



# 5

Generosity

?

WHEN HAS  
SOMEONE  
BEEN  
INCREDIBLY  
GENEROUS  
TO YOU?

The  
**POINT** ➤

God's generous grace moves us  
to be generous.

## ➤ 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9

<sup>1</sup>We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup>for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup>For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, <sup>4</sup>begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— <sup>5</sup>and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. <sup>6</sup>Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. <sup>7</sup>But 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.

<sup>8</sup>I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine.

<sup>9</sup>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.



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

## FACT:

A common complaint kids have about their parents is feeling ignored or not being allowed to express themselves. If you feel this way, talk with a trusted church leader, and ask for help about approaching your parent(s).<sup>1</sup>



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // SALVATION

No amount of good works can save a person, and Jesus paying the penalty for our sin is the only way to be reconciled to God.

My dad is one of the most generous people I've ever known. This is something I'm grateful for, but this wasn't always the case. I grew up in a rural community where my friends and I enjoyed riding our dirt bikes and ATVs. Our normal routine after school was to go for a ride until dinner. One fateful day, I came home ready to hit the trails, and lo and behold, my ATV wasn't where I'd left it. In a panic, I began searching for it, but it was nowhere to be found. I ran inside and shouted to my mom, "Somebody stole my four-wheeler!"

She replied calmly, "You know Cameron?" Of course I knew Cameron. He lived a couple streets over, and I didn't like him. Cameron was a new kid at our school and he wasn't easy to get along with. But there was a reason for his struggles. Shortly before moving to our town, Cameron's mom had died, and he and his dad had moved to be closer to Cameron's grandmother for support. Cameron had struggled to cope well with all the change, and their family struggled to make ends meet financially. My mom informed me that my four-wheeler was missing because my dad had given it to Cameron.

At the time, I didn't always appreciate the ways my dad expressed his generosity—at least not to others. However, I now recognize that he was generous to me more than anyone else. The only appropriate response to generosity is that we too would be generous.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-2

**1** Why were the Macedonian Christians generous, even though they were desperately poor?

**2** How has God's grace encouraged a spirit of generosity in you?



*Our giving is an expression of our devotion to God.  
#BSFLCharacter Counts*

## 2 CORINTHIANS 8:3-6

**3** What is the difference between a have-to-give versus a get-to-give attitude in our giving?

**4** In your own words, why is giving a privilege?

**5** What is the connection between experiencing God's grace and sharing generously?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 8:7-9

**6** If the Corinthians were excelling in so many areas, why did Paul need to address their lack of generosity?

**7** How does knowing, doing, and being relate to our expressions of generosity?

**8** How have you experienced God's grace? How is this impacting the ways you share?



# LIVE IT OUT



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // SALVATION

*No amount of good works can save a person, and Jesus paying the penalty for our sin is the only way to be reconciled to God.*

Grace is, by definition, a free gift that we can't earn and don't deserve. We are saved by God's grace, and if we've experienced God's grace generously lavished on our lives, the natural response is to be gracious and generous to others.

## > CHRIST

God is generous in ways that are beyond description. Still, it's important for us to slow down and take time to recognize God's generosity.

**9** Make a list of ways God has been generous to you in Christ:

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

**SALVATION**

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY  
& WORLD

## > COMMUNITY

---

Who is someone in your church you recognize as being incredibly generous?

**10** This week, thank this person for being an example of generosity.



**11** Ask this person to share reasons for his or her generosity.

## > CULTURE

---

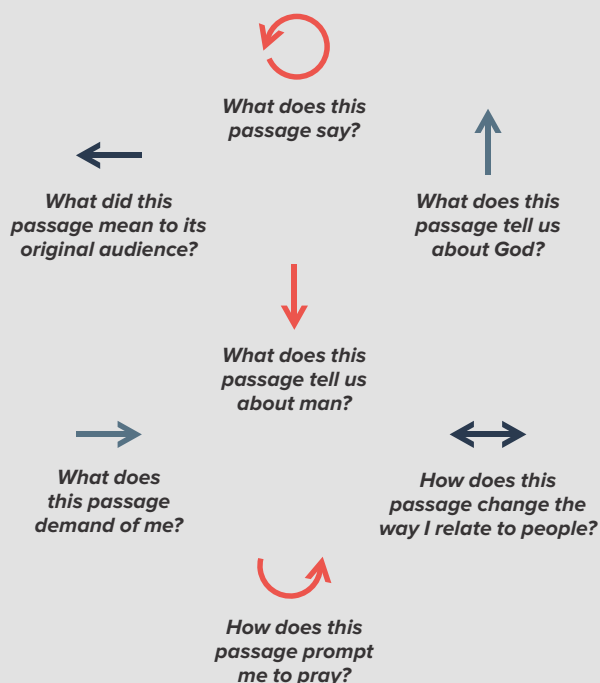
Jesus was generous in many ways, including sharing His time as well as providing for the needs of those He encountered. He did this as an expression of God's love, often toward people who were far from God.

