

# Generosity

Read **2 Corinthians 8:1-15** aloud together before you begin.

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## OPENING

Ask the group:

*Think of a time someone's generosity had a real impact on you - not necessarily at church, just in your life. What made it stick with you?*

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## THE MACEDONIANS (verses 1-5)

Paul holds up the Macedonian churches as an example. They gave out of severe poverty, and they gave beyond what anyone expected. The detail worth sitting with: *they gave themselves first.*

### Questions:

1. What surprises you about how Paul describes the Macedonian giving?  
What words or phrases stand out?
  2. Verse 5 says they gave "themselves first to the Lord." What does it look like practically when giving flows from that kind of surrender, rather than from obligation or habit?
  3. *Can you think of a time when you gave from a place of genuine faith rather than calculation? What made it different?*
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## WILLINGNESS VS. COMPLETION (verses 10-12)

Paul isn't asking the Corinthians to give what they don't have. He's asking them to finish what they started. The willingness, he says, is what makes the gift acceptable - not the size of it.

### Questions:

1. What's the difference between being willing to give and actually giving?  
What tends to close that gap, or keep it open?
2. *Paul says the gift is acceptable "according to what one has, not according to what one does not have." How does that reframe the way you think about your own giving - either as an excuse or as genuine freedom?*

3. Where in your life have you had good intentions around generosity that haven't translated into action? What got in the way?
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### **GIVING IN FAITH FIRST (Malachi 3:7-10)**

God's challenge to Israel wasn't a prosperity formula - it was a call to obedience first, trust second. They had been withholding what they owed, and God called it robbery. His response wasn't condemnation alone: it was an invitation to test him.

Read **Malachi 3:7-10** aloud.

#### **Questions:**

1. God tells the people to bring the tithe and *then* watch what he does. Why is the order significant? What does giving first, before seeing the return, require of us?
2. *The text promises God will meet needs, not necessarily every want. How do you hold that tension practically - trusting God's provision without treating giving as a transaction you expect to profit from?*

What do you notice about the following stories?

- Mark 12:41-44 - Widow's Offering
  - Matthew 14:13-21 - Feeding 5000
  - Mark 14:3-5 - Jesus anointed at Bethany
- [answer: they all gave extravagantly in faith]
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### **INTEGRITY (2 Corinthians 8:19-21)**

Paul goes out of his way to make sure the collection is handled transparently, with witnesses. It's not enough to do the right thing - how it's seen matters too.

#### **Questions:**

1. Why does Paul think the appearance of integrity matters, not just the integrity itself? Do you agree?
  2. How does that principle apply beyond money - to the way your group, your church, or you personally handle generosity publicly?
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### **CLOSING REFLECTION**

The Macedonians gave out of poverty. The widow gave everything. The boy gave his lunch. The woman gave the whole jar of perfume. None of them waited until they had enough. What would it look like for you to give from what you have, not from what you wish you had - this month, in a concrete way?

*Give people a moment to sit with that before you close in prayer. You don't need to collect answers. The point is that everyone leaves with something specific to act on, not just something to think about.*

Close by praying for the group's generosity to be an act of faith, not just finance.