



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

NEW THIS YEAR:

As we enter this new season at Grace Chapel in search for the next Senior Pastor, we invite you to consider the significance of this moment and to incorporate a time of prayer for the search.

Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search
- IV. The Journey Resources
- V. Support for the Leader

How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
4. **Ask Questions:** Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with and see how the conversation flows.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

If your group meets over Zoom:

- Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

Group Leader Support:

- Please reach out to your Campus Pastor if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic.
- If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor [Tim Ghali](#) or [Grace Lee](#) from the Group Life team.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for Sermon given on November 19, 2023

by Pastor Rachel Keeler

THIS GRACE OF GIVING – 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-12



I. Introduction

Welcome to Seeds of Grace week 2 where we are focusing on how and why it is so important to become more generous providing financial support for our own church. Next Sunday, after Pastor Bryan delivers the final sermon in this series, Grace Chapel will be celebrating 75 years on Sunday November 26th. The Sunday Worship Services will include a special video of Grace Chapel's history, a live interview with Pastor Gordon MacDonald who served as the Senior Pastor at Grace for 20 years and a Celebration Reception complete with pictures and a slide show beginning at 12:30. The reception will also include a brief program honoring past Elders and Pastoral Staff at 1:00 pm.

Last week Pastor Bryan said, "One of the best things we can do for our souls is to become more generous with our financial resources." But how do we do that? How can we grow in generosity? To help us, we we'll turn to the apostle Paul and listen to the advice he gave to a church he planted in the city of Corinth.

Questions: How do we grow in generosity?

Bottom Line: We become more generous when we make deliberate decisions to increase our giving: from new giving to regular giving to proportional giving to abundant giving. Every financial gift, regardless of amount, matters because it is an opportunity for the giver to experience the grace of giving, and every one of those gifts plants a seed that will grow the local church.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Readings:

1Corinthians 16:1-4

16 Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. **² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.** ³ Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

2Corinthians 8:1-12

8 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.

¹⁰ And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. ¹¹ Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. ¹² For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

II. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Giving is a gift to those who give, as well as those who receive. Givers find joy and blessing in giving to others.
 - Think about a time where you saw someone give and observed his/her joyful countenance. How did their giving impact you?
 - Think about a time where you gave a gift that surprisingly made you joyful.
 - When was the last time you experienced that degree of joy?
2. Paul has founded the Corinthian church. He writes a letter to them to appeal for “a collection for the Lord’s people” (1 Cor 16:1).
 - Take a moment to re-read the Scripture passages individually (**1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and/or 2 Corinthians 8:1-12**)
 - Notice what phrases or words stand out to you.
 - Is there any part of Paul’s instructions that are confusing? Challenging to apply?
 - What do you observe about Paul’s heart (desire and intention) as he provides instructions?
3. Pastor Rachel gave 3 simple reasons for giving to the local church first:
 - The Biblical model is to give the firstfruits to the local church
 - Church is where you and your family are experiencing the most nurture and growth and where you can most directly see the impact of your giving
 - It is a good way to diversify your giving, since the church supports a variety of ministries both here and around the world
 - We understand that there are multiple demands on your charitable giving.
 - What have been the challenges impacting your ability to give generously? If you feel comfortable, feel free to share and lift these challenges to the Lord in prayer.
4. Pastor Rachel had interviewed several members of our congregation at different stages of their generosity journey. Each of them had mentioned various items or activities that they had to give up in order to take that next step.
 - How would you like to prioritize your giving for the rest of the year?
 - What will you have to surrender to take your next step of faith?
5. Here at Grace, we talk about 4 phases of giving on our way to a more generous life: new giving, regular giving, proportional giving and abundant giving. Where are you on your giving journey right now and what would your next step be?
 - Spend a few minutes at the end of your discussion praying for one another that the Holy Spirit would guide you in taking that next step in your own generosity journey.

Take Home Message:

No matter where you are right now on your giving journey, prayerfully consider taking a next step. Take the “Seeds of Gratitude” cards, pray with them, and bring them back next week. Next Sunday, we’ll take time during the service to fill these out and invite everyone who calls Grace Chapel their home church to place your card in the offering plate as a confidential commitment to your next step on the journey.

Let’s Pray**III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search**

During this next ministry year as we navigate transitions, we invite you to secure time during your life group to pray over the search process. Click [here](#) to access the full resource of the prayer guide.

Prayers for Preparation of the heart

- Pray for God to reveal to you the condition of your soul or the work of God’s Spirit within you, as you consider your feelings about the Senior Pastor search process.
- Prayer is not just an opportunity to make requests from God, but to listen to what God might want for us during this season of transition. Pause and listen for any invitation from God that he is asking you to enter into.

Prayers for the Purposes of God

- Pray that God will use the people of Grace Chapel in the fulfilling of his mission to further the Gospel message and for us to be people of peace and healing in a broken world.

Prayers for the People of Grace

- Pray that Grace Chapel will seek the Lord as we continue our vision to be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God for the good of the world. Pray that we will continue with our mission to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond.

Prayers for the Person God’s calling

- Pray that they will have a passion to continue the work the Lord is doing at Grace Chapel and that they will be excited about the opportunities here.
- Pray that the new pastor will have a clear vision for how to minister to the people of Grace Chapel and the surrounding community.

Prayers for Discernment

- Pray for God’s clear direction in how resumes are examined and interviews conducted.
- Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the committee.
- Pray for the Search Committee to have God’s wisdom in all the questions and information they share with the prospective pastor.

IV. The Journey



We're all on a journey. Where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it is good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus. It comes from putting them into practice.

Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The **with-God life** of our personal habits and routines;
- The **with-others life** of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The **for-the-world life** that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

V. Support for the Leader

These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and opportunities in the life of our church.

Teaching Points:

- When we give generously, it brings joy and freedom to our souls. There's nothing that will free us from the love of money and its hold on our lives more effectively than giving it away
- Giving is a gift to those who give, as well as those who receive. Many of us have experienced this firsthand, finding joy and blessing in giving to others
- By serving and giving to the Lord's people, you are serving and giving to the Lord himself
- Generosity cannot be commanded; true generosity is always a reflection of love
- Every financial gift, regardless of amount, matters because it is an opportunity for the giver to experience the grace of giving, and every one of those gifts plants a seed that will grow the local church
- Paul's advice about how to grow in generosity:
 - The first step is the willingness to give
 - Regularly and intentionally set aside a portion of your income
 - Giving is itself a grace, a gift to those who give, as well as to those who receive
- Grace Chapel's Generosity Journey – 4 Phases of Giving
 - *New giving*: your first intentional contribution to the work of God through the local church
 - *Regular giving*: setting aside your weekly or monthly gift to God's work, before any other saving or spending
 - *Proportional giving*: developing the biblical practice of tithing, by giving an increasing percentage of your income each year, with the goal of reaching 10%
 - *Abundant giving*: discovering the joy of going beyond tithing, and giving more than you ever imagined possible
- There is a deep connection between our generosity with money and other kinds of generosity. When we grow more generous with our money, we are also freer with our time, our skills, our praise; we are more generous with our forgiveness, more generous in our assessment of other people