

# Session 4 – Put your Money To Work | 2

## Corinthians 8:10-15, 9:1-5 | 3/23/14

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- Introduction
  - We will be continuing our lesson series on giving and we be looking at what we use our God given income for.
  - Paul speaks of giving through chapter 8 and part of 9.
  - We looked last week at the beginning of chapter 8 and we looked at what Paul told us about the churches of the Macedonians.
  - Last week summary
    - Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-2
    - The churches of the Macedonians were under a time of sever affliction, they didn't have much money or resources themselves.
    - However regardless of that they gave out of their poverty, they gave when they did not have anything to give.
    - And this giving was not out of obligation or their excess but out of their hearts and the love that they had for others.
  - We saw that:
    - To give with true generosity is a spiritual gift given to us by God.
    - This is not giving out of our excess but sacrificial giving that comes from the heart.
    - We saw the JOY that in the hearts of the Macedonians when they begged Paul to let them give.
    - We also looked at giving by our God given abilities which we will talk more about today.
  - We will continue in these passages of scripture from 2 Corinthians.
- Let your act of giving be done with the same eagerness as in your desire to give | 2 Corinthians 8:10-11
  - **Read 2 Corinthians 8:10-11**
  - Here Paul encourages the Corinthians to continue to give as they had previously promised that they would.
    - It seems that a year prior that the Corinthians had the desire to give that was great and encouraging for others.
    - Yet now they seem to have faltered and that eagerness to give is not being shown in their actually giving.
    - This is likely why Paul has been using the churches of Macedonia to encourage them, so they could see the generous and sacrificial giving of those churches.
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  - To give is not a command
    - Paul makes it clear here as well that he was not commanding them to give, but it was his opinion and advice that they should.
    - To give is not a command because the spiritual gift of giving involves giving with true generosity.
      - It is not truly generous if one gives out of obligation or because they have to.
      - It requires giving out of a genuine love for others.
    - This giving with true generosity comes from the heart, as it is an act of love.
  - To give shows our love for the Lord and others.
    - The act of giving shows our love for God and our love for others.

- We give to the church, we give to others because we love them and we want to help them.
- By giving to these it also shows God that we love him, because we show our love for others and being selfless instead of our natural selfish person.
- In fact it is a test of our love.
  - 2 Corinthians 8:8
    - “I am not saying this as a command. Rather, by means of the diligence of others, I am testing the genuineness of your love.”
  - Is our love genuine? Do we act on the love for God and the love for others that we say we do.
  - Is our love for others only in words or do we also show it in our works.
  - **Paul is encouraging them to action, to not only have the desire to give but to follow through with that desire and give to those in need out of love.**
  - **To give with love from the heart.**
  - Not out of obligation or to look good in front of others, but instead for the right reasons.
- If we love God we will not close our eyes to the needs of others.
  - 1 John 3:17
    - “If anyone has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need but closes his eyes to his need—how can God’s love reside in him?”
  - If we go through life closing our eyes and pretending that others are not in need we are certainly not showing love to them or God.
  - To love God is to also love those that bear his image.
    - 1 John 4:20
      - “If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen.”
  - To love others is of course to feel the love for them in our hearts, but it is also in our works and our actions.
  - To know that your friend has no food or some other basic need and yet we choose to ignore, is not showing them the love that we as Christians are supposed to show.
- If our heart and mind feel the desire to help, we must follow through with action.
  - James 2:15-16
    - “If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, “ Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well, “ but you don’t’ give them what the body needs, what good is it?”
  - James points out that we need to do more at times than just offer kind words of encouragement,
- Instead of just advice and how to get better to actually provide what is needed for that person to be better
- **How do we turn the “desire to give” into the “act of giving” with love and generosity?**
  - God will bless the generous giver.
    - Paul does not give a command and he does not give an amount for their giving.
    - There is no minimum and there is no maximum for our gifts to God in our giving.
    - The NT does not make any distinction as to the amount of our giving, however the OT used 10% in several instances.
    - But Paul does make it clear that God will bless the generous giver.

