

**Pray for your time together in God's Word!**

*Leaders Note: As Americans we live in the richest society that has ever existed. Even the poorest among us is richer than the vast majority of individuals who have ever lived. We have chosen to look at this passage in this context (i.e. we are all 'wealthy').*

**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 9:6-15**

*New International Version*

**Generosity Encouraged**

6 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. 9 As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;  
their righteousness endures forever.”

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

**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 down a specific discussion. Caution: Do not let this turn into a debate about personal understandings—keep it more on the “observation” level.*

**Ask the Group:** In chapter 9, Paul talks about how Christians should approach wealth. What are some ways that you see people around you approach material possessions?

*Leaders' Note: This question is designed to encourage discussion. While there is no right or wrong answer to this question, possible answers include people hoarding wealth, squandering wealth, or using it to buy friendship...*

- Why do you think they have this approach?

**Ask the Group:** In verse 7 Paul talks about deciding in your heart what to give. How does this intentional approach to giving compare to other approaches to giving that you may have seen or heard?

*Possible Answers: People giving impulsively (responding to a telethon or a pledge drive), spending all their money so that they don't have anything to give, giving too much so that they don't have anything left to live on.*

**Ask the Group:** In verse 7 Paul talks about giving cheerfully and not reluctantly. What obstacles do we face to being cheerful givers as a society and as individuals?

*Possible Answers: Not believing that we have enough, viewing money as security, the need to keep cushioning ourselves, being afraid of losing control.*

**Ask the Group:** Verse 8 tells us that the reason for God to give 'sufficiency in all things' is so that Christians can abound in good work. How does this compare to the attitudes that you see around you regarding wealth and possessions?

*Possible Answers: People wanting to be secure or fulfilled and using possessions to try and accomplish this, not acknowledging that what we have comes from God and taking pride in possessions, etc.*

- How does this passage show that what we do with our money is a gospel issue and not merely a financial issue?

*Possible Answers: How we handle our money reflects our experience of the gospel- just as we have freely received God's mercy in Christ, so too we are enabled to give freely, the phrase 'we can abound in every good work' implies that we are bringing God's good news to people*

**Ask the Group:** Verse 10 tells us that God 'supplies seed to the sower and bread for food.' This implies that our material goods are for both our needs (bread for food) and for kingdom use (seed). What are some ways that we can incorporate both of these purposes in how we approach our wealth?

*Possible Answers: Setting aside a portion of our income to give to God's work; Using a part of what we make to share with those in need; Setting aside a bonus or a raise to help a ministry.*

**Ask the Group:** Verses 8-10 tell us that by abounding in every good work we depend on God, and He increases our righteousness (being made more like who God wants each of us to be). How do you think your handling of your wealth has made you more or less like how God wants you to be?

*Possible Answers: By trusting God and allowing Him to guide my life, I am more like Him; depending on myself I become more selfish and become less like Him.*

**Ask the Group:** Verses 11-13 tell us that by being generous others will give thanks to God. Can you describe a time when your generosity (or the generosity of someone else) brought God glory?

*Leaders Note: Have an example from your own life in mind to start the conversation, if needed.*

**Ask the Group:** Verse 15 says 'Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!' After our discussion today, what do you think this gift is?

*Possible Answer: The gift is that God allows us to bring Him glory by participating in ministry with what He has given to us.*

## **Gospel Application**

**Ask the Group (small or large):** Contemplate your wealth this week and ask God how He would have you use it for his kingdom.

**Ask the Group (small or large):** How can you worship God more fully with your finances (Note: This does not necessarily mean giving more.)?

- How can you rely on God to help you overcome the obstacles you have to worshiping Him more fully?

*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):** 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?