

Discipleship – Generous Giver

2 Corinthians 8-9 Generous Giving

- How many of you like tests?
 - I was so happy when I finished the test. When I finished my boards, I thought I would never take another test again. I was wrong. Life is a test.
 - There are so many types of tests in life, test your knowledge, emotions, psychology, marriage, love language, your giftings, spiritual giftings and your spiritual test.
 - **James 1:12** God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.
 - Test - lets students “show what they know” and “what they can do.”
 - We are currently doing a series about discipleship. Every preaching shouldn’t add much to your knowledge, but test your lifestyle.
 - Living in submission, spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit, worshiper, prayer, and sharing your faith.
 - Today is a big one; we are talking about being a generous giver.
 - The Bible has more to say about money than about heaven and hell combined.
 - There are over 2,000 verses concerning money, twice that of faith and prayer.
 - Nearly 15% of everything Jesus spoke about was related to money and possessions.
 - When it came to Jesus’ parables, 16 out of his 38 dealt with the topic of money.
 - The only subject Jesus taught more about than money was the Kingdom of God.
- 3 T’s – Time, talent, and treasure
 - Something is coming against these things very harshly in this generation.
 - This society is never satisfied. It wants more and more of your time, talent, and treasure.
 - Why? Because the devil knows if he can get those 3 from you, he can rob you of your inheritance.
 - These things build the kingdom of God.
 - They have conditions attached and also some consequences if you don’t. - Matthew 25
 - How does a disciple of Christ live in response to generosity?

2 Corinthians 8-9

Verse 1-2 – Root of Generosity

- Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. 2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.
 - Where does generosity come from?
 - I have thought that when I get more, I’ll give more. That thinking is wrong! The more you have, the harder it is to give.
 - Generosity doesn’t come from what you have; it comes from what’s within.
 - They are being tested by troubles.
 - The result is great joy and generosity.
 - When you take joy in something, you will gravitate towards it.
 - Your time, treasure, and talent will gravitate towards this.
 - How has your relationship with God been?
 - When you are in love with God, when you are living a surrendered life, when you are living a life led by the Holy Spirit, your 3 T’s will follow.
- The opposite is true: worry, greed will choke out God’s word in your life

- **Mark 4:18-19** The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, 19 but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.

Verse 5 – God wants your Heart.

- They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do.
- God has it all; He doesn't need your money. He wants your heart.
 - What you spend your 3 T's on is directly related to where your heart is at.
- What other area of your life is so influential?
 - What other area of your life has consequences that can be as severe (positive/negative) that can result from the way you manage your finances?
 - There is hardly a single activity that you aren't involved in that doesn't include money.
 - You wake up and get dressed – it costs money.
 - You eat – it costs money.
 - Travel
 - House
- Money gets you stuff.
 - Experiences – there are things you simply cannot do without money.
 - What's your dream vacation?
 - How many of you saw the Super Bowl?
 - How many of you have been there? Want to go? Why haven't you gone?
 - A pair of tickets went for \$35,000 for ticket.
 - Power
 - Influential
- It feels like if we depend on God, we can get on our own if we have enough money.
 - Money is after your heart!
 - There shouldn't be any area of our life that is off limits to God. In fact, there shouldn't be an area of our life that we don't completely surrender to God.
- **Matthew 6:24-25** “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.
 - Jesus never said such a statement about anything else. He did not say, “You cannot serve God and power... God and sin... God and career... God and self.” Why not? Because people know instinctively, they must serve God alone. However, because of the deceitful nature of money and wealth, many people are convinced they are serving God when they have actually become slaves to money.
- This is one of those tests that never end.
 - You have to constantly check your heart and evaluate where its at.

Verse 8:12; 9:7 – Give Eagerly – The why matters

- 8:12 Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have.
 - The word eager is mentioned 7 times in these 2 chapters. This should get our attention.
 - Eagerness of mind; willingness
 - This means the why matters!
 - Why you give is just as important as what or how much you give.
- 9:7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”
- Give eagerly!
 - The Corinthians loved God, but they needed a reminder that loving God takes action, not just words. Not just an action, a cheerful action.

- This verse says that God loves a cheerful giver. A giver because he loves God, and giving is a byproduct of your love.
 - I remember the first time I took Roxanne to Cattleman's. I was broke, but I paid because I loved her.
- Terms
 - Reluctant giver says I don't want to give.
 - A compulsive giver says I have to give.
 - A cheerful giver says I get to give.
- How do we give cheerfully?
 - We keep our eyes on Jesus!
 - **2 Corinthians 8:9** "You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich."
- Do your finances, time, and talents reflect the kind of cheerful generosity Paul is talking about?
- Budget
 - And give according to what you have, not what you don't have.
 - **Mark 12:42-44** Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. ⁴² Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. ⁴³ Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. ⁴⁴ For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."
 - Plan to give. Be good stewards of your finances.
 - Tithe is giving to God what is His. A tithe is not generosity.
 - The disciple of Christ must become a faithful steward of financial resources. Only then can they serve the one true master of life.

Verse – 2 Corinthians 8:8 - Giving is a test of the heart

- "I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. "
 - We did a physical test with my daughter's team called death by 10 meters.
- Testing exposes what you know and what you don't know.
 - There are different types of text to expose what you are looking for.
 - For therapy, there are tests for balance, strength, function, and walking.
 - For psychology, there are different tests.
- What test exposes what's in the heart?
 - Paul is testing the Corinthians' Love by how they give. Giving is a test of the heart.
 - God wants your heart.
 - Generosity comes from a joyful heart.
 - The why matters. We give because we are in love with God.
 - Giving will test how genuine your love really is.
- How we control or are controlled by money speaks loudly to those who would examine our lives. Money exacerbates and illuminates our outer priorities and our inner character.

Verse 9:10 – Where wealth comes from

- **2 Corinthians 9:10** For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.
 - **Proverbs 11:28** Trust in your money and down you go! But the godly flourish like leaves in spring.

