

# THE CHURCH IS RADICALLY GENEROUS

YEAR: UNITE / FOCUS: I AM PART OF A FAMILY  
SERIES: GOD IS FATHER - I AM PART OF THE FAMILY

## BIG TRUTH: THE CHURCH IS RADICALLY GENEROUS

Acts 2:44-45; 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

## BIBLE VERSE: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-2

*"We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 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."*

## BIG IDEAS

- Everything we possess we have been given to steward for God's glory.
- Our sacrificial generosity gives us the opportunity to make Jesus known.
- We give because Jesus gave His life for us.

## BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9; 9:6-15

## UNITE - I AM PART OF A FAMILY

The Unite Year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are given a spirit of adoption as sons (Romans 8:15-16), are made a child of God, and we are also saved into a family- the Church. The Unite Year explores how we are to live as a part of a family, and to live in light of our calling as servants and disciples of Christ. We use our gifts to build up the church as we pursue unity, humility, and gentleness with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2).

## SERIES AIMS



### Every student should know that...

- The church is a family.
- The church is given by God.
- The church exists for God.



### Every student should feel...

- Thankful for the unique ways God has gifted them and their church.
- Appreciation for the elders and leaders that God has gifted their church.



### Every student should strive to...

- Prioritize gathering to worship each week with their church family.
- Learn more about membership in their local church.
- Do something to intentionally serve someone in their church family each week



### Every student should want...

- To devote themselves to pursue holiness with their church family.
- To have their lives be marked by love for the church.
- To live in a way that is sacrificial and generous for the good of others and the glory of God

## GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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**BIBLE VERSE: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-2**

*"We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 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."*

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**The church should be known for its generosity.**

*"We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia..."*

- The churches of Macedonia were planted during Paul's missionary journeys. These churches in particular partnered with Paul in a radical way. They sent money and people to help Paul during his missionary journeys and they showed a commitment to the spread of the Gospel even when they themselves faced trials and affliction.
- Paul names these churches in his letter to the church at Corinth as an example of what true generosity looks like. Every local church should be known for its generosity, no matter its size or economic make-up. The church's generosity is a way in which believers show the grace of God to others.

**The church should practice generosity even in affliction.**

*"...about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 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."*

- Often our giving to others depends upon our personal situation and circumstance. Paul speaks of the churches of Macedonia in a different way. These churches gave despite their circumstances. They gave generously even when they faced trials and poverty themselves.
- The local church should be known for this type of giving. When the church gives despite their own circumstances, they reveal a true trust and faith in the provision and work of Christ. They show a faithfulness to the purpose of God and the spread of the gospel to the world.

**The church should practice generosity with joy.**

*"...for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy..."*

- The Macedonian church not only gave generously during their time of affliction, but they gave joyfully, too. Their joy was because of their faith and trust in Christ, not because of their circumstance. Their source of joy was not in their earthly position or material things. The source of their joy was in Christ.
- When the church's source of joy is in Christ, she can give joyfully and generously. When individual believers find their joy in Christ, they give cheerfully and joyfully. Then the church does so as well because they find their joy in Jesus and not in this world.

THE CHURCH IS RADICALLY  
GENEROUS**BIG IDEA #1: EVERYTHING WE POSSESS WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO STEWARD FOR GOD'S GLORY.<sup>1</sup>****[ THIS ]**

God gives good things to His people. James 1:17 teaches us that every good and perfect gift we have is from God. God not only gives us life, but He sustains our life and provides for our daily needs. If we have great intellect, it is because God has given it to us. If we have abundance, it is because God has enabled us to have it. We have things because God allows us to have things. He blesses us so that we can use what He has given us for His glory. In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul teaches that it is because of the grace of Jesus in dying for our sins that we can and should live for the glory of God. We can give generously because Jesus gave generously to us. A great price has been paid to ransom us from our sin debt; therefore, we should respond by living for the glory of God.

**[ THEREFORE ]****What does it mean to steward something for God's glory?**

1 Corinthians 6:20 teaches that we are bought with a price and should glorify God in our body. To steward something for God's glory is to use it for His purposes and not for our own.

**[ THIS ]**

God created mankind and gave them dominion on the earth. God also made people stewards of His creation. To be a steward is to manage and look after the property of another person. Every believer is a steward of God. This means that we all are responsible for looking after and managing the things that God has given us. This applies especially to the money that God allows us to make and receive. In 1 Corinthians 4:7, Paul writes to the church at Corinth about their attitude of superiority toward one another. All that we have we have received. Even if we work very hard to make money, we're able to do so because God has allowed us to and positioned us to do so. If we have plenty, then we are to use what we have for the glory of God and not for ourselves. This means that we can give generously because we know that all that we have is from God and for God.

**[ THEREFORE ]****What are some things you have that you can steward for God's glory?**

We are all blessed with things we can use for God's glory as James 1:17 shows us. We have money, time, creativity, and talents that can be used for His glory. We can look at what God has given us and seek to use it to further His kingdom and not our own.

**What are ways you can use your time and energy for God's glory?**

1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:23 teach us that whatever we do, we should do for the glory of God. This means that our time should be used for God's glory. We can look at the time we have and seek to serve God in some way. We can use our energy to bring Him glory by using the talents and gifts He's given us to serve in our church or community. We can use the energy we have to engage others for His glory.

