

## A God-Centered View of Generosity

Peter Stonecipher – July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Do your questions about generosity reveal a profound concern for God getting glory?

- How can I bring God the maximum amount of glory through generous giving?
- How much money can I part with to support my church's gospel witness to our city and to the world?
- What are the ministry implications of my gift?
- What aspects of my lifestyle can be trimmed, freeing me up to give more generously?

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Do you generally have a human-centered view of generosity? Or a God-centered view? What is the difference between these two?
- How does the Corinthians' attitude toward generosity show a lack of understanding of God's economy? What prevents you from understanding God's economy like you should? How is this reflected in your giving?
- Why does Paul quote Psalm 112 in 2 Corinthians 9:9? How might this encourage the Corinthians to give generously?
- Why does God provide you with health, jobs, money, food and shelter? What does it look like for you to "scatter the seed" God provides?
- What type of "harvest" do you look forward to? How does that adjust your expectations of God as you give generously?
- What usually motivates your generosity? How might God's glory motivate you to give more generously?

Text: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

### Introduction

Christian generosity is never a transaction between just two people.

### I. The Attitude God Expects (9:6-7)

There's a problem at Corinth

2 Corinthians 8:9 is a great place to look at The Cross as a Pattern for Christian Giving!

*"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."* (NIV)

This isn't just a deal going down between the Corinthians and those in Jerusalem with Paul acting as a delivery guy. God is intimately involved in the process of generosity from start to finish.

Even as Paul talks about sowing and reaping generously, his primary concern is with the Corinthians' attitude.

Paul is saying, “In God’s economy, the first type of giver doesn’t make sense. He has no understanding of how God’s provision works or about the harvest of righteousness promised to believers!”

In the picture of the farmers, the correlation between *attitude* and *amount* is evident.

- Luke 21:1-4

Giving cheerfully is a discipline.

## **II. The Seed God Supplies (9:8-10)**

God is involved in the process of generosity from very the start.

Acts of generosity begin in the gracious provision of God *to* the giver.

Psalm 112

He has given to them with the intention that they would give to others. In return, the Corinthians will reap something from God that moth and rust can’t destroy, a harvest of righteousness.

How tight-fisted can you really be with your stuff when you realize it's not your stuff at all?

When you understand that God provides everything for you with the purpose that you will abound in every good work, it frees you up to give significantly.

## **III. The Glory God Gets (9:11-15)**

What is the *end* of generosity?

Verses 11-15 should overwhelm the Corinthians with the end of their generosity - God's glory.

In these verses, Paul lands the final, victorious, blow to the Corinthians human-centered view of generosity.

The Corinthians are so concerned with the human agents involved in generosity that they’re in danger of robbing God of his glory!

Imagine the overflow of thanksgiving to God that’ll take place when Paul brings a collection from all over the world to the poor believers in Jerusalem! These believers can’t help but be encouraged as they receive gifts from places they’ve probably only heard of: Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth.

- Acts 21:17-20