

## Spiritual Foundations Bible study

### Participant's version: The Giving Heart study 5

#### Introduction

Jesus used the illustration of building important spiritual foundations in our lives such as Matthew 7:24-27 records.<sup>24</sup> 'Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.'<sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.<sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.<sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.'

#### The Giving Heart

We are journeying through this series because we want to encourage Christians to have robust spiritual foundations in their life. As Jesus stated in his analogy, healthy foundations are built when we put into practice the teachings of Scripture. So far, we have examined the topics God's Word, prayer, worship and Christian love. This study explores the giving heart. Chapter 9 of 2 Corinthians gives us many insights into principles of Christian generosity.

#### Openers

**How often do you feel like Pelican? Everywhere you turn there is an enormous bill in front of you! Recall a time when you felt most financially in need?**

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**Can you remember an occasion where you believed the Lord blessed you financially? How did it make you feel?**

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**As a group read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.**

**1: Examine 1 Corinthians 9:1-5. How would you summarise the introduction or context of 1 Corinthians chapter 9 in a sentence?**

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**2: Read 2 Corinthians 9:6. Paul here uses a farming analogy. Explain what he is teaching and how it relates to Christians today?**

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When the Apostle Paul sent his first epistle to the Corinthian Church, they had all sorts of sinful behaviour and issues that had to be addressed. However, they seemed to have responded to the Apostle's document and are in a much healthy place by the time of the second letter.

**3: Read 2 Corinthians 8:7. List the areas that the church excels in?**

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**3b: What do you think it means to excel at something?**

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**3c: What is the area Paul highlights that he considers should also become something the church excels in?**

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The words of Jesus in the introduction of this study were about robust spiritual foundations. Jesus stated that the one who puts into practice His words is the one who is building their house on good foundations. Jesus' teaching included living life with a giving heart.

**4: Explain Jesus' teaching about generosity in Luke 6:38?**

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**4b: How does the Lord determine and measure the giving of His provision to you?**

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**5: Examine 2 Corinthians 9:7a. What does this teach us about financial giving to God's work?**

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**6: Consider 1 Corinthians 16:2. When did Paul teach the Corinthian church to put aside a portion of their income for the Lord's work?**

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**7: Study Leviticus 27:30-33. Before a monetary system was the primary form of trade what percentage of their assets where God's people encouraged to give? Why was it considered holy?**

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**8: The Holy Spirit guided Paul in anticipation that some would feel that they simply cannot afford to give. How is this addressed in 2 Corinthians 9:8?**

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**9: Read 2 Corinthians 9:7. As we give financially into God's work, what attitude does the Lord want us to have?**

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**10: Examine 2 Corinthians 9:10-11. List at least three reasons as to why we can be positive or cheerful about financially giving into the Kingdom of God.**

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**Conclusion**

**This study has considered three primary dimensions of the giving heart. Those with a giving heart are...**

**1: Generous in their giving**

**2: Decisive in their giving**

**3: Cheerful in their giving**

**Most churches are made of people who have four responses to financial giving into the ministries of God.**

**-Give nothing at all**

**-Give very little**

**-Give a reasonable amount**

**-Give a tithe of their income.**

**The tithers, although they usually make no more than about 20% of the attenders, carry the finances of the church.**

## Close in Prayer

**Would you consider praying that the Holy Spirit would help you to develop faith to rise from one category of giving to another? For instance, if you only give a little would you ask for faith that you might step up to give a reasonable amount?**

**Pray for the finances of your church that ministry needs might be met.**

**Pray for the tithers of the church that they might be blessed for their generosity.**

**Do we hold onto money so tightly because we over value it? The reality is that money can't buy the most important things in life! Read the following poem and reflect upon its sentiments over the next week.**

*Money can buy you popularity, shout people drinks, pay for big parties,  
impress people, but it can't buy you one true friend*

*Money can pay for all manner of "toys": the sports car, the boat, holiday  
home, but it won't buy you happiness*

*Money can pay for the most respectable of private schools and universities  
but it will not give you the brains to pass.*

*Money can pay for an expensive diamond ring, an elaborate wedding but it  
can't buy you a lasting marriage.*

*Money can pay for the best doctors, surgeons, and medicines but it can't  
buy you health.*

*Money can buy you a king-sized comfortable bed with all the ornate  
trimmings but it can't buy you sleep.*

*Money can buy you an expensive gold crucifix, diamond studded but it  
can't buy you a saviour!*

Poem adapted from a Charles Swindoll sermon.

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