

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*Be Wise, Be Generous*  
2 John 1-11; 3 John 1-12

**Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.**

## **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

**Gathering Time Leader:**

**Bible Study Leader:**

**Worship Time Leader:**

## **Music Sources:**

**Find Us Faithful**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 598; CCLI # 18259

**Be Strong in the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 504; CCLI # 52105

**Let It Be Said of Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI # 1855882

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***Be Wise, Be Generous***

### **Focal Text**

2 John 1-11; 3 John 1-12

### **Background**

2 John; 3 John

### **Main Idea**

Christians are to provide generous support and hospitality to those who are sharing the gospel and to refuse to support those who do not abide in Christ's teachings.

### **Question to Explore**

How wise and generous are you in supporting Christ's work?

### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to decide how they will increase both their wisdom and their generosity in supporting Christ's work.

### **Gathering together:**

Sing:

**Find Us Faithful**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 598; CCLI # 18259

### **First thoughts:**

Wisdom and generosity are the two character traits which will be studied today. Generosity without wisdom can lead to the investment of our financial means, our time and emotional energy into causes which may not serve Kingdom goals. Today's social media outlets bring many needs to the public attention. Often, we respond emotionally. Many of these needs are valid. But unless there is some means of accountability present, we need to be wary of giving.

Home churches, as well as individuals, must be wise in the decisions they make about giving resources to causes. Since expenses for home churches are limited, gifts given

to the Lord by home church members may be available for ministry around the world. Every home church must find causes and people which truly are about Kingdom work if they are to give money to them. Accountability is the key word here. Are those people or causes accountable to others? Are they in some way accountable to us?

We need to have wisdom in making those decisions.

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *Be Wise, Be Generous*

#### **Focal Text**

2 John 1-11; 3 John 1-12

#### **Background**

2 John; 3 John

#### **Main Idea**

Christians are to provide generous support and hospitality to those who are sharing the gospel and to refuse to support those who do not abide in Christ's teachings.

#### **Question to Explore**

How wise and generous are you in supporting Christ's work?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to decide how they will increase both their wisdom and their generosity in supporting Christ's work.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

For any Christian there are important decisions to be made as to what causes, people, and institutions one will give their financial support as well as prayer and emotional support. Today's lesson examines a New Testament example of giving through hospitality. Second and Third John are not books often studied so this is a good opportunity to continue examining John's teachings on practical Christian living.

### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Before the apostolic writings which became our New Testament were circulated, the early Christians had no standard by which to judge the doctrines taught by traveling missionaries who might come into their community. Evidently quite a number of these teachers traveled among the churches. Some opposed apostolic teaching or claimed their teaching was an advancement to apostolic doctrine or perhaps a new revelation. Such teachers presented the early church a multiplicity of erroneous teachings. Most of our New Testament documents were written as correctives to one or more of these false teachings.

The second epistle of John responded vigorously to an erroneous teaching. John left no doubt concerned his reaction to those who taught that Jesus had not come in the flesh” (**The Disciple’s Study Bible**, Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, page 1622).

“Third’ John is a brief but practical note addressed to a Christian leader named Gaius. The key issue was what relationship Christians should have with visiting Christian teachers. Gaius had been faithful to receive the emissaries of the elder (verse 5). Demetrius (verse 12) also had been faithful in this regard, but Diotrephes had not (verse 9-10). Perhaps these were pastors or leaders of three distinct Christian congregations (**The Disciple’s Study Bible**, page 1622).

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### **2 John: 1-11**

Verse 1 – The elder most likely refers to a respected title used by Christians to refer to their leader and father in the faith. He has authority, not because of an office he holds, but because of his wisdom and love for the people he has taught.

Many commentators feel that 2 and 3 John have the same author as 1 John – the apostle John. Certainly the teachings about love and obedience are repeated in 2 John and the contrast between those who do good and who do evil is repeated in 3 John.

The chosen lady and her children probably refer to a Christian community for whom John, the elder, has great love and concern.

Verses 1 and 2 are a greeting of love for those who know the truth. The truth for the apostle John as expressed over and over in 1 John is that Jesus is our Saviour and that we are to love the brothers and obey God’s commands.

The letter, then, is written to those who share those beliefs.

