

Men's Sunday Night
The Book of 2 Corinthians
"Finding Strength in Weakness"
Lesson 8 – 2 Corinthians 9
"Sowing and Harvesting"

It seems strange that we Christians need encouragements to give, when God has given so much to us. God had enriched the Corinthians in a wonderful way, and yet they were hesitant to share what they had with others. They were not familiar with grace giving, so Paul had to explain it to them.

Paul now shares the promises that we can claim if we are faithful in our giving to God. This chapter presents giving as a blessing, not as a legal obligation that burdens people. If giving is difficult for a Christian, then there is something wrong with their heart.

In 2 Cor. 8:1-5, Paul used the churches of Macedonia as examples to encourage the Corinthians, and now he uses the Corinthians as an encouragement to the churches of Macedonia. Christians ought to be an encouragement to one another. Paul had been "boasting" to others of the generosity of the church at Corinth (8:24), and now he wants to make sure that the Corinthians do not embarrass him. He knew they had readiness of mind and were willing and anxious to share in the missionary offering, but he wanted to remind them just the same.

Paul uses an agricultural principle here to illustrate his point. "*He who sows bountifully will reap bountifully.*" To sow bountifully means to "sow with blessing" and to reap bountifully means to "reap with blessing." God will be no man's debtor; He is faithful to bless when we are faithful to obey. Chapter 9 closes with a word of praise. He has been writing about giving, and his heart has been so filled with God's goodness to him that he shouts, "*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!*" This gift is, of course, is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, and His gift of eternal life.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-5. Pray and answer the following questions:

In chapter 8, Paul reminded the Corinthians of the collection that began a year earlier and urged them to follow the example of generosity in the Macedonian churches. He introduced the committee, appointed by these churches, who will deliver the collection to the Christians in Jerusalem. In this study, you will discover principles of giving that produce joy and thanksgiving in both the giver and the receiver.

1. Why doesn't Paul write in further detail about the needs of the Jerusalem Christians?
2. What effect has the Corinthians promised gift had on the Macedonians?
3. What attitude did Paul want the Corinthians to have regarding their gift?
4. What is wrong with giving gifts grudgingly?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-9. Pray and answer the following questions:

Paul wanted the Corinthians to give generously toward a fund-raising project to help needy Christians. He linked generosity with spiritual benefits: the more one gives, the more one benefits. This principle goes beyond financial giving. At work, for example, you may donate toward the local charity. But when a coworker asks for some of your time to talk about a problem, what is your response? Do you give your attention generously or grudgingly? When your boss gives you a special assignment, do you give the project just enough attention to get it over with, or do you jump in wholeheartedly with energy and creativity? What about your time and emotional energy after hours? When your spouse or children need you, do you make yourself available generously or grudgingly? Do you give a fair contribution of yourself to assignments that you've volunteered for, or just a token effort? We are constant recipients of God's generous grace. He promises that if we will give of ourselves, He'll enable us to have an abundance of resources for the work to which He has called us.

5. How should we give? Why?

6. What promise does God give to believers who do give generously?

7. Why does God give us more than we need?

8. How do our needs differ from our wants?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:10-15. Pray and answer the following questions:

Think about Paul's principles of giving, such as; we should give because God and Christ gave. We should give because God will see that our needs will be supplied in excess. We should give cheerfully, even out of poverty. We should give in proportion to our means. We should give because it is an act of thanksgiving and worship to God and will produce thanksgiving in those who receive.

9. Find as many results of the Corinthians generous giving as you can in verses 11-14?

10. Some people teach that giving money to the Lord's work results in getting more money for yourself. What does Paul say about the benefits of personal gain from giving? (vs. 6-11)

11. If Paul were writing to our local churches today, what principles in this chapter do you think he would include in his letter? Why?

12. What could you do this week to encourage a Christian friend to be a cheerful giver?

The Cheerful Giver

“So let each one gives as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Cor. 9:7

The giver who pleases God gives deliberately, not grudgingly and not from compulsion. It is absolutely crucial to note one thing: God does not accept the gift of a person who does not want to give. God expects four things of the person who gives:

1. The giver must give as he purposes in his heart. This does not mean that people are not to be encouraged to give or that they cannot be stirred to give.
2. The giver must not give grudgingly: not out of sorrow, with regret. If the giver is going to be hesitant over his gift and regretting that he had given it, his gift is unacceptable to God.
3. The giver must not give out of necessity. A person’s gift is not acceptable to God when he is forced to give.
4. The giver must give cheerfully if he wishes God to accept his gift. The word “cheerful” means joyful.

Journaling

Compare your notes and daily Scripture references. Take some time to pray and meditate on what God showed you in a practical way this week and how you can apply it to your Christian walk. Write your insights down for review and group discussion.
