

The Joy of Giving

2 Corinthians 8:1-12

“For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability...They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.” - 2 Cor. 8:3-4

As your group time begins consider the following questions to get the conversation going:

Has there ever been a time you did NOT enjoy giving to someone or some cause? Share your experience.

To whom do you enjoy giving the most? Why?

Many of us are in the same boat with the Corinthian church. We've made promises to give but when it comes time to do it, it's just easier to skip over those promises. But Paul encourages the Corinthians by showing them the positive side of giving and the powerful effect of generosity in our culture. We learn that love must be the motivating factor when it comes to our giving and we'll see a few examples of how love plays out in our giving today.

Love plays out in our giving when **WE GIVE IN SPITE OF CIRCUMSTANCES**. Read **2 Cor. 8:1-2** together.

What juxtapositions do you see in these verses? Did the Macedonians let the negative circumstances get in the way of their desire to give?

What does Paul say the Macedonian church received through their giving? Do you believe what **2 Cor. 12:9** has to say about what they received? Explain.

Although we in America and many in this church have not experienced circumstances such as the Macedonians, the majority of us do not have the same spirit of generosity. How does one gain this attitude? (Hint: See v.5)

Love is also demonstrated in our giving when **WE GIVE WITH ENTHUSIASM**. Read **2 Cor. 8:3-9** together.

Verse 5 indicates Paul was surprised at the Macedonians actions (“they did not do as we expected”). What would unexpected giving look like for you and your family?

Pastor Erik told us God isn’t interested in the size of your gift, but He IS interested in the heart you give with. What difference does it make to give with enthusiasm?

Paul mentions he is testing the sincerity of the Corinthians love for God compared to the earnestness of others (v.8). If the sincerity of your love for God was based on your giving where would you fall on a scale of 1 to 10? Write your number below. Would you feel good about sharing that number?

How does the amount of one’s wealth typically effect their enthusiasm for giving? Why is that, and should it make a difference?

It’s important when we give in love that **WE FOLLOW THROUGH.** Read **2 Cor. 8:10-12 together.**

Describe a time you started a project or drew up the plans but either didn’t start it, or never finished it. You’ve heard it said “It’s the thought that counts,” but is that enough when it comes to giving to God? Why or why not?

What might be holding you back from following through in your giving today? What steps do you need to take to break the chains of financial bondage that you might do more than just desire to give?

If you follow through with giving 10% of a million dollars or 10% of \$1000, does one please God more than the other? Explain your answer.

Pray:

As you close your time together ask that God would truly give you a joyful heart of generosity towards Him. Pray for a cheerful heart when you give. Pray that the Lord would help you in your commitment to giving and that you would follow through with it now, not waiting any longer to bring your portion to Him. Have faith that God will bless you and increase your faith as you give.

Connect:

Listen to the classic hymn “I Surrender All.” As you meditate on the words, do as verse 4 says (just like the Macedonians!) and give yourself to Him. As you do so, you will begin to let go of the things and desires of this world and be filled with the love and power of Almighty God who can satisfy all of your needs. Trust Him!