

## **Paul Visited the Churches**

The Gospel Project: Unit 34 Session 3

Acts 18-21

Midweek Bible Class

Week of March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Christ Connection:** As Paul traveled on his third missionary journey, he used every opportunity to tell people the good news about Jesus and to help the church. Paul was dedicated to Jesus, who called him to do the work of sharing the gospel.

**Big Picture Question:** What should Christians do? We should tell others the good news of Jesus.

**Memory Verse:** PS: Tell people of God's wonderful works. Psalm 96:3. Elem: Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. Psalm 96:3

**Spiritual Discipline:** Generosity

**Leader Bible Study:** In 2 Corinthians 9:7, the apostle Paul lays out a profound principle of biblical generosity. Christ-centered generosity, he argues, is rooted in cheerfulness and joy. Paul reminds us that the spiritual discipline of generosity isn't merely about the act of providing resources; it's about the condition of our hearts when we do so. As leaders, this principle is especially significant because our actions often set the tone for those we lead.

Take a moment to read 2 Corinthians 9:7, making note of anything that stands out.

The first step in growing in our own spiritual practice of generosity is a deep introspection of our own hearts. We must earnestly inquire within and ask the pivotal question, "Am I giving with a joyful heart?" With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this inward

reflection can serve as a profound mirror, enabling us to discern whether our acts of generosity genuinely reflect our relationship with Christ.

As believers, we know that there is only one true source of joy, Jesus. It's imperative that our joy is not merely a fleeting emotion tethered to our circumstantial experiences, but rather, a constant and unshakable wellspring of gladness, flowing solely from our relationship with Jesus. When we, as leaders, radiate this unwavering joy, it can have a contagious effect on those we are privileged to lead, kindling in them a desire to seek and discover their own abiding joy in Christ.

The essence of cheerful giving, as emphasized in Scripture, is a beacon for leaders. We are called not only to provide resources or support but to do so with a heart full of genuine joy, free from reluctance or compulsion. When we give with a joyful heart, we not only bestow material blessings but also uplift spirits and inspire faith. Through our actions we broadcast a resounding message about the joy that accompanies following Christ.

Spend time reflecting on what it means to give with a heart rooted in the joy of Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to let that joy be evident and encouraging to the kids you lead.

## **Welcome**

### **Sing Songs**

### **Best Gift Ever**

Materials: paper, pencil

Give each kid a piece of paper and something to draw with. On one side of the paper, they will draw the best gift they have ever received or would like to receive. On the other side of the paper, they will draw the best gift they have ever given. After a few minutes, give kids the chance to share their drawings with the group.

## **Give More**

Materials: Painter's tape, balloons or foam balls

Use a line of painter's tape to divide the room in half. Create two teams and lead teams to stand on opposite sides of the painter's tape. Give each team an even number of inflated balloons or foam balls. Explain that their goal is to give the other team as many of the balloons as possible, without crossing the tape line. The team that has the fewest balloons on their side when you call time wins.

## **Dance Dance Freeze**

Materials: music

Choose one adult to be the "DJ." The DJ will be responsible for starting and stopping the music. Lead the kids to spread out around the room. Explain that when the DJ starts playing the music, the kids will dance. When the music is turned off, they must freeze. If they are caught moving, they must give an example of a spiritual discipline.

## **Gift Wrap Frenzy**

Materials: gift wrap, scissors, tape, items to wrap

On one side of the room, place two even piles of random objects that can be gift wrapped, two rolls of gift wrap, scissors, and tape. Create two teams and lead them to line up on the opposite side of the room. Explain that the kids will run relay-style to their teams' piles, wrap one of the objects, and then run back to their teams. The first team to finish wrapping each object in their pile wins.

[\*Learn About Generosity\*](#)

**Review Spiritual Disciplines**

Materials: none

Ask, ***“Who would like to share their understanding of what a spiritual discipline is?”***

Say, ***“A spiritual discipline is a regular practice or action that aids us in nurturing and growing our love for God and deepening our godliness. Today, we’ll explore how we can grow deeper in the spiritual discipline of generosity.”***

### **Group Game: Bible Verse Unscramble**

Materials: below WS, scissors

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.	2 Corinthians 9:7		

©2017 The Bible Project. All rights reserved. Verse Unscramble (2017)

Enlarge and print above worksheet and cut the cards apart. Read 2 Corinthians 9:7 aloud. Then lead the kids to find a partner and give each group a set of cards and a Bible. Encourage the kids to look up the verse and put the cards in the correct order. Then challenge them to mix up the cards, close the Bible, and put the cards in the correct order from memory.