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1. James 1:17: Every good and perfect gift is from God. Our purpose is to glorify Him with everything we have.

THE CHURCH IS RADICALLY  
GENEROUS**BIG IDEA #2: OUR SACRIFICIAL GENEROSITY GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE JESUS KNOWN.<sup>2</sup>****[ THIS ]**

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, Paul uses the Macedonian churches as examples of sacrificial giving. The Macedonian churches gave generously even in the midst of a severe affliction and their own poverty. They desired to make Jesus known and gave sacrificially to Paul that he might proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The lesson for every believer is not just that the Macedonian churches gave generously, but that they gave so that Jesus would be known all over. Supplying the needs of others is part of making Christ known because it shows that our faith is true and that we trust in God as our great Provider. Giving also means that we want to see the gospel spread throughout the world. The Macedonian churches gave sacrificially to see the gospel spread. This revealed their own thanksgiving for having received the gospel and their heart to see others hear the good news of Jesus.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**The Macedonian churches gave to see the gospel spread. How can you give so that the gospel is spread to others?**

Psalm 96:3 and Matthew 28:19 both teach us that it is our responsibility to make Jesus known in all of the world. Our financial giving is a part of fulfilling this responsibility. When we give to those who are going into the world to spread the gospel, we are participating in making Jesus known. When we ourselves go and use our resources to do so, we are making Jesus known in the world.

**[ THIS ]**

Often, in order to share Jesus with others, it is best to first meet their physical needs. If a person is hungry, we should first give them food before giving them the gospel. Often physical needs can overpower us and keep us from focusing on anything else. Our sacrificial giving can help supply the physical needs of the poor in our community and in the world. This then gives us opportunity to make Jesus known. When we meet these physical needs and we tell others about Jesus, we are helping spread the gospel to the world. Paul was on the receiving end of the generosity of churches and their generosity helped provide for his daily needs and enabled him to preach the gospel. As we give sacrificially through our local church, we, too, are helping missionaries spread the gospel in the world. Giving sacrificially means limiting ourselves in order to support the spread of the gospel.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**What does it look like for you to give sacrificially?**

Luke 21:4 reminds us that sacrificial giving is giving out of our poverty, not out of our abundance. To give sacrificially, we must go without something. Often, this looks like denying ourselves something in order to give. We all can give sacrificially by dying to ourselves and using our time, talents, and resources in a sacrificial way.

**What are some ways you can contribute to the spread of the gospel?**

Romans 12:13 and Luke 6:38 show us that we all can participate in spreading the gospel. When we give to the cause of Christ and contribute to the needs of other believers, we are helping spread the gospel in the world. We can do this by contributing to our church and to participating in the support of those carrying the gospel to people in the world.

2. 2 Corinthians 9:13: When we give generously, we prove our faith and trust in God and make His name known in the world.

THE CHURCH IS RADICALLY  
GENEROUS**BIG IDEA #3: WE GIVE BECAUSE JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US.<sup>3</sup>****[ THIS ]**

Jesus is our example in all things. We can look to Him to know how we should live for God's glory. Jesus is the supreme example of giving sacrificially. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 shows us this extreme sacrifice. Jesus poured Himself out for us and made Himself poor when He took on human flesh. He is fully God and has a divine nature, yet He willingly set this aside that He might become finite and limited like humans are. Jesus took on this flesh and then went to the cross to die in our place. Though He is perfect and lived the perfect life on earth, He willingly paid our penalty for our sin on the cross. He is our example of willing sacrifice. He gave up His very life that we might live and have a relationship with God. He gave selflessly and freely to us. Because He did this, we can now be filled with His Spirit and live a life that pleases God.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**In what ways is Jesus' example of sacrificial giving encouraging to you?**

We should be encouraged to give sacrificially when we remember the great sacrifice of Jesus. Philippians 2:6-8 and Ephesians 5:2 remind us of this great sacrifice and Jesus' willingness to give up everything for us. We should follow His example of giving because it is because of Him that we have new life and will enjoy eternal life.

**[ THIS ]**

Because Jesus set the supreme example for us during His time on earth, we have an example to follow. We know how to please God because Jesus showed us how to do so and God has given us His Word. We love because God loves us and did so first. We give because Jesus first gave for us. Jesus' death on the cross enables us to give sacrificially and to do so cheerfully. Because Jesus died for us, we are made new and receive new hearts that seek the things of God. Because God is benevolent and giving, when we have saving faith, we take on these characteristics. God's church gives radically because God gave radically when He sent Jesus. We are an extension of God on this earth and our giving is a result of God first giving for us. Our giving is also a result of God's provision to His church. We give because He first gave to us.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**What are some challenges to giving like Jesus gave?**

Our love of self and the things of this world can keep us from giving like Jesus. James 4:4 and Matthew 6:24 remind us of the danger of loving the world too much. We must die to ourselves and daily turn our hearts to the Lord. We must love God above all else in order to give like Jesus gave.

**Why must the church give radically in order to please God?**

1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 John 2:6, and 1 Peter 2:21 teach us that we must be like Christ to please God. Christ did please God and God calls His people to be like Christ. When we follow in Jesus' footsteps of giving radically, we will please God. We will become like Christ in setting aside our own will to do the will of the Father. This is the church's responsibility and without dying to ourselves, we cannot please the Father.

3. 2 Corinthians 8:9: Jesus gave of Himself that we might be reconciled to God.