

RICH GENEROSITY



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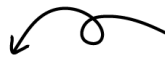
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INTRODUCTION TO RICH GENEROSITY

What thoughts come to your mind when you hear a church is doing a series that talks about money?

Although money can be a difficult topic to think about and talk about, when you open up the Bible you see God continually address this specific topic.

One of the passages in Scripture that gives us the clearest guidance on money is in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

It is also in this passage that God addresses the connection between our money and our hearts.

Over these 3 weeks, our hope is that as we speak about money, we'll be digging deep into who we are to discover and discuss why we think what we think and why we're called to have a *rich generosity*.



WEEK 1 | GIVE YOURSELF

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5 | GROWTH GROUP

Section 1 | Big group | 45 minutes

What has shaped your attitude to giving? (Positive or negative, people or events.)

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

How is the Macedonian church's giving described?

How is this generosity counter-cultural, even to the point that it doesn't make logical sense?

A key point is "They gave themselves first of all to the Lord". What do you think that means?

Read 1 Cor 15:1-8 & 50-58

The Apostle Paul uses a similar phrase in 1 Corinthians 15 (particular verse 58) which helps explain the "why" (why we should give ourselves to the Lord).

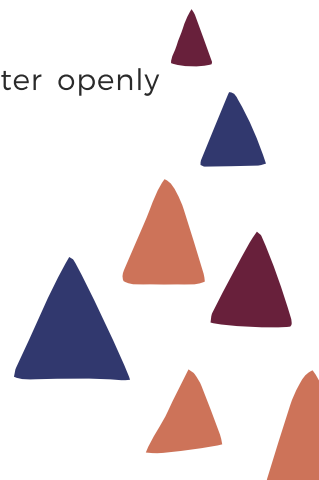
What does this passage add to our understanding of the *why* we give? And how much of ourselves should we give?

Read back over 2 Cor 8:1-5. How do you think the resurrected Jesus has shaped how they have used their lives and money? Does believing in the resurrected Jesus make logical sense of their generosity?

Introduction to small group discussions

These chapters indicate the giving from the churches was a public matter openly discussed as a helpful lesson.

How can not talking about money be unhealthy for us? How is it healthy?



WEEK 1 | GIVE YOURSELF 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5 | GROWTH GROUP

Section 2 | Small group | 45 minutes

Introduction to small group discussions

Break into groups of 3 of the same gender to discuss the following questions and pray for each other. Please commit to the same group for the next 3 weeks.

Small group discussion.

In these studies we will be talking about our giving, our hearts, and practical tips to help us use money to excel in the grace of giving. There is no room for being proud or boasting (Mat 6:1-8), instead we're here to build each other up in the grace of giving (2 Cor 8:7). That starts with trust and honesty with others in our group.

Believers are called to live lives that are shaped by Christ, to give ourselves completely to Him. However, it can be uncomfortable to be asked questions like, "How's your Prayer, Bible reading, purity, and especially giving...?"

How are you feeling about being accountable to this group with things like giving? What do you want from the others in your group?

Read Mark 12: 41-44.

Was Jesus interested in people's giving?

What was Jesus condemning?

What was Jesus commending?

Is the issue a money issue? A heart issue? How are they both related?

What does the way you use your money say about you and what you're living for?

Pray for each other using the points on the next page - pray especially for helping us all to be comfortable having these discussions,

Exercise for this week (See Appendix for a budget template).

The best way to have a true perspective on where or money goes is to see our budget. For next week: prepare a budget to share in small groups each other.

WEEK 1 | PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

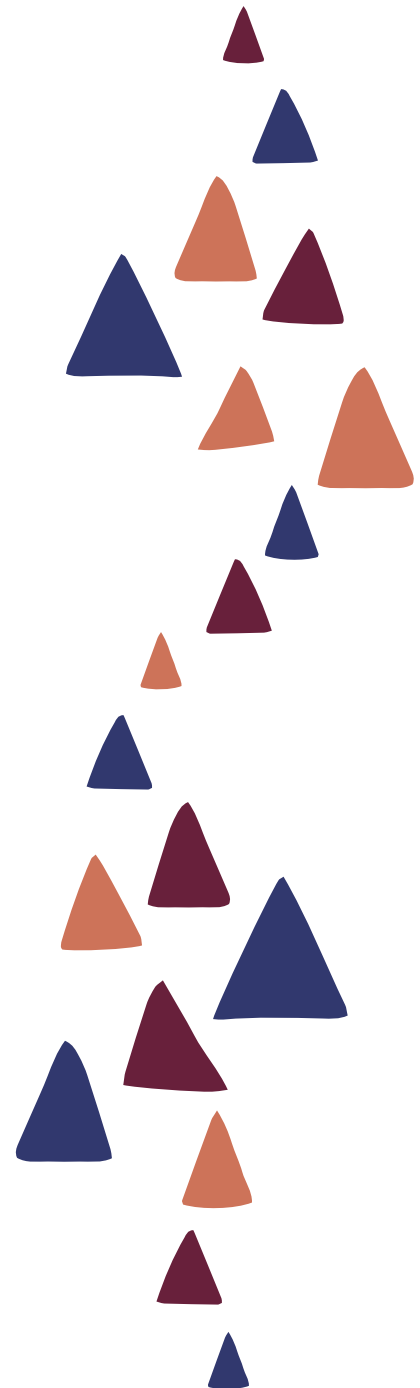
How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?



