"In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity." (2 Corinthians 8:1-7)

All We Have Has First Been Given (2 Corinthians 8:1)
- God's grace is preeminent in our lives
- All we have is a gift from God

We Give All in Response to the Lord of All (2 Corinthians 8:5)
- If all we have is given by God
- In response we give ourselves back to the Lord of all
- In response we give all we have back to the Lord of all

An Example of Voluntarily Giving Above and Beyond (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)
- The Macedonians' example of giving
- The Macedonians' challenging circumstances
- The Macedonians' deep desire to give
- The Macedonians gave freely and voluntarily
- The Macedonians gave above and beyond

Excelling in Gracious Giving (2 Corinthians 8:6-7)
- The invitation to the Corinthians through Titus
- The invitation to match their excellence in faith, speech, and knowledge with excelling in the grace of giving

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Open Up (answer 1 of these 2 questions):
- Share a time someone showed you "undeserved" kindness. How did it change your mood or day?
- What is a project you have started but stalled on finishing? What has kept you from completing it?

Dig In:
1. Paul highlights the Macedonian churches who gave out of "extreme poverty." What are the various ways Paul describes the Macedonians in this section?
2. How does the attitudes he ascribes to them correlate to some of the situations he says they were facing? What would you say is unusual about that? How would we normally expect people to react to those situations?
3. What do you think Paul means when he says they "gave themselves first to the Lord"? What difference would you think that makes in how they responded to both their circumstances and their response to the need they see in the Jerusalem church?
4. Considering some of the situations happening in the Corinthian church Paul has been addressing, why do you think he would point them to the Macedonians example? Ie…what might this "test" of generosity reveal about the Corinthians to themselves?
5. How would you say grace changes our perspective on what we "have" versus what we can "give"?

Look Up:
- Grace is sometimes receiving what you don't deserve (a gift) and sometimes not receiving what you do deserve (punishment). Spend time in prayer thanking God for the specific ways His grace has "overflowed" into your life this year.

Live It Out:
- This week, look for one "Macedonian" opportunity—a chance to be generous even if you feel you have little to offer. It could be with your time, your energy or your resources (providing a meal for someone, food for the food pantry, a gift card, etc.).

DIG DEEPER:
- **Exploring Faith:** The Macedonians were generous in spite of their circumstances because they recognized the gift of grace God had showed them. Does the idea of "grace" (getting what we don't deserve) change your view of God?
- **New Disciple:** Grace isn't just for salvation; it's for daily living. How does knowing you are already fully loved by God change why you give or serve? Memorize verse 5 as an example of us to follow.
- **Christ-Centered Disciple:** Paul notes the Macedonians gave out of "extreme poverty." Identify a "poverty" in your life (time, energy, or finances) where you are currently making excuses instead of trusting God's grace to overflow. What specific steps will you take this week to be generous towards another in response to God's grace towards you? How will you make it clear to them that your generosity is because of God?