**12** How can you help a non-believing friend or neighbor experience God's love by being generous? Commit to making it happen this week.

# DAILY DEVOTIONS



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



## Day One

### 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6

Sowing and reaping is a basic principle that comes from farming. If a farmer sows a little seed, we all know that he shouldn't expect an abundant crop. If the farmer wants a huge harvest, then he must do the hard work of buying lots of seed, preparing a large area of land, planting the seeds, and nurturing their growth until harvest time. In Galatians 6:7, Scripture teaches that the reap-and-sow principle applies not only to farming but to our lives in many other ways. The truth is that all people reap what they sow. In fact, Paul connected this principle to people making big claims but failing to follow through. He said we must understand that God is not mocked, and we always sow what we reap. In academics and athletics, in relationships and even our faith, we can expect to reap in direct relation to what we've invested. Let's choose every day to invest our time and energy in the things God has called us to. Then we can expect to reap the benefits.

- > **Where do you see people expecting great results with little investment or effort?**
- > **How specifically is God calling you to invest your life so that you'll reap His blessings?**

## Day Two

### 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7



There were poor Christians in Jerusalem who were facing desperate struggles, and the Corinthian church was eager to help and had even offered to collect a generous offering (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:5). Paul wanted to make sure they intended to follow through on their promise. However, he also wanted to make sure they were giving with the right motives. At times, we might feel pressure to give to the church or to serve the needs of others. However, we shouldn't give out of obligation. Instead, a healthy view of giving acknowledges that when we give to God's purposes, our resources can truly make an eternal difference in others' lives. This helps us to give, even when it is legitimately sacrificial, from a place of joy. God is pleased with us not when we feel like we have to give but when we give generously from a heart of love for God and others.

- **Why is it important that we give not from obligation but from joy?**
- **In your own words, what kind of perspective helps us to give joyfully?**

## Day Three

### 2 CORINTHIANS 9:8-9

Grace refers specifically to a free gift that is undeserved and cannot be earned. In a purely spiritual sense, we are saved by God's grace made available to us through faith in Jesus. In this verse, Paul is referring not to saving grace but to material blessings that come from God. James 1:17 teaches that every good gift in our lives comes from God. Of course, salvation is the ultimate gift and one we could never earn. However, it's also important for us to understand that our relationships, our homes, our food and clothing, and even our opportunities are gifts from God. And if we're ever tempted to think that we've worked to earn these things, it's important to acknowledge that even our skills and abilities are from God. From an earthly perspective, we do work hard and earn what we receive. However, from an eternal and ultimate perspective, God is the giver of all good things. With this in mind, when we commit to using the things God gives us for His purposes, He will provide all we need for excelling in "every good work."

- **In your own life, how do you see that all good things come from God?**
- **How specifically is God calling you to use what He's given you for "every good work"?**

## Day Four

# 2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-11

In verse 6, Paul introduced the reap-and-sow analogy and pointed out that if we are stingy in our sowing, we'll reap very little. If we sow generously, though, we can expect a plentiful harvest. The farmer prepares the ground, plants the seeds, waters the plants, and harvests the produce containing more seeds. However, it's ultimately God who provides the seeds, growth, and harvest. Farmers are certainly responsible to do their part, but nothing happens without God's involvement. This same principle applies in our lives. We can study, and work, and earn, but God is ultimately the One who provides the things we have. We are simply stewards of the things He entrusts to us, and we are responsible to use all He's given for righteous purposes. And when we faithfully and generously use what we have for the good of others and the glory of God, we can confidently expect that God will multiply our resources to use for even more good. God doesn't bless us so that we will be selfish and indulgent—He blesses us so we would be an instrument of blessing to others. When we live this way, God delights to bless us even more.

- **What does it mean that we are stewards of what God has entrusted to us?**
- **How can we put ourselves in the position that God would entrust us with more resources?**

## Day Five

# 2 CORINTHIANS 9:12



Many Jews had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus's followers. Peter then preached about Jesus and many were saved. These new believers stayed in Jerusalem to learn and grow, but they had no source of income. Further, many followers of Jesus in Jerusalem had lost their jobs due to persecution, and these believers were experiencing desperate need on many levels. The Corinthian church was in a generally good position financially, and they generously and sacrificially gave to support their brothers and sisters in Christ. When we give to those in need, not out of obligation but from hearts of love for others, God will use our gifts to make a big difference in both an earthly and eternal sense. If we've known the generosity of God, then the natural response is for us to be generous in humility and with gratitude.

- **How has God been generous to you?**
- **How does your life show that you are truly grateful for God's generosity?**