

Journey Through the New Testament

2 Corinthians 6 – 10

Series: Body Language
“If I Stick My Hand in My Heart”
8-11-19

Introduction

Paul continued his leadership and encouragement to the Corinthian churches in chapters 6-10. There had been challenges to deal with but Paul boldly continued his ministry and mission to them and to all Gentiles. Paul urged the Corinthians to be faithful and generous like the Macedonian believers who had freely given funds to help the church in Jerusalem.

M-O-N-E-Y That word always gets our attention. Rare is the pastor who looks forward to preaching about money, and yet, the Bible mentions money nearly 800 times. Whether personal finances, politics or church, money is an emotionally charged topic. Stewardship of money is a spiritual matter. Generosity, the grace of giving, is a loving response to all that God has given out of his love for us. Giving demonstrates faith in action and enables God’s mission in the world.

Opening Prayer

O, God in our world of excess and materialism, our neighbors are hungry. Open our hearts. Make us willing to excel in the grace of giving. Enable us to be generous and free with the plenty that we have so that needs are met as we “abound in every good work.” With thanksgiving, we pray. Amen.

Bible Study 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 (CEV)

What?

1. What were the circumstances of the Macedonian Christians? (v. 2)
2. What did they do when they learned of the poverty among the believers in Jerusalem? (v. 3-4)
3. What was Paul’s instruction to the Corinthian church in verse 7?
4. What does it mean to “excel in the grace of giving?”

Read 8:8-12

1. In verse 8, Paul says he is, “trying to prove the authenticity of your love.” What is the connection between loving and giving?
2. What is the gauge for generous giving, according to verse 12?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 from “The Message”

So What?

1. How does the use of our money reflect our priorities?
2. How does the use of money reflect our spiritual life?
3. How does generosity in giving help us grow spiritually?
4. How does spiritual growth affect our giving?
5. Why is it so difficult to entrust our money to God?
6. In what way is giving a matter of faithful obedience?
7. What joy results from generosity in giving?

Lesson Notes: Paul highlighted the extreme poverty of the Christians in Macedonia. Generosity does not depend on the size of our bank account. It depends on our readiness to open our hearts for the needs of others and to share what we have with them. Considering how generously Jesus shared his life can help us live in gracious generosity whether we are rich or poor. (Commentary, *Wesley Study Bible*)

Now What?

1. What are the challenges of stepping out in faith with our finances?
2. What changes might we have to make in order to be more generous givers?
3. What next step could you take that would help you grow in the grace of giving?

Closing Reflection

Earn all you can, give all you can, save all you can. –John Wesley

Both psychologically and practically there are few things in life that bind together people and institutions more effectively than sharing their bank accounts.

–Raymond E Brown