

THE DISCIPLINE OF GIVING: LIVE GENEROUSLY!

(2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 9:6-10)

Series: The Disciplines of a Godly Life (Part 4)

...One of the great indicators, if not the greatest, of new life in Christ is the change from living for self, to living to give. By birth we are all naturally selfish and self-centered. It takes the Gospel to transform our dead hearts so that our iron fisted grip is loosened on our "stuff." In Jesus we discover that living and giving go together.

...As Christians, giving should mark us as a people. We are to live generously by giving our time, talent, and treasure to Him who owns everything. We are merely stewards-managers entrusted by God with His resources...

...The Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth and urged them to be generous givers by realizing afresh the priceless treasure they received from Christ.

TWO QUESTIONS HELPING US TO LIVE GENEROUSLY, EVEN SACRIFICIALLY, AS WE MANAGE GOD'S RESOURCES.

...For everything we have is not ours to keep, but is ours to use for the kingdom.

I. Why Should We Be Generous Givers Of What We Have? (2 Corinth 8:9)

- A. Because as Christians, we have received the most costly gift ever given. (v.9a)
1. Paul calls us to remember the tremendous generosity of the Lord.
...Here the word "Grace," means generosity. Generous to His enemies... (Us!)
 2. Note the cost: Jesus had been "rich" but was made "poor."
 3. Jesus voluntarily made Himself poor. (Philippians 2:6-8)
...This was His humiliation in leaving His throne and having "no place to lay His head."
 4. His ultimate poverty was His cross, for there He endured an eternal Hell for us.
- B. Because as Christians, we have been made "Rich," wealthy beyond imagination in Christ. (v.9b)
1. Absolute poverty was our original condition at birth and beyond.
...The poor of this world are not those without material means, they are all those without Christ. Consider their current situation...terrible at best!
 2. Through the Gospel of Christ we are wealthy with true riches, not the cheap stuff!
 3. Since we have received real wealth, we too ought to be generous, like our Lord, who gave it all. When we do this, we reflect Jesus in our life.

II. What Are The Results We Might Expect In Living Generously?

- A. You will GROW. This is one of God's key methods in maturing you in your salvation.
1. You will grow in your love for the Lord.
...Jesus told us, "Where your treasure is, that is where your heart is."
...That is, as you increasingly invest your funds in heaven, your heart will follow...
...If you find your love for the Lord and His work cold, consider giving more...
(Remember the widow's mite...Jesus said she gave all she had)
 2. You will grow in your faith. We are saved by faith, and we are to walk this journey by trusting Him. Does your giving reflect your walk of faith? Or is it a token, when your real trust is in yourself and resources? (2 Corinth 8) The Macedonian believers gave...
 3. You will grow your joy. It was Jesus who said, "It is more blessed to give than receive."
(Acts 20) The word "Blessed" means multiplied "happineses". (Joy!!!)
...If your life is without joy, increase your stewardship in giving.
...Give your time, abilities, and money to help and encourage God's work and others.

4. You will grow in your kingdom usefulness. (2 Corinth 9:6-10)
...Your generosity will strengthen God's work and produce more fruit. (Philippians 4)
...We here at Grace Church need your faithful generosity in giving your tithes and offerings for this Gospel work. Thank you for giving to the Lord. It is allowing others to hear the Gospel and be saved. Your giving is producing a harvest...
- B. You will be GUARDED. Giving will help guard your tendency to covet. (1Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19)
 1. Paul told Timothy to warn Christians of the danger of covetousness. Yearning for more and more will never provide contentment. It will rob you of deep satisfaction.
 2. God's solution to this temptation is to live to give. Be generous! Give sacrificially!

WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. Your giving should not be done haphazardly, but you should prayerfully consider your stewardship of giving. Give yourself first to the Lord trusting Him to meet your every need, then give generously. This is the discipline of giving. Give a percentage of "all your increase." Consider God's tithe (10%) to be a minimum guide and give it as an act of worship with thanksgiving and joy in your heart. In doing this, God sees it and tells us "He is well-pleased."
2. Come to the realization of God's ownership of everything you have. Come to see yourself as a manager of what He has given you to be used for His glory. God owns not just the tithe, but everything. Remember we will give an accounting of our stewardship when we stand before Him.
3. Live generously means more than our money, it means we are active givers of our time to those who may need it, and givers of our abilities. It means we are gracious with our words, always expressing gratitude and encouraging others. Use your life to be a blessing to others.
4. Have you received the salvation that is offered only in Christ? If not you are still lost and face a horrible eternity without Christ. Ask God for the grace to receive His grace of salvation today.