



The Joy of Giving - Lessons from 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

By Ariel

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—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”

Setting the Scene

Key Concept:

Giving is a reflection of God's love and generosity. It is an act of grace that brings joy to both the giver and the recipient. True joy in giving comes not from obligation, but from a heart that is cheerful and filled with love. Through giving, we bless others and deepen our relationship with God, reflecting His character in a tangible and transformative way. When we give, we participate in God's work, becoming vessels of His love and grace.

Engaging Analogy:

"Think about planting seeds in a field. Each time we give, it's like planting a seed in someone's life. With God's love and blessings, these seeds grow into acts of kindness, encouragement, and hope. Just as a farmer rejoices when the seeds sprout and flourish, we experience joy when we see the impact of our giving in the lives of others. And just like seeds multiply and bear fruit, our giving creates a ripple effect, inspiring others to share and bless as well."

Invitation:

Encourage participants to reflect on the joy of giving and how their actions can make a lasting difference. Challenge them to think about how cheerful giving spreads God's love and inspires hope in those around them. Invite them to explore ways to excel in the grace of giving, just as Paul encouraged the Corinthians.

Section 1: Reflect and Discuss

Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to give with joy? How is joyful giving different from giving out of obligation?
2. Why do you think God loves a cheerful giver?
3. Can you think of a time when someone gave you something that made you feel loved and cared for? How did it impact your faith or perspective?
4. How can giving be an act of worship and gratitude to God?
5. What are some creative ways we can give, even if we don't have money to give?
6. How does giving connect us to the heart of God and to others?

Family or Group Discussion

- **Biblical Examples:** Share stories of cheerful giving from the Bible, such as the widow's offering (Mark 12:41-44), the Macedonian church's generosity (2 Corinthians 8:1-5), or the boy who gave his loaves and fish to Jesus (John 6:9). Discuss how these examples demonstrate trust in God and joy in giving.
- **Practical Application:** Talk about different ways to give, such as sharing time, talents, or resources. Reflect on how these acts of giving reflect God's love and bring joy to others.
- **Personal Stories:** Encourage participants to share moments when they gave or received something meaningful and how it impacted their relationships and faith. Highlight the joy and connection that comes from acts of generosity.

Section 2: Hands-On Activities

Activity 1: Joyful Giving Jars

Objective: Create jars to collect resources or ideas for acts of giving.

Materials Needed:

- Mason jars or recycled containers
- Markers
- Stickers, ribbons, and decorative items
- Slips of paper and pens

Instructions:

1. Decorate the jar with cheerful designs and phrases like "God Loves a Cheerful Giver" or "Seeds of Kindness."
2. Write or draw ways to give on slips of paper (e.g., donate to a food bank, help a neighbor, pray for someone) and place them in the jar.
3. Set a goal to complete one act of giving each week. After completing each act, reflect on how it brought joy to others and to yourself.
4. Share your acts of giving with the group or family to inspire others.

Extension Idea: Encourage participants to use their jars to collect small donations or gifts that can be given to someone in need. Turn it into a group challenge to see how much love and kindness can be shared in a month.

Activity 2: Giving Tree Craft

Objective: Create a tree filled with ideas and acts of giving.

Materials Needed:

- Poster board or large paper
- Markers and crayons
- Paper leaves
- Glue or tape
- Stickers and glitter

Instructions:

1. Draw or create a large tree on the poster board. Use markers or crayons to add details like branches and roots.
2. Write giving ideas or completed acts of giving on paper leaves. Examples include "Bake cookies for a neighbor," "Volunteer at church," or "Help someone with homework."
3. Attach the leaves to the tree, celebrating each act as part of growing in God's grace.
4. Display the tree as a visual reminder of the joy and impact of giving.

Extension Idea: Create a group "Forest of Giving" by combining individual trees into one large display. Use the forest as an opportunity to pray over the acts of giving and the people they impact.

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Activity 3: Gifts of the Heart Cards

Objective: Practice giving by creating cards with encouraging messages for others.

Materials Needed:

- Blank cards or paper
- Markers, crayons, and stickers
- Envelopes

Instructions:

1. Write or draw encouraging messages and Bible verses on the cards (e.g., "God loves you," "You are a blessing," "Be strong in the Lord").
2. Decorate the cards with cheerful designs, stickers, or drawings.
3. Deliver the cards to friends, family, or community members who might need encouragement, such as elderly neighbors or healthcare workers.
4. Reflect on how these small acts of kindness can brighten someone's day and show God's love.

Extension Idea: Include a prayer on each card, asking for God's blessings on the recipient. Host a "card-making party" to involve more participants and spread more joy.

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Section 3: Music and Creativity

Memory Verse Song

Set 2 Corinthians 8:7 to the tune of a familiar children's song, such as "This Little Light of Mine":

"Excel in faith and love, And in this grace of giving. Cheerfully, joyfully, Reflect God's grace each day."

Encourage participants to sing along and create simple hand motions to make the song more interactive and memorable.

Extension Idea: Challenge participants to teach the song to someone else and explain its meaning. Add percussion instruments like tambourines or clapping for a lively rendition.

Creative Writing Prompt

Ask participants to write or draw about a time when they gave something to someone and how it made them feel. Reflect on how their giving reflected God's love and grace and how it impacted the recipient.

Extension Idea: Combine individual stories into a group "Book of Giving" to inspire others. Include photos, drawings, or testimonies of how giving has impacted their lives.

Section 4: Closing Reflection and Prayer

Reflection:

- What is one way I can give cheerfully this week?
- How can I reflect God's love through my giving?
- Discuss how even small acts of giving can create a ripple effect, spreading kindness and hope.

Prayer:

Lead a prayer thanking God for His generosity and asking for a heart filled with joy and compassion in giving. Pray for wisdom and opportunities to share His love through acts of kindness. Include a moment of silent reflection for participants to think about someone they can bless through giving.

Extension Idea: Encourage participants to write their own prayers of gratitude and commitment to giving. Share these prayers with the group to inspire one another.