Say, ***“Today we are going to learn that generosity is not just an action, it’s about the intentions and attitude behind the action. This Bible verse will be our guide as we learn about the heart attitude we should have when practicing generosity.”***

### **Review the Discipline of Generosity**

Materials: none

Say, ***“So far, we have learned a lot about the spiritual discipline of generosity. We have learned that God has given us the perfect example of generosity through Jesus. Last week, we learned that we can be generous not only by giving gifts or money, but also by spending time with others. Today we are going to learn about what it means to be joyful in our generosity.”***

### **Follow Up on Weekly Challenge**

Materials: none

Say, ***“Last week, your challenge was to be intentional about being generous with your time.”***

Ask, ***“How did it go? Who did you spend time with and what did you do together?”***

### **Read the Bible**

Materials: Bibles

Say, ***“Today, we’re going to explore a special message from the Bible about being generous and joyful. We’ll learn how our hearts play a big role in the way we give and how we can inspire others to follow Jesus through our actions! Let’s start by looking up 2 Corinthians 9:7 in our Bibles and reading it together.”***

Read the verse together.

Ask, ***“Who can tell me what this verse means?”***

Say, ***“The apostle Paul tells us in this verse that when we give, we should do it with a happy and cheerful heart, not because we have to or because someone is making us. Giving should be***

***something we want to do because of our joy in Jesus! So, the first step in becoming a generous person is to look at why we are giving. When we give, we can ask ourselves, ‘Am I giving with a cheerful heart?’ Are you happy and excited when you help others, or do you dread it and only do it because you have to? It’s important to think about this with the help of the Holy Spirit. He can show us if our giving reflects our love for Jesus.***

***If we are followers of Jesus, then we know that He is the real source of our joy. Our happiness shouldn’t depend on the events or circumstances happening around us. It should come from our relationship with Jesus, which is always there, like a never-ending well of joy. When we have this kind of joy, it can shine out from us and make others want to experience it, too! When you give with a cheerful heart, whether it’s helping a friend, sharing your toys, or just being kind to someone, you’re setting an example for others. Your joy can be contagious and make people curious about why you’re so joyful. Generosity isn’t just about what we have to offer others; it’s about sharing joy. When you give with a joyful heart, you’re showing everyone how wonderful it is to follow Jesus. We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us cheerfully give and inspire others to discover the amazing joy that comes from knowing Jesus.”***

### **Group Activity: The Silliest Gift I Ever Received!**

Materials: none

Lead the group to stand in a large circle. Explain that you’re going to play a game of improv, which means everyone will be using their creativity and imagination to think of what will come next. Turn to the kid on your right and say, “I have a gift that I’m so excited to give you! It’s a \_\_\_\_\_, and it’s great because \_\_\_\_\_!” Fill in the blanks with a silly item and a silly explanation, such as a rooster that would make a great alarm clock, or a salad bowl that would make a great

hat. Pretend to give the kid the gift, and coach her to pretend to receive it and act surprised. Then she will repeat the phrase with a different gift to the kid on her right. Continue until everyone has “received” a silly gift.

Say, ***“Great job! You all gave some incredibly silly gifts. I loved seeing you use the creativity and imagination that God has given you to think of ideas.”***

Ask, ***“What was your favorite silly gift that someone received during our game?”***

Say, ***“Those were some great ones! Just like you guys used your creativity and imagination to play the game, you can use those same skills to be generous toward others. When we are creative in our generosity and really take time to notice what others might need, it can add to the joy of giving.”***

### **Christ Connection**

Materials: none

Say, ***“We’ve been talking a lot about gifts today. Did you know that Jesus has given us a gift that is better than any other gift we could ever receive? He gives us the gift of eternal life when we believe in Him!”***

Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

Say, ***“The reason that we can be joyful givers is because of the joy that we have in Jesus when we trust in Him as our Savior and Lord. He’s source of our joy and because of Him, we can share that joy with others.”***

## **Love God be Practicing Generosity**

### **Joyful Hearts**

Materials: construction paper hearts- 1 per kid, markers or crayons

Give a heart to each kid and provide markers or crayons. Remind kids that we have been learning about practicing generosity with a cheerful heart. Encourage them to write or draw something on the heart that reminds them to give with a cheerful heart. Some ideas include writing this week's Bible verse, painting a picture, or drawing items that make them happy. Encourage the kids to place their hearts somewhere in their room where they can be reminded of today's session.

### **Close in Prayer**

Materials: none

Use the scripted prayer, pray in your own words, or ask a student to pray.

Say, ***“Jesus, thank You for giving us joy! Fill our hearts with Your joy as we give generously to others around us. Amen.”***

### **Weekly Challenge**

Materials: none

End the session by challenging kids to notice someone who cheerfully gives to them this week.