



Community Group Discussion Guide

That Thing You Do: Giving– Weekend of February 2-3, 2019

I. Starter Questions:

Simple question: With what in your life are you generous? Money, time, toys? With what in your life are you stingy?

Vulnerable question: If you were to evaluate your love for God by your checkbook or your credit card statement, what grade would you give yourself?

II. Overview of The Sermon Series:

Context: Over the last few weeks, Pastor John has led us through the sermon series called “That Thing You Do.” The series casts a broad light on the things we do in church. Why do we pray? Why do we preach? Why do we baptize? In other words, why do we do all that we do in church, why is it important, and how do we do it?

As Christians, we benefit from being reminded of these! And, for those who are new, this series points us to the gospel, answers questions some are too intimidated to ask, and practically teaches how to live out our calling as children of God in the context of a gathered church. This week, we’re studying giving, a topic many are confused by, or burned by from legalistic teaching through the years, or are in fear of, because the topic demands faith, submission and action. People do not want to talk about giving because it can be the most difficult idol to lay down.

III. Our Main Passage

Context: Our main passage this weekend is found in 2 Corinthians, chapters 8-9, where we see Paul encouraging the church to give generously, even in their poverty. This model of generosity came from the Macedonian church, and from the very example of Jesus Christ. Paul exhorted the church to excel in the grace of giving. Giving is the very essence of grace. Their overflow of rich generosity is a model for us today as a church. 2 Cor. 8:9 provides the key verse for our understanding of grace in giving.

2 Corinthians 8-9 (ESV)

Encouragement to Give Generously

8 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ⁶Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷But as

you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

⁸ I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. 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 by his poverty might become rich. ¹⁰ And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹ So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹² For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. ¹⁵ As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”

Commendation of Titus

¹⁶ But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you. ¹⁷ For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. ¹⁸ With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. ¹⁹ And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. ²⁰ We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, ²¹ for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man. ²² And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. ²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. ²⁴ So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

The Collection for Christians in Jerusalem

⁹ Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, ² for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. ³ But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴ Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. ⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.

The Cheerful Giver

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in

every good work. ⁹As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹²For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Brief Explanation:

The Macedonian church members were going through various trials and were poor. Through it all, they exhibited abundant joy and modeled generosity, with willing hearts. Paul exhorts the Corinthian church to follow their example, showing generosity to others, thus proving the genuineness of their love.

For Discussion:

1. Read I Corinthians 16:1-4 and Romans 15:25-27. What do we learn about the Macedonians from their giving? Why would Paul draw their attention to the Macedonian example? What does this test of generosity reveal?
2. Chapter 8:6-7 talks of “this act of grace”. How do we excel in the grace of giving? How do you link grace with giving? People, pastors, churches and denominations have “fallen short”, sinned as it relates to cheerful giving, stewarding the money entrusted to us, for centuries. How does this idea of “grace is the essence of giving” translate?
3. In chapter 8:20-21, Paul talks about being above reproach when it comes to stewarding money as a church. How can that happen in today’s world related to you personally, to your family, to our church? What role can you play in fiscal responsibility?
4. If the Macedonians came to visit HHBC, would they find us overflowing in generosity or lacking? Give examples. (HTI Nicaragua, College House meals, benevolence, Widows ministry, student camps, etc.)
5. Verse 24 says, “show these men the proof of your love...so that the churches can see it.” See what? Can people see generosity? How? Why is it important for other churches to see our generosity?
6. What is the difference between 10% tithe giving and hilarious giving? Can both be done out of a grateful, generous heart? What is “hilarious giving?”

7. Chapter 9:7-10 talks of the principle of sowing and reaping. Is this “prosperity gospel” teaching? Discuss the concept of reaping more and later what you sow.
8. Chapter 9:7 says God loves a cheerful giver. Is giving contagious? How can giving away your money and time bring joy when you are sacrificing? How is this the essence of the Gospel and grace?
9. It is easier to give than to receive. Why in the society that we live in find it so hard to receive gifts and help when we are desperately in need?
10. Chapter 8:9 sums it up. Please take time to pray and thank the Lord that in His plan, He who was rich, gave to us who are poor so that through this poverty we may become rich.

VI. Responding in Prayer:

1. Pray for our church! Pray that we see God’s grace as sufficient for us, wholly and completely. Pray that we will have a “Kingdom of God” perspective as it relates to giving. Pray for opportunities to invest in eternal fruit.
2. We confess that we have a lack of faith when it comes to this principle of hilarious giving. Lord, help us to grow more and more like your son, Jesus Christ.
3. Let us pray for that one lost family member. Pray by name or initials of that one co-worker, neighbor or friend from school who needs salvation of their soul. We desire that the world know the hope of the gospel. We are to patiently stand firm for the coming of the Lord!