- The giver that gives generously from the heart.
- Because it is more blessed to give than to receive.
  - Acts 20:35
    - “In every way I’ve shown you that by laboring like this, it is necessary to help the weak and to keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, for He said, **‘it is more blessed to give than to receive.’**”
- These blessings for giving are not necessarily going to be monetary, God may bless you with spiritual blessings, they may be rewards that we won’t see this side of Heaven
- However the God has made it clear that his blessings will be poured upon us with true generous giving.
  - Luke 6:38
    - “Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.
  - Jesus makes it clear that if we give out of generosity, we will be also be rewarded by the same measure.
- When we give generously and sacrificially God will bless that giving.
  - 2 Corinthians 9:6
    - “Remember this. The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.”
    - If we sow sparingly, by only giving from our excess or giving very little from what we are abilities to give is, we will reap little.
    - But if we give sacrificially and generously in relation to our abilities we will reap generously.
- You cannot out give God and he invites us to test him
  - There are no limits to the blessings that God will give us, and he enjoys pouring them upon us.
  - He invites us to test him in this, to see how he will bless us.
  - Malachi 3:10
    - “Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this way,” says the Lord of Hosts. “See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.”
  - This is one of the few times where God has stated for us to actually test him.
  - God makes it clear that he will bless us in our giving and he says we are free to test him.
  - He will open the floodgates of heaven and pour out blessings without measure.
  - So the more we give to God the more he will bless us. This is fact and truth, but requires faith to carry through.
  - This goes against worldly wisdom that the more I give to others the more I will receive. Sounds like bad investment advice right?
  - But God will reward this giving; it may not be monetarily it could be in many other forms. But God will honor this if we freely give.
- **Have you experienced the blessings of God because of your giving?**
  - Give as your heart has desired.
    - Paul reminds the Corinthians, to follow through with the same eagerness they had for their desire to give, to now use that same eagerness in the act of giving.

- We know we can certainly feel compelled to give at times, but to actually follow through can sometimes be a challenge.
      - I know I have been in a position where my heart told me to give but I couldn't get myself to actually commit.
    - Paul is reminding the Corinthians of the eagerness they had with their desires to give and he is encouraging them to follow through.
    - Paul says remember the desire that you had to give, remember that desire and finish.
    - Give what you had desired to give.
    - **What can cause us to refrain from giving as our heart has desired?**
  - Give to help others in need | 2 Corinthians 8:12-15
    - ***Read 2 Corinthians 8:12-15***
    - Give generously according to what we have.
      - As we had spoken about last week, regarding the previous passages of giving according to our abilities as the churches of Macedonia did.
      - To give generously is not a specific dollar amount. Instead it is in relation to your God given ability to give.
      - God is concerned with the heart of the giver.
      - We should NEVER feel like well what's the point in giving since I can only give so little, what difference would it make?
        - The bible is clear that even the smallest amount WILL make a difference in not only the life of the one receiving but also in the life of the giver.
        - When you give from the heart God WILL bless it.
      - Each of us has different abilities in our giving, as we all have different levels of income and possessions.
      - To give generous and sacrificial for one may be 5 dollars where for another it could be 5000.
      - As we saw the poor widow whom Jesus declared had given more than all the wealthy because she gave all that she had to live on.
        - Mark 12:43-44
          - "Summoning His disciples, He said to them, I assure you: This poor widow has put in more than all those giving to the temple treasury. For they all gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she possessed—all she had to live on."
      - It's not the amount, it's what is in the heart in relation to your abilities.
      - Jesus knew her heart and she above all that had given there had her heart in the right place.
    - We are not expected to give ourselves into hardship.
      - As Paul stated we are not expected to give what we do not have.
      - We certainly are not to put ourselves into debt because of our giving, as that is not being wise or a good steward either.
      - He also states that we are not expected to give what we have to help someone else out and to then put ourselves into hardship or poverty because of that.
        - This is a "shew" moment 😊
        - This is different than sacrificial giving.
      - God does not expect everyone to live in poverty, that you are somehow not worthy if you have not given away everything you own.
      - **But our giving must be from the heart and of true generosity of our God given abilities.**
      - It pleases God when we give according to what we have and our abilities to help others.