Verse three is a blessing for those people and an expression of rejoicing that this is true of them. Verse 4 indicates that some of “your children” are walking in the truth. It is the sad reality of Christian life that not everyone who professes belief remains true to that profession. We rejoice in those who do.

Verses 5-6 repeat the teaching of love and obedience.

However, verse 7 indicates the writer's concern that there are "deceivers" – "many deceivers" who are teaching that Christ did not come in the flesh.

John uses the strong word "antichrist" for these people. He warns in verse 8 that believers must watch out that they not be deceived and "lose what you have worked for".

Verse 9 indicates that there is great loss for the one who does not continue in the teaching of both the Father and the Son.

"John was surely not talking about their salvation. They did not work for that; it was a gift (see John 4:10). He referred to their reward to be given at Christ's return. John didn't want their reward to be stolen away by these false teachers. He wanted them to be "rewarded fully" so, he warned them to 'watch out.'

Reward (misthos) has as its basic meaning 'a workman's wages.' In this passage John picked up on its common New Testament usage – a payment or honor to be received in heaven. The heavenly 'reward' is never described precisely in the New Testament, although it is often held up as a motivation for doing right while we live on this earth. Paul painted the clearest picture of the reward ceremony. Both motivational and convicting, his description is found in 1 Corinthians 3: 8-15" (Shepherd, D. R. Editor-in-Chief, **Shepherd's Notes–1,2,3 John**, Nashville, Tennessee; Broadman & Holman, 1998, page 91).

Believers are warned against receiving those who preach falsely. "The central point of issue is the humanity of Christ. Jesus is the incarnate Son whose teaching must be followed. His Sonship is not understood properly if His full humanity is denied or neglected" (**The Disciple's Study Bible**, page 1622).

Christian hospitality was extended to the preachers and teachers of the early church. There was no place for them to stay except in the homes of believers. Food and care was given to them in return for the ministry they extended. However, John warns against giving this Christian hospitality to those who are preaching falsely. To do so would be to share in the wickedness of the false preacher just as to give Christian hospitality to the true servant of God is a means of sharing in that faithful ministry. The believer is not to assist in the distribution of false doctrine.

Verse 12 indicates the closeness of the writer to the church to whom he is writing. To merely write is not adequate; they need a face to face conversation with the joy that such fellowship provides.

The final verse of the chapter indicates that a sister church sends greetings.



### 3 John: 1- 8

This letter is addressed, not to a church, but to a man named “Gaius” Gaius was a popular name in New Testament times. “Three other men by the name Gaius appear in the New Testament, two of them being companions of Paul (Acts 19:20; 20:4), the other a man baptized by Paul at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14; Romans 16:23). Since the name was a common one, it is highly unlikely that the Gaius addressed by the Elder is to be identified with any one of the other three. It is possible that he was the pastor of the church mentioned in verses 6, 9, 10, but it is also possible that Diotrephes, because of his unusual power as a leader in the church, was its pastor” (**The Broadman Bible Commentary, Volume 12**, Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1972, page 229).

If he was not a pastor, then he was a layman with some authority. He held a fond place in John’s heart. Agape love is expressed in verse 1 and he is later called “dear friend”.

“His love is ‘in the truth’ an identical phrase to 2 John 1 and verse 4. This seems to indicate that Gaius was a person whom John had personally helped to come to know Jesus (‘my children’)” (**Shepherd’s Notes**, page 94).

Verse 2 follows a customary statement for correspondence of that day and yet there is a sincerity to these words that goes beyond mere form. Good physical health and good spiritual health are prayed for Gaius. No better gift can be given from one friend to another than to pray for these things.

It gave John great joy to hear that Gaius was faithful to his commitment to belief in Jesus. John expresses in verse 4 the reality of all those who faithfully serve the Lord and bring others to Christ “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth”. Parents, Bible study leaders, children and youth workers, home church participants, Seminary teachers and pastors all share this reality. Many things may bring pleasure in life, but this is the best of all.

Gaius is commended in verse 5 for the hospitality he has given to those who were “strangers” to him, but were faithful servants of the Lord in need. “As both Christian people and itinerant Christian teachers traveled, they would need a place to stay. Inns and hotels as we know them today were not available. They were not as comfortable as a private home. They usually housed as many fleas and as much dust as they did guests. They were also generally known for their dishonorable atmosphere, which was prompted by the poor character of most innkeepers. So it became a common practice for local Christians to open their homes to traveling Christians. Such hospitality is seen throughout the New Testament (Acts 16:15; 17:7; 21:8; 16; Romans 16:23). This genuine hospitality was also abused by people who were simply looking for free lodging” (*Shepherd’s Notes*, page 86).

