

Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Show Generosity and Kindness to Impoverished Believers

¹ And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian [Mäss-ĕ-dōugh-knēē-ăn] churches.

Q1. To whom is Paul addressing? (Believers? Nonbelievers? Others?)

Believers? Nonbelievers? Combination? Others? Why did you circle that answer?

Q2. ***The grace that God has given the Macedonian churches:*** To what does the “grace of God” refer?

 “The topic on which the Epistle now touches, and which is carried on through this and the following chapter, was one very dear to the Apostle’s heart. (See . . . 1 Corinthians 16:1 ↓.) When he wrote before, he had simply given directions as to what the Corinthians were to do. Now he has something to tell them.

“The churches of Macedonia — Philippi, we must believe, prominent among them — had been true to their old generosity (2 Corinthians 11:8-9 ↓; Philippians 4:15 ↓), and were now showing it, not, as before, in personal kindness to their teacher, but in the truer way of acting as he wished them to act; and he sees in this a means of stirring up his friends at Corinth to an honourable emulation. There is something intensely characteristic in the way in which he opens his statement. He traces the generosity of the Macedonians to its true source. He is going to tell the Corinthians of the “grace of God” that has enabled them to do so much.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-1.htm]

1 Corinthians 16:1-3 [NIV-1984]

¹ Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. ³ Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 11:7-10 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

⁷⁻¹⁰ Perhaps I made a mistake in cheapening myself (though I did it to help you) by preaching the Gospel without a fee? As a matter of fact, I was only able to do this by “robbing” other churches, for it was what they paid me that made it possible to minister to you free of charge. Even when I was with you and very hard up, I did not bother any of you. It was the brothers who came from Macedonia who brought me all that I needed. Yes, I kept myself from being a burden to you then, and so I intend to do in the future. By the truth of Christ within me, no one shall stop my being proud of this independence through all Achaia!

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Philippians 4:15-16 [NIV-1984]

¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.



Macedonia is located at the top of the map.

Paul visited the Macedonian cities on his Second and Third Missionary Journeys.

Map is in the 'Public Domain'

Q3. *The grace that God has given the Macedonian churches:* What are names of three Macedonian cities?

Acts 17:11 [NIV-1984]

Now the Bereans [Berea was also spelled Beroea] were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Q4. Is Paul entering the Corinthians into a 'giving' competition, so that the Corinthians are competing against the Macedonian churches? Thoughts?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }



"[This] part of [the] epistle [contains] different exhortations to stir up the Corinthians to liberality [generosity], with which the poverty of the church of Jerusalem might be helped at an appropriate time. And first of all, he sets before them the example of the churches of Macedonia, which otherwise were brought by great misery to extreme poverty,

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so that the Corinthians should follow them." [©2012, *The Geneva Bible Translation Notes of 1599* by Tolle Lege Press; https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-1.htm]

Leviticus 27:30 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

"Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord.

Numbers 18:25-29 [The Message (MSG)]

God spoke to Moses: "Speak to the Levites. Tell them, When you get the tithe from the People of Israel, the inheritance that I have assigned to you, you must tithe that tithe and present it as an offering to God. Your offerings will be treated the same as other people's gifts of grain from the threshing floor or wine from the wine vat. This is your procedure for making offerings to God from all the tithes you get from the People of Israel: give God's portion from these tithes to Aaron the priest. Make sure that God's portion is the best and holiest of everything you get.

Matthew 23:23 [The Message (MSG)]

"You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You keep meticulous account books, tithing on every nickel and dime you get, but on the meat of God's Law, things like fairness and compassion and commitment — the absolute basics! — you carelessly take it or leave it. Careful bookkeeping is commendable, but the basics are required. Do you have any idea how silly you look, writing a life story that's wrong from start to finish, nitpicking over commas and semicolons?"

Q5. Should churches pay their preachers?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

1 Corinthians 9:7-10, 14 [NIV-1984]

⁷ Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? ⁸ Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? ⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰ Surely, he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. . . .

¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 [NIV-1984]

¹⁷ The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

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² Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

Q6. Generally speaking, what class of people are more likely to embrace Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior: the poor or the wealthy?