- Giving to meet the basic needs of others when it is needed.
  - **Read 2 Corinthians 8:13-14**
  - First of all Paul is not talking about redistribution of wealth within the church.
  - Instead Paul is referring to meeting the basic needs of others as the needs arise.
  - In our time of surplus when things are going well. We have a good job, steady income and money in the bank.
  - He suggests that we be willing to give the surplus to help others with their needs.
  - And likewise because there may be a time when it is reversed and we the giver find we are needing the help from others.
  - So quite simply if you can give to help those that are in need as best as you can, knowing that help will be there for you if you will need it.
  - Equality in the first church
    - Now if we look back in Acts to the first church we see an example of this.
      - Acts 4:32-35
      - This early church truly acted as one heart and mind, they would pool their resources together and give to those in need as it was needed.
      - It is not likely that immediately when a person became a Christian that they immediately sold everything that they had down to poverty and gave it away.
      - Instead they sold what was necessary when it was necessary.
      - Never out of obligation but because they felt led to give of their possessions to meet the basic needs of others.
  - We too can be encouraged to give to the basic needs of others when it is needed.
    - We too can give from our resources when others are in need, when there basic needs are not being met.
    - An example may be a friend or someone you know cannot pay the electric bill or put food on the table.
    - Perhaps you felt called to help but it required for you to sell something of your to help meet this need.
    - Your love for the needs of this person was greater than the desire for your possession.
  - **Are we willing to give with the needs arise? Are we willing to make a sacrifice for others? What can we do to open our hearts to others and act on giving?**
- Give and share as did the Israelites
  - Paul speaks from Exodus 16:18 here describing how some of the Israelites had gathered much and others little, yet they all had what they needed.
  - Equality from Paul is not distribution of everything you have to someone else, but for you to give when you can so that the basic needs of others can be met.
- Inspiring others to give | 2 Corinthians 9:1-5
  - **Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-5**
  - So not only were the Macedonians encouraging the Corinthians, but the Corinthians had previously encouraged the Macedonians and the Achaia's.
  - There was certainly some mutual encouraging going on between the churches.
  - While Paul was using the Macedonians act of giving as encouragement to the Corinthians, it seems that the zeal of the Corinthians in their desire to give had inspired many others.
  - Paul again reminds them and encourages them to follow through with their gift that they had promised.
  - In other words you had promised to give a certain portion of your income and he is encouraging them to follow through with their promises.
  - In reality it is easier to have the desire and zeal to give than the actual giving.

- This applies to us as well as we have made plans of how and what we want to give, we need to be sure that we follow through with this, if it's our tithe or other money to help others in some way.
    - We may have the desire and intention to do it, but if we put it off and don't make it a priority the resources we wanted to use for giving might be used elsewhere.
    - To do this, we must give first to the Lord.
      - This is why it is important that we give to the Lord first before we give to ourselves.
      - We are to give God the first fruits of our labors.
        - Proverbs 3:9-10
          - "Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first produce of you entire harvest; then your barns will be completely filled, and your vats will overflow with new wine."
        - We are to give to God first this shows that he has priority.
        - If we give him the left overs then we show that he is not a priority for us in our giving.
        - **Giving to God first goes with sacrificial giving, because you may have to give up something if you give first to God.**
  - **What prevents us from giving to God first?**
- Closing
  - To give shows our love for God and for others.
  - To give out of true generosity it must not be out of obligation, but out of a true desire to do so from our hearts.
  - God will reward this behavior and he will pour out his blessings upon us.
  - We must follow through with the act of giving, with the same eagerness we have with our desire to give.