In reality, hospitality in homes has been a feature of Christian life throughout Christian history. Conventions, training sessions and evangelistic meetings offered opportunity to host the out-of-town guests and speakers. Many families were blessed by this

interchange of ideas and by giving children the opportunity to meet fellow believers and some giants in the faith. Life-long relationships often began by the sharing of one's home with a fellow believer. (The worship time will develop the theme of hospitality).

The hospitality for which Gaius was commended was that given to traveling Christian teachers. They were on a mission for Christ "It was for the sake of the Name that they went out" (Verse 7a). The motives of the missionaries were pure. They would obviously receive no help from the non-Christian community. It was the responsibility and privilege of the Christian community to care for them. This gave the opportunity to "work together for truth" (verse 8b).

By showing hospitality, the believers cooperated in the effort of spreading the truth and doing the truth. These same opportunities exist today. Most of the Christian church will stay at home attending to business and education and care of family. A few will be called to go to difficult places and different cultures. Their financial support and their prayer support is dependent on those who stay at home. This too is hospitality!

### 3 John 9-11

Diotrephes was also a leader in the local church to which John wrote. He may have been a pastor or a prominent layman. He obviously had a problem with pride – "he loves to be first" and would not listen to the counsel of "the elder". He "will have nothing to do with us – he is gossiping maliciously about us". This was a personal affront to John, but it was also an affront to the church who had recognized the authority and wisdom of John as a leader.

But beyond that, Diotrephes refused to give hospitality to the itinerant preachers and teachers who needed a place to stay and food to eat. He apparently had enough power within the church to put those out of the church who wanted to aid the travelers.

Verse 11 encourages the readers not to imitate evil behaviour, but to imitate that which was good. Demetrius is given as another good example—well-spoken of by others and faithful to the truth. John himself gives Demetrius a good recommendation.

These are important issues and John cannot adequately address them in writing. He hopes to see the church face to face and discuss these issues. He will confront Diotrephes: ***"So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church"*** (verse 10).

There is a time to confront those whose desire for power leads into unchristian behaviour. This church seems to have allowed Diotrephes to determine what will be done even though others in the church wish to act differently. It is one of the realities of church life—however big or small the church may be—that some people exert undue influence. John reminds us "Do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who

does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God” (verse 11).

The two emphases of this short chapter are these: support the work of those who carry the gospel to the ends of the earth and be wise in giving support to leadership. In a day when there are many demands on our time and money, it is important that we evaluate carefully to whom we will give our support. This is true for individuals and for churches.

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

There are two important things to emphasize in this lesson. First, it is important to support the work of those who serve the church. The emphasis here is on those who go to places away from home. The second emphasis is on the wise choice of leaders. Christians have a responsibility to follow those who do good. With limited resources for carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth, we must be careful that we choose those who reflect Biblical teachings and goals.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Be Wise, Be Generous***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

2 John 1-11; 3 John 1-12

#### **Background**

2 John; 3 John

#### **Main Idea**

Christians are to provide generous support and hospitality to those who are sharing the gospel and to refuse to support those who do not abide in Christ's teachings.

#### **Question to Explore**

How wise and generous are you in supporting Christ's work?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to decide how they will increase both their wisdom and their generosity in supporting Christ's work.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Mention some of the current pleas for financial help which may have come your way. Don't be negative in your comments. One of those charities may be important to someone in your group.

#### **Guide the Study:**

Have someone read 2 John: 1-22

Discuss the meaning of the term “the elder”. Emphasize that this is most likely not an office, but a title of respect.

Ask: Who is the author of 2 and 3 John? (Help the group to watch for similarities to the teaching of 1 John – the teaching about the relationship between love and obedience and the contrast between those who do good and who do evil).

Discuss with the group: Who are the chosen lady and her children to whom John refers? (A Christian community. Mention instances in language where an object or institution has feminine or masculine designation. In some languages an article before the noun makes this clear. In Spanish, for example, church is la iglesia – feminine).

