



2 Corinthians 9:6-15

RECAP

This week's focus: We bring to God our first and best because God first loved us by giving us His best.

The Apostle Paul knew a lot about human nature — the good, the bad, and the ugly. Perhaps it was because he had lived the life of a controlling narcissist and remembered what it was like to have no gratitude in his heart.

Before encountering the risen Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul was large, in charge, and very much in control of his world. He was clearly the authority and had little patience for others who would upstage his grandiose character. Yet this man who presumed to be religious and upright was little more than a narcissistic fool that craved attention, sought power, and lived in a world of hateful judgment.

That was, of course, before he met Jesus Christ. The love of God's son dramatically changed his life. Eventually, this same man who once persecuted the church became one of the church's most devoted servants. Paul went from a man who chased wealth and power to one who lived in faith. He went from being a man mired in hatred for anything and anyone he could not control to one who willingly relinquished control out of love for God. He went from being a disgrace to God to being one of God's most noteworthy and productive evangelists.

Paul was called by God. He had experienced the transforming power of the Gospel and now had to let the world know about Jesus. In his passion to share the Good News, many would follow in his footsteps confessing their sin and acknowledging Jesus as Lord of their life. The movement of the early church was exploding. Churches were planted and leaders were trained.

As the church grew, so did their needs. The church in Jerusalem was facing economic hardships because of famine. As an act of compassion Paul wisely encourages the church in Corinth to give generously without reluctance or under compulsion.

Like many today, the early church struggled to understand the importance of giving in the life of a believer. Paul taught that generosity is a byproduct of the Gospel. God deserves our first and our best. He calls us to use our resources for the world like Jesus used His for us.

Don't be confused, God doesn't have needs, but He uses our giving as his means to work in our lives and in the world around us. Generosity is an attitude of gratitude partnered with a joyful plan to bless both God and others. Like scattering seeds that grow into a massive crop, generous gifts invested into the work of the ministry will produce an eternal harvest that will never be destroyed. When you give generously, He will cause all sorts of blessings to abound. While following Christ is not a money-making scheme, when you put Him first in your life and your finances, He will always be sure you have your needs met.



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SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: Who is in your life that you would consider a generous person? What traits or values do you notice as they serve others?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

1. As you think about the message and reading this week, what struck you as significant or meaningful? What was hard for you to grasp or understand?
2. What do you think about this statement: "God doesn't need your money; He wants your heart."? How are finances related to what we value most?
3. The topic of money is in 40% of what Jesus teaches in the Gospels. (That's roughly one out of every ten verses.) Why do you think Jesus talked so much about money and its role in our lives?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. What do the sowing and reaping represent in this passage? What does it then mean to sow sparingly?
5. What do we learn about God in vs. 6-7? What result or return is God hoping to see from His investment of grace in you?
6. In verse 10, what does the seed represent? For what purpose does God give us more seed? How are you supposed to use the seed you have been given? How specifically can you do this?
7. God calls us to steward the resources He gives us. How is stewardship different from ownership? How do you practice the principle of stewardship in your life? What does it look like to save diligently, spend wisely, and give extravagantly.
8. Generosity rarely happens naturally. It's a discipline we need to build consistently over time. What do you need to change in your life to become more generous?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Pray for one another to be faithful stewards of what God has given you. Ask God to grow your generosity and manage your finances with wisdom. Pray also that the people of GateWay would seek God's plan for their individual expressions of generosity.