Poor? Wealthy? Why did you circle that answer?

 **the most severe trial:** Commentator Charles Ellicott wrote: “We do not know what is specially referred to, but a community of Christians in a heathen city was always exposed to trials of this kind, and the temper shown before by the rulers at Philippi and the Jews of Thessalonica (Acts 16:19-22 [↓]; Acts 17:5-6 [↓]; 1 Thessalonians 2:14 [↓]) makes it almost certain that they would carry on at least a petty persecution with more or less persistency. The “poverty” at Philippi may possibly be connected with the preponderance of women in the Church there, as indicated in Acts 16:13 (↓). In the absence of the bread-winners of a household, Christian women in a Graeco-Roman city would find but scanty means of subsistence. In part, however, the churches were but sharers in a widely-spread distress. Macedonia and Achaia never recovered from the three wars between Cæsar and Pompeius, between the Triumvirs and Brutus and Cassius, and between Augustus and Antonius. Under Tiberius, they petitioned for a [reduction] of their burdens, and were accordingly transferred for a time from the jurisdiction of the senate to that of the emperor, as involving a less heavy taxation.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-2.htm]

Acts 16:19-22 [The Message (MSG)]

When her owners saw that their lucrative little business was suddenly bankrupt, they went after Paul and Silas, roughed them up and dragged them into the market square. Then the police arrested them and pulled them into a court with the accusation, “These men are disturbing the peace — dangerous Jewish agitators subverting our Roman law and order.” By this time the crowd had turned into a restless mob out for blood.

Acts 17:4-7 [The Message (MSG)]

⁴⁻⁵ Some of them were won over and joined ranks with Paul and Silas, among them a great many God-fearing Greeks and a considerable number of women from the aristocracy. But the hard-line Jews became furious over the conversions. Mad with jealousy, they rounded up a bunch of brawlers off the streets and soon had an ugly mob terrorizing the city as they hunted down Paul and Silas.

⁵⁻⁷ They broke into Jason’s house, thinking that Paul and Silas were there. When they couldn’t find them, they collared Jason and his friends instead and dragged them before the city fathers, yelling hysterically, “These people are out to destroy the world, and now they’ve shown up on our doorstep, attacking everything we hold dear! And Jason is hiding them, these traitors and turncoats who say Jesus is king and Caesar is nothing!”

1 Thessalonians 2:14 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,

Acts 16:13 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

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Q7. (Luke 21:1-4 ↓) Who has greater trust in God and in His provision: the rich/wealthy or the poor widow?

Rich? Poor? Why did you circle that answer?

Luke 21:1-4 [NIV-1984]

¹ As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.

³ "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

^{3a} For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. ^{3b} Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

Q8. (Verse 3^a) What words tells us that the Macedonian churches were generous? And why?

Q9. (Verse 3^b) ***Entirely on their own:*** Does this indicate that the Apostle Paul had to prod (or encourage) the Macedonian churches to provide charity to their destitute brothers and sisters?

Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Q10. (Verses 3 & 4) What motivation drove the Macedonian churches to collect an offering for their destitute brothers and sisters? Did they consider it a burden? A duty? An honor? Why?

Burden? Duty? Honor? Other? Why did you circle that answer?

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Q11. (Personal reflection – not to be shared) How do you feel when you contribute money to your church's offering — what is your motivation? Do you consider it a burden? A duty? An honor? Why?

Burden? Duty? Honor? Other? Why did you circle that answer?

If you do not like your answer, would prayer help to change your attitude?

⁵ And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

Q12. ***they did not do as we expected:*** Does this phrase indicate that the Apostle Paul was disappointed in the response of the Macedonian churches?

2 Corinthians 8:5 [The Message (MSG)]

[Sometimes a different Biblical version will provide additional understanding to a specific passage or verse.]

This was totally spontaneous, entirely their own idea, and caught us completely off guard. What explains it was that they had first given themselves unreservedly to God and to us. The other giving simply flowed out of the purposes of God working in their lives.

