

PLANTED

becoming a long term discipling presence
in our region & beyond

STUDY GUIDE

PLANTED • WEEK 1 • STUDY GUIDE

An Act of Grace - 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Big Idea

After 15 fruitful years of being a family on mission, we're ready to make a faith-filled journey toward permanent facilities. Our goal is to lean into being a long-term disciple-making presence in our region and beyond, and so we're dreaming together and raising the funds we need to make it happen. To that end, we're asking the Soma family to spend a month considering the biblical teaching on generosity and to make a 2-year financial commitment to the vision of Planted. Our aim is to grow into sacrificial and joyful generosity, rooted in personal experience of the sacrificial generosity of Jesus Christ. Without deep knowledge of his work for you - all he gave up on your behalf, and all you've been given in him - living a life of generosity will never make any sense. Paul urges us to reflect on the grace of Jesus until we're transformed, leading to a radical, sacrificial, and joyful lifestyle of generosity.

Notes

Discussion Questions

- What makes you most excited about the vision of Planted? What hesitations or questions do you have?
- Consider the math of the Macedonian's generosity. How does it challenge your view of what you need in order to be generous?
- The earnestness of their desire to give was rooted in trusting first the Lord and second their leaders. Which is harder for you to trust? Why?
- Notice how Paul connects the gospel to personal finances in v.9. What is he saying? Why is he saying it?
- If we believe that Jesus made us rich through becoming poor, how ought that impact how we budget, save, spend, and give?

PLANTED • WEEK 2 • STUDY GUIDE

Giving Freely and Proactively - 2 Corinthians 8:10-9:5

**Big
Idea**

Over the next 2 years, we're hoping to raise \$1 million above our regular budget for the vision of Planted. That's a wild and audacious goal, and we're asking the whole Soma family to participate. But to be honest, fundraising is a really strange part of ministry, and can get really confusing for everyone involved. In this section we see Paul trying to walk a fine line as he raises funds for the ministry need in Jerusalem. While it is necessary for him to share the need and equip the Corinthians for financial generosity, he doesn't want to manipulate or coerce them, as that would entirely miss the point. He really believes generosity is a result of genuine love for Jesus, echoing Jesus' words about how what we do with our treasure reveals the state of our hearts. Once we have the right heart motivations in place, we're ready to start taking practical steps toward greater generosity. Joyful generosity involves looking at our abundance, planning proactively so we are ready to give willingly and freely as opportunities arise.

Notes

- In v.8 and v.24, Paul infers that genuine love (for Jesus) will show up in our generosity. What connection is he making?
- The New Testament gives no specific number or measurement for generosity, indicating that giving is first and foremost a matter of the heart. Why might Jesus and Paul not simply say, "give x percent"?
- Paul addresses a sticky issue in fundraising: the potential for leaders to coerce people into giving. According to v.19-21, what safeguards has he put in place? Why are these important?
- The flow of generosity in this section is from desire (heart) to readiness (plan) to completion (action). Where do you tend to get hung up? Why?
- As you commit to Planted, what steps do you need to take in order to give joyfully and willingly?

Discussion Questions

PLANTED • WEEK 3 • STUDY GUIDE

A Steward of God's Resources - 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Big Idea

In just two weeks we'll be asking everyone in the Soma family to make a 2-year financial commitment to our Planted initiative and the vision of being a long-term disciple-making presence in our region and beyond. Our hope is that these two years will grow us into a more joyful, free, and generous people all across the board. In this section, Paul urges the Corinthians toward bountiful, cheerful, and abundant giving by reminding them how the economy of God's Kingdom works. All we have has been given by God, and he gives abundantly to us so we can give abundantly to his purposes. Our resources belong to him, and when we're not generous we're not only greedy but also thieves, taking what was entrusted to us for ourselves! Paul reminds us that God promises to enrich us in every way so we can be generous in every way. God will multiply our seed for sowing, entrusting us with greater resources to steward, as we learn to step courageously into joyful generosity.

