

# Family

## Week 3 Group Guide | Message by Chad Bruegman

### Start

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

**In order, what are the three best movies ever made?**

### Share

Welcome to our series "Family."

Driving by almost any neighborhood, we see rows and rows of houses. A house is what we see from the outside, but it's what happens on the inside that makes it a home. Not every house is a home. The people who inhabit it define a home. It is about the family life inside that makes it feel like home.

God's church is not a building; it is the people of God that make up the church. A membership class will not make someone a member. A member is someone who has a relationship with Jesus Christ and is fully engaged in the life God has called them to alongside other believers. It is a family to be a part of, not something we sign up for. Just like any family, we enjoy each other's friendship, encourage one another, argue at times, sit at the table, and apologize and find ways to help serve our brothers and sisters in Christ.

At Red Rocks Church we believe in the family of God. All of us have a place at the table thanks to what Jesus Christ has done for us. We don't build the church; God builds the church and calls us to play a part using our God-given abilities, resources and time to run the one and only race that matters. We get to do Kingdom work and invite others to join the family that they have always been longing for.

This week, we are talking about the topic of giving and how when we truly act like a family, we are a generous people who look to give back to God what he has freely given us.

As Christ followers, we are to be a generous people, looking out for the needs of others and sharing what we have been given. The problem is that many of us don't truly believe that God has given us everything we have. The human heart is notoriously selfish and it is easy to convince ourselves that we have earned everything we have. We falsely assume we made it happen and don't see the truth. It is God, in his infinite wisdom who gave us our talents, capacity to learn, health and energy to work and make a living. So instead of praising our-

selves for that scholarship, the promotion, or those athletic talents, we give thanks to God who gave us the raw abilities to achieve what we have. Our talents, resources and time have all been given to us. We have one life to live. Are we using our gifts to build our own little kingdoms or to give back and build God's Kingdom?

There is nothing we can give that we haven't first received from a good and loving God.

### **Let's read 2 Corinthians 8:7 and 9:6-15**

Most of us desire to improve in growing in our faith, excelling in communicating our faith, in knowledge of the scriptures and in love. **Would you say you also naturally want to excel in the grace of giving?**

**What makes giving such a difficult thing to excel in?**

### **Grow**

As Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthian church, he wanted each person to remember: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." This would have made a lot of sense to a farming culture. Everyone could understand the principle of planting and harvesting. God wanted them to understand that in the same way, we are to be a generous people who invest in what's most important.

Paul later reaffirms this kingdom principle of sowing and reaping when writing to the Galatians.

### **Let's read Galatians 6:7-10**

In *The New American Commentary*, we gain some insight into what would make someone feel weary in doing good:

Paul's message to the Galatians is quite simply, "Don't quit!" Faced with the temptation of legalism on the one hand and libertinism on the other, many of Paul's converts in Galatia were beginning to lose heart. Having begun well in the life of the Spirit, they were in danger of losing their first love, being diverted from witness and service into petty bickering and greedy self-concern. To these fatigued and spiritually exhausted Christians, Paul made his appeal: "Let us not become weary in doing good."

In the last part of v. 9 Paul added a word of motivation to this urgent reminder: "For at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." The word for "the proper time" is *kairos*, the same word Paul used in 4:4 to describe the opportune moment, the fullness of time, in which God sent his Son into the world. The same expression is used in 1 Tim 6:15 to describe the *parousia* or second advent of Christ—"which God will bring about in his own time." At this point Paul's metaphor of the spiritual life as a process of sowing and reaping breaks down. When a farmer plants a crop in the springtime, he can calculate with reasonable accuracy the time of the harvest. Of course, there are always variables to be taken into consideration, matters such as changing weather patterns, a swarm of destructive insects, and the like. Still, with the aid of the *Farmer's Almanac* or more scientific agricultural techniques, the wise farmer can usually depend on the expected timetables of seedtime and harvest. Not so in the spiritual life. One of the greatest frustrations in the Christian ministry, and a principal cause for "weariness in well doing," is the inability to calculate the spiritual outcome of faithful labors in the work of the Lord. For this reason we must be cautious in putting too much stock in what we often call "visible results."

We serve a sovereign God who has promised that his Word will not return void. The ultimate harvest is assured, but it will only come “at the proper time,” that is, in God’s own good time.

**Most of us want to see visible results of our giving and doing good, but many times we don’t get to see that. What personally helps you stay in the game and not give up on doing good?**

**How can we encourage one another to not give up in our walk with Christ?**

## **Move**

As Chad mentioned in the message, there is an obvious gap between the time of “doing good” and “reaping a harvest.” It can feel discouraging to give of our time, talents and resources to what we know to be good, yet to not see an immediate impact. We are encouraged to hang in there because God promises a “harvest” if we do not give up.

As we try to excel in the grace of giving, let us remember that we can’t do that without God changing our hearts, so that we do this cheerfully in full faith that God will provide everything we need. Giving is not a pocketbook or scheduling issue, but a heart issue that only God can fix.

**Let’s end by reading 2 Corinthians 9:7-11**

**Which form of giving is most difficult for you?**

- Giving of your time
- Using your God-given abilities and talents to help build the Kingdom
- Giving a percentage of your income back to God and his purposes

**God promises to enrich us in every way so that we can be generous on every occasion. How do you think this applies to your life?**

**This week, where can you begin to start giving back to God?**

## **Pray**

As a group, spend some time praying for each other, especially for the struggles that people might be facing today. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women’s groups to talk more freely.

## **To Go**

**2 Corinthians 9:7**

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your hearts to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*