WEEK 2 | PERSONAL GROWTH 2 CORINTHIANS 8:6-15

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.

13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, 15 as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.”

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

WEEK 2 | TEST YOURSELF

2 CORINTHIANS 8:6-15 | GROWTH GROUP

Section 1 | Big group | 45 minutes

What things do you admire in someone's character? Why is it good thing to identify and pursue particular character traits?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:6-15

What are the reasons for giving in this passage?

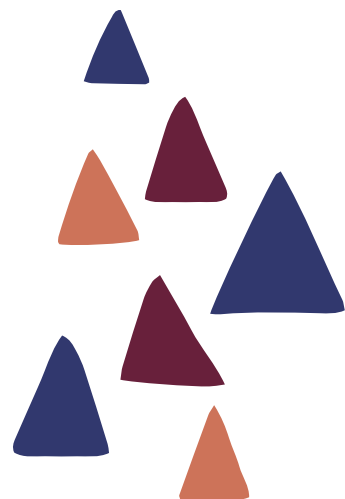
Should our giving be considered as equally important as the other characteristics listed in vs 7?

How do you think our generosity is a "test" of the sincerity of our love (vs 8-9) and why might money be a fair measure of assessment?

In Vs 10-12, why is this discussion **not** *about* how much money you give?

In Vs 10-12, why is this discussion *about* how much money you give?

If we fail to consider what it means for each of us to be generous, what does that say about our spiritual maturity?



WEEK 2 | TEST YOURSELF **2 CORINTHIANS 8:6-15 | GROWTH GROUP**

Section 2 | Small group | 45 minutes

How would you describe the tone of Paul's challenge to the Corinthians?

This is important for us to capture in our discussions.

At Southside, our mission is to make and grow disciples of Jesus. It's our prayer that discussions like this are an encouragement to each other as we spur each other on to grow as followers of Jesus.

How are you going with excelling in your faith, speech, knowledge, love and earnestness of God?

How are you going at excelling with giving?

Rip the band-aid off - Share your story of giving.

Share your budget or how much you give and talk through the following:

How did you come to decide on that amount (you don't have to share a long story)?

Is your giving regular or not?

What is the biggest struggle for you when it comes to "overflowing joy" in giving generously?

What's one tip you've found helpful when it comes to giving money?

Pray for each other using the template on the next page and particularly with challenges or struggles from this study's discussion.

WEEK 2 | PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

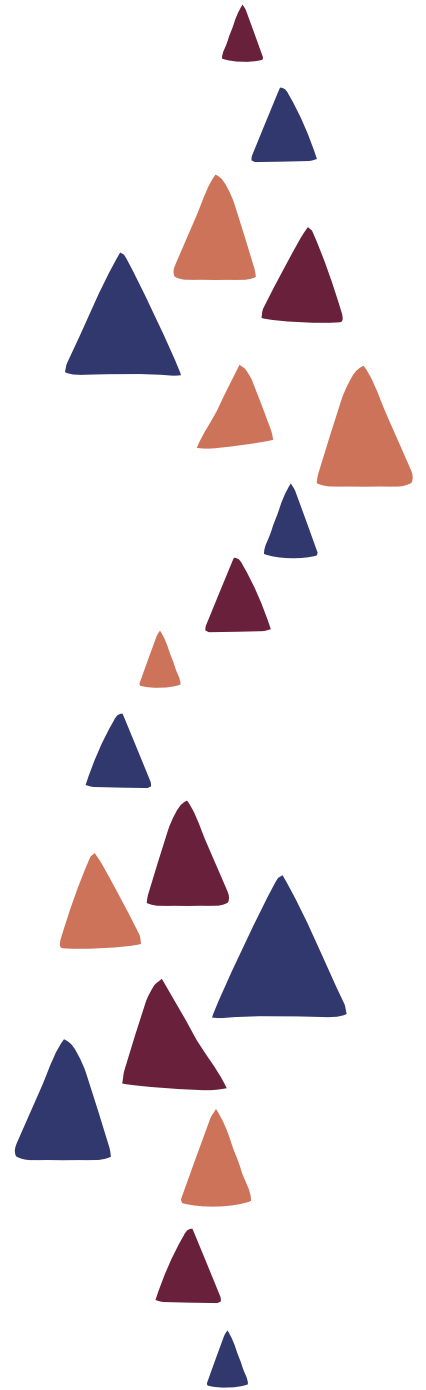
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WEEK 3 | EXPRESS YOURSELF 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15 | GROWTH GROUP

