

# Bible Studies

## How To Enjoy Giving



A Series in 2 Corinthians 8-9

# Index

Study 1: Wealthy in Generosity	Page 3
Study 2: Part of the Team	Page 6
Study 3: Provision and Praise	Page 9

# 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

## *Study 1: Wealthy in Generosity*

1. Pray for God's help as we talk about money together. Pray that we'd be honest, humble, realistic and willing to listen to God's word.
2. Read the following quote from a 2024 report on Australian charitable giving (in general, not just towards Christian ministries):

*"Our data shows that most people are not sacrificial in their giving, with 80% giving less than 1% of their annual income to charity," he said. "In fact, the median percentage donated of those that do give is just 0.38%."*<sup>1</sup>

What does this data suggest about general Australian attitudes towards generosity?

### **What's Going On In 2 Corinthians 8-9?**

3. Read all of 2 Corinthians 8-9.
4. In this section, we are joining a conversation that Paul has been having with the church in Corinth for some time about a financial collection he is making. What do the following verses tell us about Paul's financial appeal (e.g. who it's for; how it will be administered; the purpose; who he's previously asked)?
  - "Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 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. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me." (1 Cor. 16:1-4)

---

<sup>1</sup> Greg Thom, *Institute of Community Directors Australia*, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024, <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/articles/high-cost-of-living-dictating-trends-in-charitable-giving>

- “James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.” (Gal. 2:9–10)
  
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
  
- 2 Corinthians 8:10-11
  
- 2 Corinthians 8:13-14
  
- 2 Corinthians 8:16-21
  
- 2 Corinthians 9:1-2

5. Write a sentence summarising what Paul hopes the Corinthians will do after reading this section of his letter to them.

6. In other parts of the New Testament, believers are called upon to financially support a whole variety of causes, including poor believers in their own context (e.g. Lk 18:22; 1 Tim 5:1-16), missionary endeavours to other parts of the world (e.g. Rom 15:23-24; Phil 4:14-16), and the ministry of the local church (1 Tim 5:17-18). What does Paul’s appeal to the Corinthians imply about the attitudes Christians ought to take towards generosity?

7. What do you find striking about the Macedonian's generosity in verses 1-4?
  
8. In verse 7, Paul encourages the Corinthians to excel in "this act of grace" (i.e. giving to the poor). Why is it worth "excelling" in giving?
  
9. Consider your own attitude towards giving money away to the causes listed in question 6. How positive are you about giving? (indicate on the spectrum)

*That's a  
terrible  
idea!*

*I beg  
people  
for the  
privilege  
of giving  
(v.4)!*



10. How does what God has done for you in Christ challenge your attitude towards giving (verses 8-9)?
  
11. Write down a specific need that you would like to prayerfully consider giving towards (e.g. an appeal; church ministry; other Christian ministries; an NGO). Make a plan to follow up on this.
  
12. Divide into pairs. Pray that God would help you to "excel in generosity". You could also share about a ministry or Christian charity that you support and pray for their work.

# 2 Corinthians 8:8-9:5

## Study 2: Part of the Team

1. In this passage, Paul encourages the Corinthians to compare themselves to the example of others in their giving. Can you think of other situations in life where...

a. It's not a good idea to compare ourselves to others.

b. It's helpful to compare ourselves to others.

2. Pray and read 2 Corinthians 8:8-9:5.

3. In 8:8, Paul says:

*I am not commanding you (to excel in giving), but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. (2 Cor. 8:8)*

What do you think he means?

4. In the verses that follow, Paul positively describes the example of others to motivate the Corinthians. Fill out the table below.

	Who is held up as an example?	What are they like?	How should the Corinthians respond?
8:9			
8:16-17, 23			
8:18-21			

8:22-24			
9:1-2			
9:3-5			

5. Summarise:

a. What sort of people does Paul compare the Corinthians to?

b. How does Paul hope that this comparison will help the Corinthians?

6. Who does Paul give the credit for the generosity of other Christians?

7. In verses 10-15, Paul puts some boundaries around what he is asking of the Corinthians. How might verses 10-15 protect the Corinthians from...

a. Excessive guilt/shame if they are unable to give as planned

b. Impoverishment

8. Often in a Western Christian context, giving is seen as a highly personal or private matter. For instance, it's generally considered rude to ask someone about their household budget. Part of this stems from Jesus' own teaching – Christians are to hide “their right hand from their left” and avoid showmanship and hypocrisy at all costs (e.g. Matthew 6:2-4). How should we hold together Paul's teaching here with the wider biblical encouragement to let our giving be in secret?
  
9. Brainstorm situations in which you have seen a Christian or a church give generously.<sup>2</sup>
  
10. How might seeing ourselves as a part of a giving team help us to grow in generosity? We might also ask, “how might isolating ourselves from the examples of other Christians in the area of giving make it hard to grow in generosity?”
  
11. Spend some time praising and thanking God for the generosity his Spirit has enabled in others. Pray that you might be like them.

---

<sup>2</sup> You can't share about yourself!



# 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

## *Study 3: Provision and Praise*

1. Pray, then read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.
2. What things can stop us from being generous towards others? List as many factors as possible.
3. Draw a diagram capturing the relationship between God, the Corinthians, and the saints in Jerusalem who benefit from their generosity (e.g. "Corinthians generosity supplies the needs of the saints in Jerusalem").

4. 2 Corinthians 9 reflects the wider teaching of the Bible that God is the creator and sustainer of all things, and who governs over his entire creation, down to the smallest creatures. Read the following two quotes from John Calvin summarising the doctrine of “providence.”

*“After learning that there is a Creator, (faith) must forthwith infer that he is also a Governor and Preserver, and that, not by producing a kind of general motion in the machine of the globe as well as in each of its parts, but by a special providence sustaining, cherishing, superintending, all the things which he has made, to the very minutest, even to a sparrow.” (Calvin, Institutes, I.XVI.II)*

*“Indeed, there could be no serious meaning in our prayer for daily bread, if God did not with paternal hand supply us with food. Accordingly, to convince the faithful that God, in feeding them, fulfils the office of the best of parents, the prophet reminds them that he “giveth food to all flesh,” (Ps. 136:25).” (Calvin, Institutes, I.XVI.VI)*

How do we see God’s Fatherly providence for his creatures in 2 Corinthians 9?

5. Is Paul saying in this passage that if Christians give lots of money away God will make them rich?

6. Is generosity good for the giver, the recipient or God?

7. In this passage, we see Paul motivating the Corinthians to give generously out of their own desire. How does what Paul says speak to some of the following reasons that Christians might be unwilling to be generous:
- “If I give money away, I might not have enough to live off in the future”
  
  - “Will my giving really make a difference anyway?”
  
  - “I feel like I’m always getting hassled when it comes to charity or giving. So I normally just give a little bit so that I can tick the box and get the person asking off my back.”
8. What is the biggest barrier to you personally being generous? How does this passage speak to this issue? Pray in pairs for God’s mercy and help to be like Him.

