

# FIRST

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 2 October 31, 2021  
“The Challenge”



### OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, so often we have a very narrow focus and cannot see how so many needs that weigh on us can be met. Teach our hearts to trust you. Through this study, may we grow in our awareness of all that you have given us, as well as grow in our sensitivity of the needs of others. Help us to learn to give you our “first fruits” and not our leftovers, and may our hearts be moved to wonder and gratitude in the process, as we see your grace unfold. We pray, in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

#### 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 (NIV)

*<sup>6</sup>Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>As it is written:*

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

*<sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>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.*

*<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. <sup>15</sup>Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

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## INTRODUCTION

Earn money. *Check.* Save money. *Check.* Give money. *Wait, what?* Founder of Methodism, John Wesley, outlined three principles for how to prioritize our money—we are to earn all we can, save all we can, so we can give all we can. Wesley says that focusing on generosity can re-orient your relationship to your money. This call of God on our lives urges us toward healthy practices that extend our life-influence beyond what we ever thought possible.

## QUESTIONS

1. Consider Psalm 139:14, that you are all “fearfully and wonderfully made.” What gifts has God given you, (health, talents, nurturing) that has given you the resources and ability to earn money?
2. Read again 2 Corinthians 9:10, why would it have been especially important to save some of the harvest in an agricultural society? In your experience, why is it important to save?
3. Name one way the Pandemic has shifted the economy in a way you could not have imagined?
4. Read Proverbs 27:25-27. What do you think this passage is saying about how to be prepared for an economic downturn?
5. Read again 2 Corinthians 9:11. Has this been your experience? When do you think your generosity has resulted in the thanksgiving of others? When has someone else’s generosity, resulted in your own gratitude?

## FINAL APPLICATION

As you finish this study, take a moment to write down five things that you are grateful for. Then write down five struggles you have gone through (or are going through). If you can, share one or two with your group. Now, thank God for the struggles as well! Consider how you have needed to draw close to God through the storms and struggles of life, and how they have made you more sensitive to the needs of others. Pray that you, and all members of your group, would be on a path free from financial worry, and ready to give generously as God calls on your heart.