



Giving At Creekside

2023-03-26

Leader Notes

OVERVIEW:

Welcome to our study, "Giving at Creekside"! God is a giver. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." NIV. When we grasp what God has done for us, we'll want to give ourselves to him with all of who we are - our worship, our time, our resources. Today's topic is about giving at Creekside. When we give to our church, God is honoured and we do our part to support the amazing work he is doing here. For today's study, we'll explore 3 ways we can grow our generosity in giving. What next step is God calling you to take in your giving? Let's dive in and explore that question together!

ICEBREAKER: I Got It!

When I was in grade nine, I signed up to be baptized. I had grown up in a Christian home where my parents taught me about Jesus, but now I was stepping out and telling the world, "I get it". I understood that God had given me his Son and I declared my faith in him. At what point in your life did you "get it" about how much God loves you? Share your story with the group!

STUDY:

“When you get it, you want to give it.
When you don’t get it, you don’t want to give it.”

For the first part of our study, we’ll look at a classic verse in the Bible about giving (John 3:16). Then we’ll explore the exciting example of “grace giving” from the churches in Macedonia.

1. **READ:** John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” NIV

- God is a giver. God shows his love for us by giving.
Why is this such an important truth for us when we think about giving?

LEADER NOTE: God’s giving heart is a model for us to replicate in our own lives. God wants to grow a giving heart in you like his giving heart. Our giving should be based on God’s love. Giving is our response to God’s love. Some may give out of compulsion or guilt, or because they feel emotionally stirred by a need. A Christ-follower’s giving flows from having received the most amazing gift of all, the gift of God’s Son.

- God showed his love to you by giving you his Son. How does this truth touch down in your heart?

LEADER NOTE: The all-time greatest demonstration of love is that God gave you his Son. Think about it - God wanted to show you how much he loves you. How did he do it? He gave you his one and only Son so that you become his child and be part of his forever family. That’s amazing love!

GRACE GIVING: The Example of the Macedonian Churches

During his third missionary journey, the Apostle Paul had collected money for the impoverished believers in Jerusalem. The churches in Macedonia - Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea - had given money even though they were poor. Paul tells us their generosity came from the grace God had poured into their lives. Let’s read about their generosity to learn how we can grow in the grace of giving!

2. **READ:** 2 Corinthians 8:1-2

“And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.” NIV

- What do you notice about how the Macedonian church was motivated to give?

LEADER NOTE: In verse 1 we read - “... we want you to know about the grace God has given the Macedonian churches ...”. Their motivation came from the grace God poured into their lives. This grace is seen most powerfully in the love God showed to us by giving us his Son.

- In verse 2, Paul talks about 3 situations that results in their rich generosity. What are these situations? What surprises you about this?

LEADER NOTE: The three situations are their severe trial (likely persecution for their faith), overflowing joy and extreme poverty. Think about this as a math equation (severe trial + overflowing joy + extreme poverty = rich generosity). We might expect that someone going through financial and personal challenges would not be generous. The Macedonian churches proved the opposite. This is the surprising result of God’s grace!

3. **READ:** 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

“For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.” NIV

- What do you notice here about the generosity of the Macedonian churches?

LEADER NOTE: In these verses, Paul testifies about what he has seen in the generous giving of the Macedonian churches. First, they gave and much as they were able, and beyond! (vs. 3) They gave by faith, trusting God to provide their needs. Second, they gave “entirely on their own”. (vs. 3). They didn’t give because they were coerced or pressured in any way. They wanted to do it. In fact, they pleaded with Paul for the privilege of serving in this way! (vs. 4). Third, they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to their church family. (vs. 5). Grace giving is rooted in our love for God and for people.

4. **READ:** 2 Corinthians 8:7

“But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you[a]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” NIV

- How did Paul encourage the Corinthian church to be generous givers?

It's not about what God wants *from* you.
It's about what He wants *for* you.
-Andy Stanley

THREE P's of GIVING

Here are 3 practical ways we can grow our generosity in giving.

- i. **PRIORITY** Giving: Generosity will not happen unless we make it a priority.

- 5. What are some practical ways you can make giving a priority?

LEADER NOTE: One key way to make giving a priority is to start giving now. If we wait till we think we are rich it will never happen. Another practical thing we can do is to make a plan for giving. We need to make it happen by looking at our finances and deciding how and when we will give. Many people hesitate to give because they don't think they have enough to make a difference. Studies have shown that proportionally people who have less are bigger givers. Generosity is not dependant on your finances. It begins wherever you are. Make it a priority.

- ii. **PERCENTAGE** Giving: The percentage matters more than the sum.

6. **READ:** Mark 12:41-43 The Widow's Offering

- What does Jesus teach here about how the percentage matters more than the sum?

LEADER NOTE: One key way to make giving a priority is to start giving now. If we wait till we think we are rich it will never happen. Another practical thing we can do is to make a plan for giving. We need to make it happen by looking at our finances and deciding how and when we will give. Many people hesitate to give because they don't think they have enough to make a difference. Studies have shown that proportionally people who have less are bigger givers. Generosity is not dependant on your finances. It begins wherever you are. Make it a priority.

- How might you apply this percentage principle to your giving?

LEADER NOTE: Consider the percentage you will give. The Bible says a lot about giving 10%. That may be where you want to start or that may be too much to start off. Whatever the percentage, just like the widow, make it a percentage that has you saying, "I trust you, God, with all I have and everything comes from you. I want to be a generous giver like you."

- iii. **PROGRESSIVE Giving:** Over time raise the percentage.

7. **READ:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: Growing Generosity

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." NIV

- What principles do you notice here at growing our generosity in giving?

LEADER NOTE: There are a number of powerful principles here to guide our generosity. First - "... whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly ...". God seems to be telling us there that if we try to hold onto everything for ourselves (if we're not generous) we won't experience (reap) the blessing of giving. The second is the opposite - "... whoever sows generously will also reap generously." This is the generosity principle. Reaping will be the joy and satisfaction that comes from giving ourselves for God's work. Third - "... give what you have decided in your heart to give." Your generous giving is a decision between you and God. He gives you free will to decide. Fourth - "And God is able to bless you abundantly ..." When you give to God from your heart, he will be faithful to supply your need!

- What might progressive giving look like for you?

LEADER NOTE: The principle here is - over time, raise the percentage. As your financial situation changes change the giving percentage along with it. Ask yourself, "How can I continually be growing in my acts of generosity?" Review your giving yearly as your circumstances change.

- 8. What next step is God calling you to take in your giving?

PRAY:

Father, thank You for your amazing love for me.

Thank You for loving me so much, that You have given me
your Son, Jesus, to forgive my sin and lead my life.

Thank You for your grace that you have poured into my life.

By your grace, help me to love You and to love other people as You call me to love.

Father, help me to grow as a giver.

I want to give to You and to others from a generous heart, a heart of love.

Help me to be like the Macedonian churches, to give myself first to you and then to others.

Grow a heart in me like the heart of the widow, to give all I have to You.

Father, you are worthy of my greatest love and my deepest devotion.

Thank You for teaching me to be a giver like You are a giver.

I pray all of this in the Name of your Son, Jesus. AMEN.