Ask: To whom is this letter written? (To those who believe that the truth is that Jesus is our Saviour and that we are to love the brothers and obey God’s commands).

Have someone reread verse 3.

Mention: This is a blessing for those who share John’s beliefs about the truth and thanksgiving for them.

Have someone reread verses 5-6.

Tell them: Here is an example of John’s expression of the relationship between love and obedience.

Inquire: Who are the deceivers to whom John refers? (Those who do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ came as a person – a human being).

Ask: What strong term does John use for these people?

Explain: He uses the term “antichrist”. This is an example of exactly what John meant by antichrist. This is different from what many people would say when they look for a person—usually a strong and well known figure—to be called the Antichrist.

State: Consider the meaning of verse 9. John is referring to the reward promised in heaven.

Say: Now let’s look more closely at this idea.

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 3: 8-15. Use the **Teacher Preparation** material for this discussion.

Describe the condition of inns in New Testament times to explain why it was important for the believers to give hospitality to the traveling messengers. (Read the material for the **Worship Time** so you will know the emphasis to be given there).

Explain: Believers had to be careful to give hospitality to those who were sharing the true message about Christ. Some preached a false message out of conviction; there were most likely also those who were traveling about trying to get support with no interest at all in the gospel.

Now create a brief discussion with this: What parallels exist to our reality in today's world?

You may need to share this: There are many causes which we might support. Some charities spend a large portion of what they receive on administrative and promotional costs. A few TV evangelists and writers of Christian material may have very opulent life styles. Some appeals for money are based solely on emotionalism. Not all missionaries are accountable to those who support them. **Giving money to support any cause demands that the giver consider how that money will be used.**

Have someone read 3 John: 1-8.

Question: To whom is this letter written? (Gaius, who is a leader and a dear friend of the writer).

Now ask: What does the writer wish for Gaius? (Good physical health and good spiritual health. The form of this letter is typical of secular letters written in New Testament times. But the good wishes of the writer for Gaius are sincere).

Discuss: What gives joy to a Christian teacher or leader? (That his/her disciples and students remember what has been taught and act on it. This is what brought joy to John in verse 4).

Comment: The issue of hospitality to traveling messengers is discussed again. Gaius is commended for giving hospitality to those who were "strangers" to him, but faithful preachers of the truth about Jesus.

Request a person to reread verse 7.

Ask: What was the relationship between giving hospitality and the spreading of the gospel? (Those who gave hospitality shared in the spreading of the gospel).

Describe: Consider the implications for us today. We share in the spreading of the gospel around the world by our financial, emotional and prayer support for those who are preaching the gospel in places where it needs to be shared.

Have someone read 3 John: 9-12

Search out an answer: Who are the two men mentioned here? (Diotrephes and Demetrius – the first hindered the work and the second supported it).

Assure the group that most people who do not read and speak the Greek language have difficulty in pronouncing Greek-based names and places. The problem is not for lack of Bible knowledge. It is from the complexity of Greek names.

Ask: What do you think was the main problem of Diotrephes? (Pride. He didn't want to follow the instructions of the elder. He didn't want to support the work of the messengers. He didn't want to let the people of the church do what they felt was right).

Discuss with the group (as time allows): How can a church deal with a leader who has this kind of attitude. Watch your time.

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Summarize for the group the teaching of these two books.

State: The two emphases of this short chapter are these:

- ✓ Support the work of those who carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- ✓ Be wise in giving support to leadership.

Add: In a day when there are many demands on our time and money, it is important that we evaluate carefully to whom we will give our support. This is true for individuals and for churches.

Conclude with this final question: How can we be good stewards of our resources?

Allow for a comment or two. Then ask someone to close in prayer.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Be Wise, Be Generous***

**2 John 1-11; 3 John 1-12**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.**

#### **Wise and Generous—Inseparable Commands?**

The title for this lesson is **Be Wise, Be Generous**. It is important that these two things go together. We can easily be swayed by media or persuasive promoters of causes to give without expecting accountability for how the money is spent.

We always think that we are not “vulnerable” to a fraud or a poor investment until it is too late. We should always seek objective advice before making such decisions.

Imagine that you had a great deal of money. How would you determine what causes you would support? How could you know that you would be both wise and generous.



