

Pray for your time together in God's Word!

Read the passage out loud as a group. Option: Give the group 5 minutes to look at the passage by themselves.

This Week's Passage

Scripture Reference

2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5

New International Version (NIV)

Titus Sent to Receive the Collection

¹⁶ Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. ¹⁷ For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. ¹⁸ And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. ¹⁹ What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. ²⁰ We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. ²¹ For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.

²² In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. ²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. ²⁴ Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

2 Corinthians 9

¹ There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. ² For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. ³ But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴ For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. ⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Discussion

Ask the Group: What about this passage stood out to you?

Leaders' Note: This question gives your group the opportunity to explore their own ideas before leading them to specific discussion. Caution: Do not let this turn into a debate

about personal understandings—keep it more on the “observation” level.

Ask the Group: How does Titus set an example for how we should respond to what God puts on our hearts (vv. 16-17)?

Possible Answers: Titus recognizes what God is telling him to do, and responds enthusiastically by acting on it with his own initiative.

- Have you ever felt this way about something that God led you to do?

Ask the Group: How is the "brother" who has excelled in service to the gospel treated by the Church? (vv. 18-19)

Possible Answers: He was someone who was chosen by the church, and praised because of his faithful work.

- As a church, what types of people should we entrust with leadership?
Leaders Note: It may be helpful to look at passages addressing leadership qualifications, such as 1 Timothy 3.

Ask the Group: Vs. 20 talks about how Paul wants to avoid criticism when administering gifts. How can we ensure that we are good stewards (both practically and spiritually) of the gifts God has given us?

Possible Answers: Making sure your mind is Gospel-centered, and that ultimately your actions lead to glorifying God.

Ask the Group: Paul asks the Corinthians to give to exemplify generosity to other churches. Why would a public display of generosity be beneficial? (vv. 8:24 and 9:2)

Possible Answers: To provide encouragement to others in order to spur them on towards the Gospel. This also provides a more tangible expression of love to one another.

Ask the Group: Vs. 3 talks about being ready to give. What can we do to prepare ourselves to give?

Possible Answer: There is the spiritual element of having your heart ready to give when the Spirit leads you, but also being financially capable to give.

Ask the Group: What does a generous gift look like?

Possible Answers: A generous gift comes with enthusiasm, readiness, love and is gospel centered.

- How does giving out of generosity advance the Gospel?

Ask the Group: Why is it important that the Corinthians not give grudgingly?

Possible Answers: God will not be honored, and your heart may not be in the right place. Giving generously requires faith.

Gospel Application

Ask the Group (small or large): How can you be like Titus and the brothers by enthusiastically responding to God and His leading?

Ask the Group (small or large): Are you acting as a good steward of the gifts God has given you (talents, financial, time, etc.)?

- If this is an area of struggle, what are some things you can do this week to move towards a more gospel-centered view on stewardship?

Suggestion: Send this application question and challenge out during the week to encourage your group.

Last Week's Application: (Discuss if time)

Ask the Group (small or large): In what ways do you enjoy being generous to others?
(Steve's 4 T's - time, treasure, talent, ticker)

- Are there any other people God has shown you recently who could benefit from your generosity this week?

Ask the Group (small or large): Are there commitments in your life that you've lost sight of and need to fulfill?

- How can you refocus and 'finish them'?

Ask the Group (small or large): Do you view giving as a privilege, why or why not?

- Or do you struggle to give with joy?