



Learner's Guide

Each week in this study has 5 main points. Each point is supported by Scripture, explored with questions, and sealed through prayer prompts. This is a SIGNIFICANT amount of content. Our encouragement to you is to review the Scripture and the questions thoroughly in preparation for the group meeting. Also provided in the document are prayer prompts to accompany your study. You, the learner, will grow in contentment and generosity if you commit yourself to prayerful study of this content and engage eagerly with your small group. Enjoy!

Week 4 – Financial generosity: Getting Started and Growing Further.

1. Deciding what to give, Part 1: Allowing 'sacrificial' and 'generous' to be synonyms.

***Scripture to read:** 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Use your own Bible to read Paul's case study in sacrificial generosity.

***Questions to answer:**

-In verses 1 & 2, What 'strange behaviors' did the Macedonian churches exhibit in the midst of severe trial and extreme poverty? How were these churches able to behave in this way? (see verse 1)

-In verses 3 & 4, What do these churches plead for? Would you describe their giving as sacrificial? Why? Why not? What helpful keywords are there in the text?

-In verse 7, what behaviors does Paul encourage the Corinthians to excel in?

-Finally, and most importantly, who does Paul hold up the the ultimate example of sacrificial generosity?

-Do you ever 'give till it hurts?' Crazier still, do you 'plead' for the privilege of sharing in the work of the Kingdom?

2. Deciding what to give, Part 2: Give to God First

***Scripture to read:**

Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

1 Corinthians 16:2

2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income,

***Questions to answer:**

Faithful With Finances-Week 4

- Are you familiar with the term 'firstfruits'? What do you think it means in the context of your financial giving?
- What blessings are promised for obedience to 'firstfruits' giving? For additional color on this subject, read 2 Corinthians 9:10-15.
- Are you a 'firstfruits' giver? If so, I'd like to hear from you so we can encourage each other with stories of God's faithfulness!
- Is 'Kingdom generosity' a line item in your household budget? Do you operate according to a budget?
- Sadly, most Christians have a habit of giving God financial leftovers and never truly experience the freedom of contented generosity. How would you describe your pattern of giving?

3. Generous Giving: Commit to a life of *Blessing*

***Scripture to read:**

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

***Questions to answer:**

- In verse 6, what 'law' does Paul remind us of?
- How would you characterize your 'sowing into God's work? Could you sow more? What does the text say is the benefit of increased 'sowing'?
- Looking again at verse 7, how do you decide what to give? Through prayer (recommended), or casually, not giving it much thought?
- Contained in verse 8 are at least 2 promises attached to your generosity and God's ability to bless you abundantly. Can you see them?

***Question to ask God in prayer:** "Lord, if I were to make a list of all the assets You've entrusted to me, Lord, and ask what You want me to give away, is there anything—house, car, real estate, retirement funds, bank accounts—that I'm treating as untouchable?"

4. Generous Giving: Commit to a *LONGER* term investment portfolio

***Scripture to read: 1 Timothy 6:18-19**

¹⁸ Command them (those who are rich) to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

***Questions to answer:**

- These verses are a continued conversation that began in verse 17 with a warning to trust God

Faithful With Finances-Week 4

and not wealth. In verse 18, what are the particulars of the command to the rich (**all** of us by comparison)?

-Verse 19 contains promise language for the 'eternity-minded investor'. What are the results of investing for 'the coming age'? Where does Paul say 'true life' is lived?

-Where, and for when, are you currently investing-This fleeting life or for the coming age?

***Question to ask God in prayer:** "Lord, I realize that in most places around the world, I would be regarded as extremely wealthy (even if I am lower- or middle-class in this place and time). Have You put so much into my hands because You have blessed me with the gift of giving? What have I been missing out on by not exercising this gift to a greater degree?"

Day 5 – Generous Giving: Remember to keep Jesus' promises in mind!

***Scripture to read:** Luke 6:38

³⁸"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

***Question to answer:**

-In light of God's promises for managing his money well, what's keeping you from excellent giving?

***Question to ask God in prayer:** "Father, please empower me to live each day here like I will wish I'd lived five minutes after I die. Help me look forward to Heaven and the New Earth and to storing up treasures there. I long to hear from You: "Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matthew 25:21). What steps can I take to make this happen?"