**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Be Wise, Be Generous*****2 John 1-11; 3 John 1-12****Beginning the Service:**

Sing:

**Be Strong in the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 504; CCLI # 52105**Let It Be Said of Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI # 1855882**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

Beyond the postcard images of London are ancient villages, connected over time by economic expansion. This expansion has spanned the globe and at this time in history, these villages, known as Greater London, make up one of the world's financial hubs. That means individuals from many nations, tribes, peoples and languages are living in the neighbourhoods of London. Where else in Europe can you find 300+ languages spoken? Pray that the unreached peoples of London come in contact with Jesus' love through believers who are transparent with their own struggles and the hope they have in Jesus.

**Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**

## The Gift of Hospitality

In the ancient world, hospitality was a sacred duty. Inns were dirty and flea-infested. Innkeepers had no status because to take money for giving hospitality was not respected. “The ancient world had a system of *guest-friendships* whereby families in different parts of the country undertook to give each other’s members hospitality in their part of the country. The connection between families lasted throughout the generations, and when it was claimed, the claimant brought with him a token which identified him to his hosts” (Barclay, Wm. **The Daily Study Bible: The Letters of John and Jude**. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960, pages 174-175).

This generous attitude was a part of the early Christian tradition. It was Peter’s injunction in 1 Peter 4:9 “**Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling**”. The writer of Hebrews declared “**Keep on loving one another as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it**” (Hebrews 13: 1-2).

1 Timothy 5:9 speaks of widows over sixty to be cared for by the church. These women were to have been known for good deeds which included bringing up children, showing hospitality, caring for the saints and helping those in trouble.

Paul admonishes the Romans to share with people in need and to show hospitality.

Church leaders must model hospitality. 1 Timothy 3:2 says that an overseer must be hospitable and Titus is told to be a “lover of hospitality” (Titus 1:8).

Every culture has its norms for extending hospitality. In a world increasingly materialistic and increasingly wary of allowing strangers into our homes, we may be losing the fun and blessing of sharing our homes with others. Inviting new neighbours for a meal; providing lodging for a visiting missions team or giving a place to stay to an out-of-town relative of a long-term hospital patient are some of the ways in which hospitality can be extended.

In reality, hospitality in homes has been a feature of Christian life throughout Christian history. Conventions, training sessions and evangelistic meetings offered opportunity to host the out-of-town guests and speakers. Many families were blessed by this interchange of ideas and by giving children the opportunity to meet fellow believers and some giants in the faith. Life-long relationships often began by the sharing of one’s home with a fellow believer.

Paul speaks of another Gaius who was his host in Corinth and was such a hospitable soul that he could be called the host of the whole Church (Barclay, page 172). Romans 16:23 says “**Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greeting**”. This brief verse introduces us to a person we would like to know.

Miroslav Volf, a modern day theologian who grew up in communist Yugoslavia writes about generosity as it exists today.

“We live in a culture in which, yes, extraordinary generosity does happen. But at the same time, that culture is largely stripped of grace. It is not a gracelessness that is necessarily apparent at first glance, but it nonetheless underlies so many of our interactions. If I were to say that today everything is sold and nothing is given, that would be an exaggeration. But like any good caricature, it distorts reality in order to draw attention to what is characteristic. Mainly, we’re set up to sell and buy, not to give and receive. We tend to give nothing free of charge and receive nothing free of charge. ‘The person who volunteers time, who helps a stranger, who agrees to work for a modest wage out of commitment to the public good, who desists from littering even when no one is looking...begins to feel like a sucker’....” (Robert Kuttner in **Everything for Sale**. in Volf, M., **Free of Charge**, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervon, 2005, page 14).

### **Call to Commitment:**

Christians are called to live differently. We are to give and in giving, we receive. Paul declared in Acts 20:35 ***“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’”***.

Jesus sent out the twelve with the following instructions: ***Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give*** (Matthew 10:8).

We do not have the same instructions as those early disciples in every aspect. But inasmuch as we have freely received, we are to freely give. Paul admonishes believers in 2 Corinthians 8:7 ***“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”***.

One thing we can give is the hospitality of our home. A Christian home should be the place of “the open door and the loving welcome” (Barclay, page 174).

May it be so in our homes this week.

### **Concluding the Service:**

Sing again

**Let It Be Said of Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI # 1855882