

Daily Devotions

Day 1: Explore It

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1–24.

- 1. Paul says the Macedonian churches had "extreme poverty" but also "overflowed in a wealth of generosity." Did they give only what they could afford, or did they go beyond that?**
- 2. Paul was surprised by how much they gave. According to verse 5, what was the very first thing the Macedonians gave before they ever handed over a cent of money?**
- 3. What was Jesus' status *before* He came to earth, and what did He become for our sake? What was the intended result for us?**
- 4. Paul tells the Corinthians to finish what they started. In verses 13–14, what is the specific word Paul uses to describe the goal of sharing between those who have an "abundance" and those who have a "need"?**
- 5. Paul is collecting a lot of money here. According to these verses, why is he bringing Titus and other famous brothers along to handle the gift? Who is he trying to be "honorable" in front of?**

Day 2 — Today's Theme: All In for Jesus

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

A few years ago, a group of students from our ministry went to inner-city Detroit to serve. They were working alongside a godly man named Tony, who spent every waking hour helping kids and families in the city. During the trip, the team found out something heavy: Tony was behind on his rent. He was giving so much to others that he was struggling to keep a roof over his own head.

The students saw the need and decided to go "All In." They pooled their money together and raised about \$1,000, exactly what Tony needed.

For many of those students, that was *all* the money they had. They had been saving it for their "Fun Day" at the end of the trip. They traded snacks and souvenirs for the joy of seeing Tony's family taken care of. They realized that being a blessing to someone else felt way better than spending that money on themselves.

Every year at Christmas, we have our "All In" Offering. It's our way of saying thank you to Jesus for everything He's done. Last year, 63 students across all our campuses stepped up and gave!

You don't need an adult job to start worshiping God with your money. You can start right now.

How do you receive money? Babysitting cash? Fast food paycheck? Birthday money from Grandma? Talk to God about it. Ask Him, *"How can I use a portion of what I have to show my love for You?"*

The Bible talks about the Macedonian churches who were "dirt poor." Even though they had almost nothing, they begged for the chance to give to others in need. They didn't do that because they were "rich"—they did it because of God's grace.

Giving isn't just a "nice thing to do." It's God at work in your life. When you choose to give, you're acting like Jesus, who gave up everything so that you could have it all.

6. Think of the last thing you spent your own money on. How long did the "happiness" from that purchase last? Does it compare to the feeling of helping someone else?

7. We often think, "I'll give to God once I have a real career and a house." Why do you think it's important to start giving now, even if it's just a few dollars from babysitting or a part-time job?

8. If you talked to God today and asked him how you could use a portion of what you have to show your love for Him, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

Day 3 — Today's Theme: Locked In

Read 2 Corinthians 8:8–9.

Let's be honest. The struggle is real. When your alarm goes off at 6:30 in the morning, your first thought usually is not, "I can't wait to learn today." Most of us just want to hit snooze. Maybe for five more minutes, maybe for another hour. Whether it's a pile of homework, a sink full of dishes, or a messy room your parents keep reminding you about, motivation can be hard to find. A lot of the time, we simply do not feel like doing what needs to be done.

But what happens when that same lack of motivation starts to affect our spiritual lives? What happens when we do not feel like serving, giving, or helping others? If we are going to live for God and become generous people, we need something stronger than good intentions or passing feelings. We need a deeper reason. The apostle Paul points us to that reason when he talks about Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul says that Christ "became poor." That statement is easy to read quickly, but it is actually incredible when you stop and think about it. Jesus began in the highest place imaginable. He shared the glory of heaven. Yet He willingly laid that aside and entered our world. He did not arrive as a king surrounded by comfort and wealth. He was born into a simple family and lived an ordinary life. He experienced hunger, fatigue, temptation, and pain. He was betrayed by one of His closest followers and abandoned by the rest. He was mocked, rejected, and condemned.

No one has ever been richer than Jesus, and no one ever chose to become poorer. On the cross He did not only suffer physically, He also carried the weight of our sin and endured the judgment that we deserve. The One who gives life gave up His own life and lay in the grave for three days.

Think about it for a moment. What if Jesus had said, "I do not feel like going to the cross"? In the Garden of Gethsemane, we see how heavy that moment really was. Jesus prayed and asked the Father if the cup could pass from Him. Yet He finished that prayer with these words: "Not my will, but yours be done." Jesus did not let His feelings determine His obedience. His love for the Father and His love for us carried Him through the suffering. Because of that, He rose from the dead, defeated sin and death, and opened the way for us to be forgiven and share in the riches of His grace.

So the next time you feel unmotivated or tempted to check out, remember this: Look at the cross. Jesus set aside His comfort to serve you. Remember your reason. We do not serve or give to earn God's love. We do it because He has already given everything for us.

Then take the next step. Sometimes faithfulness simply means doing what is right even when we do not feel like it.

9. What is one chore or school subject that makes you instantly want to take a nap just thinking about it?

10. We often hear the advice "just follow your heart" or "do what feels right." Based on Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane, why might "following your feelings" sometimes be bad advice?

11. Giving isn't just about money; it's about time, kindness, and energy. Where is one area in your life right now where you've been holding back because you just don't feel like being generous?

Day 5 — Today's Theme: Integrity

Read 2 Corinthians 8:16–24.

Did you know that out of all the disciples, Judas was the one in charge of the money bag. But the gospel of John calls him a thief. He was helping himself to the cash whenever he felt like it.¹

Whether it's a massive charity, a school club, or a church, whenever money is involved, there can be a temptation for someone to help themselves to the cash. Practices need to be in place to prevent mishandling of money.

At Village, we take this seriously because we want you to have 100% confidence that when you give to God, it actually goes to God's work. That's why we have a "Two-Person Rule." Whenever money is collected or counted, there are always two trustworthy, unrelated people doing the job. No "lone rangers," no secrets, and no room for rumors.

The Apostle Paul was diligent with being transparent. He was raising a huge collection for believers in need, and he knew that even one tiny rumor of "missing money" could cripple the entire message of the Gospel.

To keep things "above board," he didn't just send one person; he sent a team. He sent Titus (a proven leader) and two unnamed brothers, men who had been tested and found to be trustworthy.

Paul's goal was to be honorable not just in God's sight, but in the sight of *everyone*. He wanted his process to be so clear and transparent that no one could even try to cancel his ministry with a lie.

Finally, Paul challenged the church to show the proof of their love. Giving wasn't just a nice gesture, it was the evidence. By helping their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, they were proving that their faith was the real deal and that they were truly one with other believers, regardless of where they were from.

16. Why do you think a person's reputation (especially regarding money or honesty) is so hard to rebuild once it's broken?

17. In your own life—like with your phone, your grades, or your habits—who is someone (accountability partner) you have to make sure you stay on the right track?

18. We often say we love people. Paul says giving is the "proof." What are some other ways we can show the proof that our faith is genuine besides just saying the right things?

This study was written by Pastor Mario Arindaeng, based on the adult study by the VBC pastoral team.

¹ John 12:6