Notes

Discussion Questions

- In v.7, Paul gives a great summary of all he's been saying up to this point. According to the text, what does joyful generosity include?
- What does the metaphor of sowing and reaping imply? Why does God supply us with resources? What does he promise to do as we 'sow' them?
- What is the difference between a steward and an owner? When you consider your resources, which lens do you tend to view them through? How does that impact what you do with your finances?
- Read Psalm 112, where the quote in v.9 originates. What is the Psalmist saying about the righteous person and how they view life? Why do you think Paul quotes that here?
- Consider the promise of v.11. What would happen if you believed and acted on it? How might that impact your commitment to the Planted initiative over the next 2 years?

A Story of Generosity *DOUG TAYLOR*

"For me, generosity means recognizing the inexpressible generosity that God has shown me, recognizing that I was bought with a price. God's generous purchase of my salvation came at the cost of the precious blood of Christ Jesus His Son, who took upon Himself the wrath that I deserved. In light of God's unthinkable generosity toward me, the only appropriate response is for me to be generous with my time, talent, and treasure in participating in God's kingdom work of building and strengthening His church, of providing a tangible sign of God's love by helping those in need, and ultimately of sharing with others about their need for a Savior and the good news of Jesus who has generously given Himself as the means of salvation."

PLANTED • WEEK 4 • STUDY GUIDE

To The Praise of His Glory - 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

**Big
Idea**

Planted is a means of furthering the vision of Soma, which we find in Habakkuk 2.14: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." If we're going to commit to Planted, we need to first be convinced God is in this and financial generosity to this initiative leads to that great end! As we conclude our study in 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul describes the reciprocal nature of generosity, showing how both givers and receivers bring glory to God and declare the gospel to a watching world. Financial giving meets material needs, leading to a groundswell of thanksgiving to God from those who receive. Those who receive grow in trust and love, and give spiritual resources through prayer to those who give, building up the giver's faith and leading to their spiritual growth. According to Paul, this circular nature of generosity is a wonderfully good gift of our generous Father, whose glory will fill the earth through the praises of his people!

Notes

- In v.12 Paul calls this fundraising effort a "ministry." In what ways have we seen that helping people learn joyful generosity is indeed ministry?
- What are the two direct results of financial generosity? How are they linked? What is the "inexpressible gift" Paul references in v.15?
- To what degree do you believe that your financial generosity now will result in an overflow of gratitude for others?
- Do you believe giving to Planted will contribute to God's glory filling the earth? Why or why not?
- How is God stirring your heart to be involved with Planted? Does your involvement reflect your trust in God and desire to be a part of fulfilling Habakkuk 2.14?

Discussion Questions

PLANTED • WEEK 5 • STUDY GUIDE

Planted Commitment Sunday -

Big Idea

Planted is so much more than a capital campaign, and we're committing so much more than our money. After 15 years of fruitful mission and ministry in rented facilities, we're eager to become fully Planted in our city and region as a long-term disciple making presence. We conclude our Planted series by making a 2-year financial commitment so we can take this historic next step together. But we do so as Paul urged the Corinthians, giving ourselves - all we are - first to the Lord. We remember all we have in Jesus, secured by his sacrifice and loss, and we submit ourselves to him as our Lord. We consider ourselves as stewards, entrusted with the resources of our King, and eager to joyfully and generously sow them into this initiative. In our final look at 2 Corinthians 8-9, we'll summarize all we've learned and gather to prayerfully commit to Jesus and one another. Joyful Generosity is a way of life rooted in the grace of Jesus in which you freely and proactively seek to give money away, seeing yourself as a steward of God's resources for his purposes, and do so until it makes a measurable difference in your lifestyle, to the glory of God.

Notes

Discussion Questions

- Reflect on the last month. What has been most impactful for you?
- Paul never once says "money" in these two chapters. What do you make of that? What is he really after?
- Consider your own journey of generosity. What has God used to move you into greater joy and sacrifice?
- What lifestyle changes have you made as you've stepped into greater financial generosity? How does that feel?
- What are you most looking forward to as we pursue this Planted vision together over the next two years?

A Story of Generosity

JOSH & NICOLE

When Soma first discussed the theme of joyful generosity it challenged us to stretch our tithing. We were tithing out of our net income, but felt led to give out of our gross income. At first, this seemed like a big stretch, but soon we didn't even notice the difference. As our income has grown, we've committed to keeping our household budget the same so that we can be generous with the surplus God has given us. How we spend our money is one way we get to declare His goodness and sufficiency. Our desire is to use the money God has provided in a way that reflects His generosity towards us.