful givers.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 2 Corinthians 9 from the Scriptures or read story 135, "God Loves a Cheerful Giver," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

God's Greatest Gift

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard, dry-erase marker

Ask the children to name the best gift they ever received. Make a list on the board. Then ask them "What was the greatest gift of all time?"

Review John 3:16, pointing out how Jesus was God’s Son, given to us. Jesus was a gift. In light of this great gift of God, we should be filled with gratitude.

Discuss why God’s greatest gift should motivate us to give. If someone gave you a dollar, you would likely just spend it on yourself. But if someone gave you twenty million dollars you would be likely to give quite a bit away. Our gift of salvation is worth more than all the money in the world! God has given us the promise of eternal life in heaven where we will eat, drink, live, and never have to pay for anything—everything will be free (Revelation 21:6). In heaven, the streets are made of gold (Revelation 21:21).

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 15 MIN

Fresh Cookies

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ fresh-baked cookies (Make a cookie that does not contain nuts and be aware of other food allergies of the children in your classroom. Chocolate chip cookies or gingerbread cookies work well. If you can use an on-site oven and have a volunteer bring them warm into class, the aroma will add to the exercise.)

Use this exercise to demonstrate giving and subsequent gratitude.

Explain to the class that God provided money for you and because you wanted to share with them some of that blessing, you baked them fresh cookies!

Pass out the cookies and then ask a few of the children to pray a prayer of thanks. Listen to their prayers. They are likely to pray with genuine thanks as a result of your gift. While the children are eating, ask them the following questions:

- **How was my giving of the cookies an expression of my thankfulness to God?**
(You recognized that God supplied you with money, and out of thankfulness to God you wanted to share that.)

- **How does our giving produce thankfulness toward God in the people who get our gifts?**

(People who receive our gifts thank God because they know that God is using us to bless them.)

- **How can remembering these things help us to be cheerful givers?**

(If we focus on what we are giving up we are not likely to be cheerful in our giving. If, however, we think about what we are giving on behalf of God to others, giving can be fun and exciting.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 57—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Who do you think pleased God in the picture: the one who gave a lot or the one who only gave a little?**

(God was pleased with the one who gave with a right attitude. This is based on the story of the widow who was only able to give two small copper coins. She was honored by Jesus because although she only gave a little, she gave all that she had with joy [Mark 12:44].)

- **What is more important, how much we give or the heart attitude behind our gift?**

(Our attitude is more important because that is what gives God the most glory.)

- **What did God give us that is the biggest gift of all?**

(God sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. It is remembering what God gave us that helps us want to give to others.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

A Giving Christmas

Read the following story to the class and then discuss what happened in the story.

THE STORY

As Christmas drew near, six-year-old twin sisters Mary and Alice began to get more and more excited. At first they thought about all the fun activities around the holidays. They remembered the Christmas lights from last year and decorating the tree and trying to fall asleep on Christmas Eve. This was the first Christmas they could really remember the previous Christmas.

Their mom asked them if they had any special gifts they might like to receive. They both talked excitedly about the gifts they wanted. Later that night, as they were about to drift off to sleep, Mary asked Alice a question that would change Christmas for those two sisters for the rest of their lives.

“What do you think mommy would like?” she asked. The two girls whispered ideas back and forth until they talked themselves to sleep. For days afterwards Alice and Mary continued their secret conversations. They had so much fun thinking of different gifts to give. Finally, they decided on a plan.

They wanted to fill a stocking full of gifts for both of their parents just like their parents did for them. They didn’t have stockings for their parents, so they decided to fill their parents’ boots with gifts. They would make gifts, wrap them up, and hide them. Then, on Christmas morning, they would wake up extra early, set their parents’ boots on the hearth, and fill them with the gifts they made.

The last two weeks before Christmas became the most exciting two weeks in their lives. They prayed about what they could give their parents. They drew pictures for their parents and gave them some of their favorite things. Each item was wrapped carefully in custom-made wrapping paper or tissues or Christmas advertisements from magazines. They gave away their favorite toys and their class photos. They wrapped up the loose change they were saving—fifty-two cents in all.

Their parents could use it to treat themselves to a date! Soon the empty space under the bottom drawer of their dresser was full of gifts. Then came the hardest part...waiting for Christmas.

On Christmas morning they woke up early. They had not been able to sleep well because they were so excited. They removed the bottom drawer of their dresser, stuffed their parents' boots full of the homemade gifts, and sat them on the hearth. They never even thought to open their own gifts! They just wandered back to bed and fell fast asleep.

Eventually their parents woke up before them and wandered into the living room. Imagine their surprise when they saw their boots bulging with gifts! After rousing their daughters, they took time to pray and thank God for giving. None of them had opened up a single gift, but they were all filled with joy from giving. Mary and Alice have stuffed their parents' boots full every Christmas since.

Why is giving a double blessing? (When you give, you are blessed by giving and the person you give to is blessed by what you give.)

How are we like God when we give? (Generosity is one of the ways the image of God finds expression in our lives. We were created to reflect the generosity of God. God gave us Jesus, his only Son. Anytime we freely give, we are demonstrating God's grace.)

LESSON 57 - GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER

