



## Overview

Can't you just see the eyes roll, watch the shoulders hunch, and feel the depletion of air that is sucked out of a room whenever a preacher begins talking about money? In fact, some of you probably just hit the mute button after reading the first sentence of this study. Why do so many automatically allow their heart and mind to go on mute when that particular spiritual discipline is addressed? What is the root cause of that? Is it fear, greed, a sense of entitlement? The truth is that when we release our hands from the tight grip we have on our money, the floodgates of blessing flow from God's open hand. Keeping in mind that giving is just like any other spiritual discipline, it affords God the opportunity to display His grace and favor in our lives. So church ... open your eyes and ears! Unmute your heart and let's eavesdrop on a conversation of encouragement Paul had about the church at Macedonia – a blessed church who lived out the *grace of giving* to the glory of God as a *way of life*.

## Going Deeper

Begin your discussion on the *all-so-popular* topic of giving with prayer.

**Ask God to:** Soften your heart, give you the grace to make any changes necessary to respond to this spiritual discipline with faith and obedience, and help you encourage someone you know in this area of spiritual growth.

## Making It Stick

**Biblical Instruction on the Grace of Giving:**

### ➤ Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

- According to this passage, did the church at Macedonia refuse to allow its circumstances to become an excuse for a lack of generosity? What did they do instead?
- What did Paul commend the church at Corinth on? (verse 7)
- What “act of grace” did Paul encourage them to grow in?

**One of the meanings of the word “grace” is:** *The divine influence on the soul and its reflection in the life. In other words, as we become more and more influenced by Jesus and become more and more like Him, our lives begin to look like Him – this is the influence of His grace in action.*

Taking into account this meaning of grace, why would Paul call giving an “act of grace”?

**There are promises in God's Word connected to giving. Read and discuss** these verses spoken by Jesus about giving: **Acts 20:35** and **Luke 6:38**.

### Questions to Consider:

Is giving to be based on your income and economic status or your love for Christ and obedience to God?

**On a scale of 1-10, what is your love and obedience level for Jesus?**

Low										High
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Is that love and obedience level evident in your giving? What or who are you loving more than Jesus?

**Truth: To be the Church you must *REFUSE* to allow your circumstances to become an excuse for your lack of generosity and *REALIZE* your opportunity for spiritual growth through giving is greater than your need to guard what you have.**

- What circumstances are hindering you from giving in abundance to God?
- Can you be like the Macedonian believers? They took their hands off and said, "Despite my needs, here!"
- Will you trust God enough to step out in faith, open your hands, and receive His blessings for your life?
- What, specifically, can you do to *grow in the grace of giving* this week?

➤ **Read 2 Corinthians 8:8-16.**

- What did Jesus do to become poor for us even though He was rich? (verse 9)
- His going to the cross was a loving sacrifice for us. He honored us above Himself. Name some ways we can honor Him above all other people or things?

*Many think that it is the amount that matters when it comes to giving. This is not so. It is, rather, the attitude of the heart. It is our willingness to honor God despite the challenges we face and sacrifices we make in life. – David H. McKinley*

What has God shown you to do that will allow Him to meet your needs and the needs of others through giving of your time, money, home, or gifts? Will you do it? (verse 11 – just do it!)

**Read 2 Corinthians 8:15 along with Exodus 16:18 and Luke 22:25.**

- What do these verses tell us about giving?
- How have you seen this happen in your life or in the lives of others?
- How might the Lord want to use this principle of giving to encourage someone you know at work or in your neighborhood?

**Truth: To be the church, you must *REPENT* of your tendency to make giving a matter of convenience rather than sacrifice and *RESPOND* with a personal plan of action for growth in the grace of giving.**

During the season of Lent leading up to Easter, is there something specific that God is calling you to "give up" in honor and reverence to Him? Consider what He might have you give or give up as a sacrificial offering unto the Lord.

*No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing." 2 Samuel 24:24*

## **Living It Out**

***Pray about our 40 Days of Giving.***

Ask God to help you step out in faith and ***courageously and sacrificially*** honor God!

*He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:24