Section 1 | Big group | 45 minutes

What are ways we express how we're feeling (other than words)?
Can you give an example of how you expressed being happy?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

When it comes to giving, Paul repeatedly says we should do it voluntarily, willingly, joyfully, and not reluctantly (8:8, 8:11, & 9:7). Why are each of these aspects of giving important?

What do you think or feel about Tim Keller's statement, "Money ultimately is a form of power, and diminished funds make you feel much less in control of your environment and much more vulnerable to circumstances"? Are there any ways you relate to that?

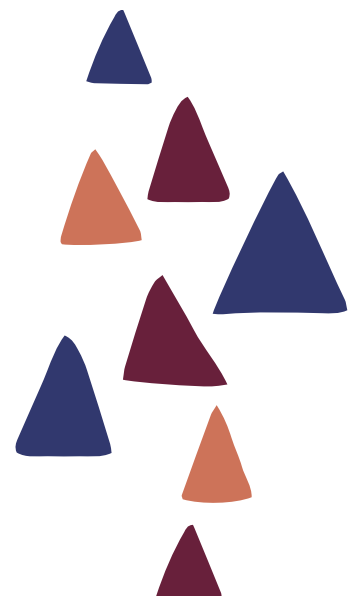
From v6-11 what is the motivation to give joyfully? And how do we do that without worrying?

How do you think this truth helped the Macedonian church in 8:1-5?

According to this passage, when we give we are expressing what message? (it says a few things)

What message does it express when we don't give?

Why might this be a serious concern we want to resolve?



WEEK 3 | EXPRESS YOURSELF

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15 | GROWTH GROUP

Section 2 | Small group | 45 minutes

Has anything changed since last week's discussion on budget and giving? How did you feel in this last week practicing to excel in the grace of giving?

"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." What does that provoke in you?

Out of verse 7's motivation for giving (voluntarily, willingly, joyfully and not reluctantly) What do you find the easiest and the most difficult thing to do?

On reflection on this series -

What are the biggest things you never want to forget:

What practical ways can we help each other remember and practice these truths?

WEEK 3 | PRAYER

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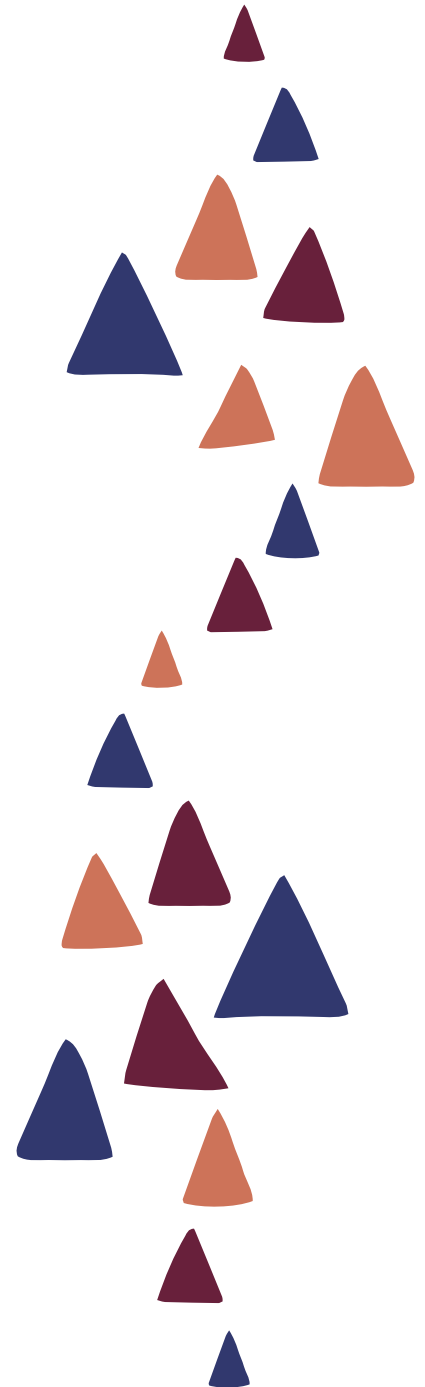
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SOUTHSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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