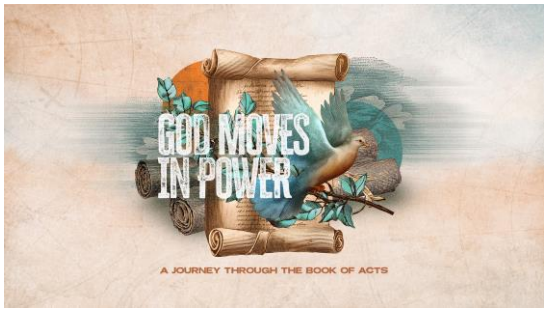



**Group Discussion Guide | November 12 + 15**
**God Moves in Power through Generosity**

*This week finishes our two-week focus on generosity. In Dan's message, we saw that the early church in Acts 2 and 4 was marked by extreme, joyful generosity. One core reason for this generous living was because God Himself is generous! God is always giving, and as we grow closer to God, our lives take on his generous character.*

*This week we'll build on that message and look at how Paul taught the same truth in 2 Corinthians 8–9. We'll also ask what it takes to move from scarcity to abundance, from fear to trust.*

**Notes for leaders:**

- Share honestly about your own journey with giving, struggles included.
- Talk about money the way you'd talk about any other area of discipleship.
- Cheer on a first gift, a recurring gift, and growth toward the tithe and beyond.
- Make sure no one leaves group feeling ashamed or singled out.
- Be clear that God's blessing isn't a promise of more money. Paul says God enriches us so that we can be generous (2 Corinthians 9:11).

**Opening Question (5 minutes)**

Last week, Dan shared how his heart toward money changed through a close friendship with a deeply generous man. Generosity is often caught more than taught.

- Since last week, did you notice God's generosity, or someone else's, in a new way?
- Think of the best gift you've ever given, not received. How did it feel to give it?

**Because God Is Generous (15 minutes)**

Read Acts 4:32–37.

Dan described the early church's generosity as extreme. People sold land and houses, no one claimed their possessions as their own, and "there were no needy persons among them" (4:34). Barnabas, whose name means "son of encouragement," sold a field and laid the money at the apostles' feet (4:36–37).

The heart of the message: our one God is generous in each of his three persons.

1. The Father gives creation, life, breath, and every good and perfect gift (Acts 17:25; James 1:17; Matthew 7:9–11).

2. The Son gives his time to children, 150 gallons of the best wine at a wedding, his touch to a leper, and finally his life on the cross (Mark 10:45).
3. The Spirit gives himself, and he gives gifts to every believer, gifts that are "given to be given" (1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10).

Discuss:

- Dan said generosity was as unmistakable in the early church as a person's most noticeable feature. What would it take for generosity to become that noticeable in your life?
- Barnabas is remembered for one generous act. What do you hope people remember you for?
- Which picture of God's generosity, Father, Son, or Spirit, has stayed with you since last week? Why?

**The Cheerful Giver: 2 Corinthians 8–9 (20 minutes)**

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1–9 and 9:6–15.

Paul teaches the same truth Dan preached: we give because God gave first. The churches of Macedonia were in "extreme poverty," yet they gave beyond their ability and begged to be part of the offering (8:2–4). Paul's reason is Jesus: though he was rich, he became poor for our sake (8:9). That's the Son's generosity from last week's message.

Paul says each person should give what they've decided in their heart, "not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (9:7). The Greek word for cheerful, hilaros, gives us the English word "hilarious." It describes joy that spills over.

Discuss:

- The Macedonians, like the church in Acts 4, gave out of very little. Why do you think people with little are often the most generous?
- What do you think it means to be a "cheerful giver"? Is it a feeling, a decision, or both?
- Read 9:8–11 again. God enriches us "so that you can be generous on every occasion." How does that echo the Spirit's gifts being "given to be given"?

**From Scarcity to Abundance (15 minutes)**

Dan shared that he grew up in poverty with a scarcity mindset. Many of us know that fear: "If I give, will there be enough?" Scripture answers with an invitation to trust.

- Malachi 3:10. God tells his people to bring the whole tithe and says, "Test me in this." It's the only place in Scripture where God invites us to test him. Paul says no compulsion, while

Malachi names a clear standard. But both point to the same thing: giving is an act of trust in a generous God.

- Acts 20:35. Paul reminds the Ephesian elders of Jesus' words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Those words aren't recorded in the Gospels; Luke preserves them here, in his account of Paul's farewell.
- The research agrees. In The Paradox of Generosity, Notre Dame sociologists Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson studied more than 2,000 Americans. They found that people who practice generosity regularly are happier and healthier and live with more purpose. Jesus said it first.

Discuss:

- Last week we asked whether you lean toward scarcity or abundance. What would help you take one step toward abundance?
- How do "God loves a cheerful giver" and "bring the whole tithe" fit together for you?
- God says, "Test me." Jesus says giving is more blessed than receiving. Could this be an invitation to try it and see? What might that look like for you?

**Next Steps and Prayer (15 minutes)**

Dan compared becoming generous to learning a language through total immersion: the more time we spend with Jesus, the more we become like him. Invite each person to choose one step this week:

- Give for the first time.
- Set up a recurring gift.
- Take a step toward the tithe, or beyond it.
    - All of these next steps can be accessed at thecreek.org/give.
- Give your time or talents. Use the serving opportunities on page 41 of *Created to Serve*.
- Be generous in a relationship: a meal, a visit, or your full attention.

Share your steps with one another, and plan to check in next time you meet.

Pray together. Thank God for his generosity as Father, Son, and Spirit, and for his indescribable gift in Jesus (2 Corinthians 9:15). Ask him to replace fear and scarcity with trust, and to make each of you a cheerful giver. You may break into groups of 2–3 to pray for one another's steps or remain together as a whole group.