Q13. ① Has your answer to Question 4 (on page 2) changed? ② Is the Apostle Paul emphasizing the generosity of the Macedonian churches as an outstanding example? (Is Paul asking questions: "Why are you so stingy? What is your motivation to give?")

① Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

② Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

⁶ So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.

Q14. ***this act of grace:*** To what does this phrase refer?



The commentator Charles Ellicott observed: "The sequence of events seems to have been this: When Titus came to Corinth, he, among other things, after seeing the satisfactory results of the First Epistle [letter] in other respects, had begun to take measures for this collection for the poor of Jerusalem. He had been, to a certain extent, successful. Encouraged by the report of that success, St. Paul had now entreated Titus to return to Corinth, and to bring the good work to its completion. 'This [act of] grace . . .' practically means — this work of liberality [generosity], as well as

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that of repentance and loyal obedience already spoken of in 2 Corinthians 7.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-6.htm]

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

7 But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Q15. In this world has anyone ever reached a level of wisdom, purity, and perfection — aside from Christ Jesus — that indicates the person is complete, and the person no longer needs to mature in their faith, no longer needs to study God's Word, no longer needs to pray, and no longer needs to serve others?

Yes? } Why?
No?

1 Corinthians 1:5 [NIV-1984]

[From the beginning of his First Letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul acknowledged the Corinthians' speech and knowledge.]

For in him you have been enriched in every way — in all your speaking and in all your knowledge

 Paul is a minister. He loves his congregations. He wants the absolute best for each member. He wants each member to grow in their faith and to demonstrate the love, mercy, compassion, and service of Christ Jesus. We, who believe, are God's obedient feet (to transport us), hands (to serve others), ears (to listen), and voice (to speak God's loving Truth) to the people God brings to us, who receive our ministrations and observe us as we demonstrate Jesus' love to others.

In verse 7 (↑), Paul acknowledges that the Corinthians are pretty good in their faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness, and love. However, they can still grow, improve. They can demonstrate greater compassion and generosity.

Q16. Does your preacher generally try to persuade, prod, and inspire you and other members of your congregation to continue to grow in your faith?

Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

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Q17. Is your preacher similar to the Apostle Paul in that he tries to squash complacency and encourage church members to obedience and action?

Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

 A fervent sister-in-Christ made this keen observation about her own faith journey as she studies God's Holy Word: "The more I learn, the more questions I have. I think one reason we do not have clarity on our questions is we might settle down and stop growing. It is a challenge and a blessing to pursue the answers." [©2025, Barbara Shaw, Lonsdale, MN]

Our God-given job in this world is to never give-up. We must always push ahead in faith, in trust, in love, in prayer, in obedience. At times it may be difficult; at times we may need to rest and regroup; but we need to be persistent, to push-on and rely upon the strength of our Lord. Always be willing to listen for the gentle whisperings of the Holy Spirit or the nudge of God as He provides us with 'course corrections' but progress is always forward. Our faith journey in this world is by no means an easy one, but the blessings will be unimaginably Heavenly!

That said, in this world I am a continuous work-in-progress. Praise the Lord! He seems to have endless patience for my fits-n-starts, my selfishness, what I see in the mirror as 'walking hypocrisy'. Thank You, Lord! Please forgive me. I repent. I will try to do better. Grant me wisdom and insight. Grant me persistence to never give-up!

⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness [sincerity, solemnity, intensity] of others.

Q18. When you love someone, in what ways (examples) do you typically show it?

Q19. If I say "I love you as a sister-in-Christ or a brother-in-Christ" are my words enough? Or do you expect to see proof? (Hints: Compassion? Curtness? Kindness? Selfishness? Listener? Gossiper? Others?) Are words enough Y / N? Is proof expected Y / N? Why did you circle that answer?

If you circled 'proof,' what kinds of proof?

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Q20. ***I am not commanding you:*** Is there a difference between a command versus persuasion?

Define “command”

Define “persuade”

Do you respond better to a command or to a well-reasoned request? Why?

