LIFE GROUP LEADERS GUIDE

The Practice of Generosity

2 Corinthians 8:10-15

Series:	None
Date:	November 15, 2026
Text Reference:	2 Corinthians 8:10-15

Key Text — 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 (ESV)

10 And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. 11 So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. 12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. 13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness 14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. 15 As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

Leader's Big Idea to Keep in Front of You:

1. Faithfulness finishes what willingness begins. Good intentions are not the same as obedience. The Corinthians had desire and even made a start, but somewhere along the way they stopped. Paul calls them back to finish what they started. Desire must become decision, and decision must become discipline.

2. Generosity begins with what you have, not what you hope to have. Paul does not tell the Corinthians to wait for better circumstances. He tells them to give out of what they currently have.

3. Paul reframes abundance not as a personal reward to be hoarded but as a resource that can meet the needs of others. What God places in our hands may have a ministry destination beyond ourselves.

4. Generosity is ultimately a matter of faith. The manna story from Exodus 16 is a reminder that God is the provider of all things. A clenched fist around money reveals something about where we actually place our trust. Generous people are not necessarily those with the most. They are those who trust the Provider enough to live with open hands.

Part 1: Opening Questions

Getting the Group Thinking

1. Think about a time when you had every intention of following through on something important but stalled before finishing. What eventually moved you forward, or what kept you from finishing?

> **Leader Note**
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> *God is calling us to generosity without exception. While we may have our own objections or boundaries to that generosity, we shouldn't let them get in the way of serving God and one another.*

Part 2: Study Questions (Engaging the Text)

SECTION A: FAITHFULNESS FINISHES WHAT WILLINGNESS BEGINS (VV. 10–12)

2. The sermon noted that Paul's imperative in the chapter is "finish the work." Why do you think Paul puts so much weight on completion rather than simply on the act of beginning?

> **Leader Note**
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> *Paul is writing to a church that was the first to desire to give for the relief of the believers in Jerusalem (v. 10), but their enthusiasm had faded over the year. Paul is not shaming them; he is calling them to follow through. Beginning shows desire, but finishing shows faithfulness. Unfinished obedience leaves the need unmet and slowly trains the heart to settle for good intentions.*
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> *This can quickly become guilt over past failures. Remind the group that Paul's tone is encouraging ("this benefits you"), and that the goal is a fresh start, not condemnation.*

3. Compare 1 Chronicles 29:10-17 with verse 12, where Paul says that giving is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. How does this reframe the way you think about your own capacity to be generous?

Leader Note

In 1 Chronicles 29:10-17 David praises God before the assembly after the people gave toward the temple. Key line (v. 14): "who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you." David's giving is rooted in the belief that everything already belongs to God. In 2 Corinthians 8:12 Paul says the gift is measured by what a person has, so the standard is willingness, not amount.

Leader Tip

Have someone read 1 Chronicles 29:10-17 aloud before discussing, and ask the group to listen for how often David says "you" and "your." Emphasize that Paul's standard is proportional ("according to what a person has" while realizing that everything belongs to God).

4. In verse 13, Paul anticipates the objection that giving generously would burden the Corinthians while easing others. How does Paul's response shape our own generosity?

Leader Note

Generosity is mutual care within the body of Christ, not a burden placed on some for the benefit of others. We give from what we have, trusting that God supplies others to meet our needs when we are in need. Our current abundance is temporary and may be reversed. Giving reflects a family, not a charity.

SECTION B: GENEROSITY SHARES WHAT GOD SUPPLIES (vv. 13–15)

5. The manna story from Exodus 16 is at the heart of verse 15. How does returning to that story challenge the way we tend to think about financial security?

Leader Note

In Exodus 16 God provided manna daily. Those who gathered much had nothing left over, and those who gathered little had no lack; those who tried to hoard it found it spoiled. We tend to equate security with savings, income, and insurance, while manna points to daily dependence on God. Hoarding reveals where we place our trust. God's provision is sufficient, though not always in the form or quantity we would choose. Security that comes from a stockpile is fragile.

6. Read 1 Chronicles 29:6-9. What does the freewill offerings given by the people reveal about their relationship with God?

Leader Note

They saw giving as worship, not obligation. Their gifts flowed from devotion to God and trust in Him. Their joy shows that giving was a delight rather than a loss. They were united in a shared purpose bigger than themselves. Willing hearts matter more to God than the size of the gift (compare 2 Cor. 9:7: "God loves a cheerful giver").

7. In verse 12, Paul explains that a gift is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what they do not have. Compare this with Mark 12:41-44. How does this passage challenge the assumption that we need more money, time, or resources before we can be generous?

Leader Note

We shouldn't take the widows giving as an imperative that we should likewise give everything. However, we should be giving out of heart that loves and not just giving from our abundance or left overs. God values the heart and sacrifice behind a gift more than the amount. Generosity is an act of trust. Waiting until we have "enough" may mean we never start.

Part 3: Application Questions

Living It Out

8. The sermon closed with this distinction: when we believe everything ultimately belongs to us, generosity feels like loss. When we believe everything comes from God, generosity becomes participation in His provision. Which of those two postures more honestly describes where you are right now?

Leader Note

Help people understand where they are right now. It isn't meant to shame someone for not holding a particular thought process or trust, it's meant to help them understand where growth in Christ can come from. It's easier to grow knowing in which areas we need to grow.

9. The sermon noted that, "Sometimes caution is wisdom. But sometimes caution becomes a respectable cover for a closed hand." How do you personally discern the difference between wise caution and a closed hand dressed up as caution?

Leader Note

This is an opportunity for people to look closely at their own generosity and determine for themselves if they are trusting God or "keeping a closed hand" to provide the security they feel they need.

Closing Prayer Guide

Faithful God, You call Your people not only to desire generosity but to practice it with willingness and integrity. I confess that good intentions often fade and that I sometimes delay obedience when You invite me to act contrary to the world. Thank You for providing all I need so that I may steward Your gifts with faithfulness and joy. Strengthen my resolve to follow through on what You have placed on my heart, trusting that You supply both the desire and the ability to obey. Make my giving a reflection of Your fairness, kindness, and care for Your people.