 ***I want to test the sincerity of your love:*** In this verse 8 the word ‘test’ as translated in our standard 1984 New International Version is for me difficult to understand. My understanding of “test” is tainted by my school experiences: exams, finals, mid-terms, popup quizzes, essay tests, multiple-choice, true/false, etc. So, why does Paul want to “test” the Corinthians? What is the “test”?

Sometimes a different Biblical version will provide additional understanding to a specific passage or verse. The International Children’s Bible (ICB) translation (↓), as well as the J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS) paraphrase (↓), provides different ways to look at Paul’s words.

2 Corinthians 8:8 [International Children’s Bible (ICB)]

I am not commanding you to give. But I want to see if your love is true love. I do this by showing you that others really want to help.

2 Corinthians 8:6-9 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

6-9 Now this had made us ask Titus, who has already done so much among you, to complete his task by arranging for you, too, to share in this work of generosity. Already you are well to the fore in every good quality — you have faith, you can express that faith in words; you have knowledge, enthusiasm, and your love for us. Could you not add generosity to your virtues?

I don’t want you to read this as an order. It is only my suggestion, prompted by what I have seen in others of eagerness to help, and here is a way to prove the reality of your love. Do you remember the generosity of Jesus Christ, the Lord of us all? He was rich beyond our telling, yet he became poor for your sakes so that his poverty might make you rich.

Q21. ***Test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others:*** If poorer churches willingly contribute to the destitute brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, the wealthier Corinthians should be willing to do likewise out of agapé love, i.e., “Love your neighbor as yourself [Mark 12:31 (NIV)]”. Why does Paul compare the Corinthian Church’s “sincerity of your love” to that of other churches?

Why does Paul compare?

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Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Q22. When Jesus was born, was His earthly family (Mary and Joseph) one of wealth or poverty?

Wealth? Poverty? Why did you circle that answer?

Philippians 2:5-7 [NIV-1984]

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.



Baby Jesus and his mother Mary

Luke 2:7 "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

Free image from <https://www.clker.com/clipart-719324.html>

Q23. By this world's standards would Jesus be considered ① wealthy and powerful? Or ② poor and impoverished?

① Wealthy? ② Poor? Why did you circle that answer?

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Revelation 21:21 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[Note: Immense pearls and streets paved with gold!]

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city [of the New Jerusalem] was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Q24. Thinking about today's world, generally speaking, are there more people of wealth compared to the number of those impoverished?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

Q25. Thinking about the world in Jesus' time, generally speaking, are there more people of wealth compared to the number of those impoverished?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

Q26. **IF** Jesus had been born into a family of wealth, a family of privilege, how would the wealthy see Him? How would the impoverished see Him? How might His ministry have changed?

How would the wealthy see Him?

How would the impoverished see Him?

How might His ministry have changed?

Q27. ***So that you through his poverty might become rich:*** I see many penniless Believers in our world; how do Believers in Jesus become rich?

James 2:6^b [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[Jesus' half-brother wrote this truth two millennia ago, and it remains true today.]

Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?

Matthew 6:19-21 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Revelation 20:12 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

[Great White Throne Judgment]

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And the book of life was opened. There were also other books opened. The dead were judged by what they had done, which was written in the books.

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Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

¹⁰ And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. ¹¹ Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.

Q28. In verse 10, Paul provides advice and also observes that they were first. In verse 11, Paul asks them to "**finish the work**". What did the Corinthians start? What was incomplete? (Speculation) why was it incomplete?

What had the Corinthians started?

What was incomplete?

Why was it incomplete?

 The commentator Charles Ellicott shared these insights:

Last year you were the first not only to give: "At first, the words seem like an anti-climax, but what is meant is that the Corinthians had been before the Macedonian churches in both those stages. They had formed the purpose of giving, they had begun to lay by and to collect, before their rivals had started. They had, as it were, scored those two points in that game of honourable competition. It was "profitable for them" that he, as a by-stander watching the game, should give them a hint, so that they might not at last be ignominiously [or dishonorably] defeated.

It is not easy to fix the exact limits of time indicated in the "year ago." The First Epistle was written about Easter. Then, after remaining at Ephesus for a while, there came the journey to Troas; then that to Macedonia; then the coming of Titus, bringing word that the Corinthians had acted on the command of 1 Corinthians 16:1 [↓]. This would bring us to the autumn months; and St. Paul, reckoning, as a Jew would, the year as beginning with Tisri (September or October), might speak of what had taken place in April or May as done "last year," though there had not been an interval of twelve months." [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-10.htm]

1 Corinthians 16:1 [NIV-1984]

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.

 And what did the Apostle Paul write in his Letter to the Galatians? (↓)

Galatians 2:9-10 [NIV-1984]

⁹ James, Peter, and John, those reputed to be pillars [of the fledgling Christian Church in Jerusalem], gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. ¹⁰ All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Galatians 6:10 [NIV-1984]

[In the last chapter of Paul's Letter to the Galatians, he wrote this appeal:]

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

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12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

Q29. Do you think God wanted the Corinthians to become indebted (owe money) so that they could give more money?

Yes? }
No? } Why did you circle that answer?

Mark 12:41-44 [NIV-1984]

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts.

42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. **44** They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on."

Q30. When "God looks into the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7 ↓) of a giver, does God examine the giver's motives for giving? Or something different? (Hint: Does the giver want to help out of his/her love and mercy? Is the giver giving out of obligation?)

Yes? }
No? } Why did you circle that answer?

1 Samuel 16:7 [The Message (MSG)]

But God told Samuel, "Looks aren't everything. Don't be impressed with his looks and stature. I've already eliminated him. God judges persons differently than humans do. Men and women look at the face; God looks into the heart."

Luke 16:15 [NIV-1984]

He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

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Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

^{13a} Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed,
^{13b} but that there might be equality.

Q31. (Verse 13^a) ***Not that others might be relieved:*** How might you explain "be relieved"?

Q32. (Verse 13^a) ***While you are hard pressed:*** How might you explain "hard pressed"?

Q33. (Verse 13^b) ***That there might be equality:*** To Paul, why might "equality" be an objective?

Acts 4:32-37 [NIV-1984]

[We are reminded of the early church in Jerusalem, after Jesus' ascension:]

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. ³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

James 2:1-9 [NIV-1984]

[How often do we revere celebrity, or the wealthy and powerful? Do we tend to place those of greater wealth upon a pedestal — even in church? Jesus' half-brother James provides this reminder:]

¹ My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

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Q34. (Verse 13^b) ***That there might be equality***: Do you think that “equality” in Verse 13^b applies exclusively to the members of your church who believe in the saving grace of Christ Jesus?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? } What is your proof?

 If you answered the preceding question with “yes”, I challenge you to prayerfully reread James 2:8-9 (↑). And read the following excerpt from the “Beatitudes” (Matthew 5:39-48 ↓). Additional quotes of “Love your neighbor” from the New Testament are found in Matthew 19:19; Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31 & 33; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; and Galatians 5:14 (these additional citations are not included in this StudySheet).

God’s original command to the Jews of “Love your neighbor” is recorded in Leviticus 19:18. However, “Love your neighbor” is no longer limited to Jews interacting with Jews; Jesus expanded its meaning to include everyone Jews and Gentiles; men and women; elderly and babies; black, brown, yellow, and white; wealthy and poor! The Apostle Paul emphasized this principle in his Letter to the Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Matthew 5:39-48 [NIV-1984]

³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Q35. (Verse 13^b) ***That there might be equality***: Does your country truly support “equality”?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? } What is your proof?

Q36. (Personal) ***That there might be equality***: Does your church truly support “equality”?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? } What is your proof?

Q37. (Personal) ***That there might be equality***: Do you truly support “equality”?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? } What is your proof?

Lesson 9: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, ¹⁵ as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."

Q38. **Plenty:** What does the word “plenty” mean in these two verses?

Q39. In our society, today, there seems to be a stigma associated with someone who asks for help. If you needed help, to whom would you ask? (Or would you tough it out without asking?)

Q40. Is the Apostle Paul suggesting a kind of communal living arrangement, perhaps similar to today’s Amish and Mennonite communities? Or some strict, devout Roman Catholic orders?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer? Thoughts?
No?

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