**PP Generous Hearts and Open Hands**

**Part 5-The *heart* of generosity 2 Corinthians 9:1-7 Pew Bible p. 968 2/10-11/2024**

**PP** *How generous are you with your money and possessions?*

Are you eager to give generously?; When you see needs others have, do you reflexively think

about how you might help meet them?; Does your heart feel compassion when you see

others in need? Do you regularly look at what you have and consider giving some away

to help others, or selling some to have the finances to give away?

Christian generosity begins with a heart that loves God and people more than material things, a

heart that willingly opens our hands with our monies and possessions to give

You can evaluate yourself by asking, **PP** *What did I give last year to the kingdom of God and the*

*poor and needy and can I willingly increase that this year?*

A frugal heart will close the hand, not trusting God nor admitting you own nothing

A generous heart sees God’s ownership of everything, that He has given to us for our needs and

that through us, the needs of the poor and the needs of His kingdom could be met

That brings us back to **PP 2 Corinthians 9, and let’s stand and read verses 1-7 (passage)**

I want to pull out of this passage three things: *the influence; the challenge, and the heart*

**PP 1-The Influence of Generosity**

**PP *“Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them.”* 9:1-2**

Friends, there are many of you at this church who are incredibly generous with your time, talents

and your treasure

My brother in law entered full-time pastoral ministry, taking a pretty severe pay cut, so Denise

and I approached our children, and asked them to pray with us about supporting

their uncle by cutting off cable tv and sending that money to them each month

What motivated us to do this was what my oldest sister did for us when we had a van break down

putting us in a financial crisis

She and her husband heard about it from my mom, and they wrote us a $1000 check for repairs

God gave us the opportunity several years later to do the same thing for them when they had a

financial crisis

Generous friends, do not underestimate the power of your example of generosity to God’s

kingdom and those in need, for your zeal can stir up others to give generously as well

Paul told the church at Corinth that by their example, the Macedonian churches of Berea,

Thessalonica, and Philippi were stirred up to give to the poor saints in Jerusalem

**PP 2-The Challenge of Generosity**

**PP *“But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.”* 2 Corinthians 9:3-5**

Denise and I have experienced having people challenge us with how we manage our finances

Earlier in our marriage, we were doing the crazy dance of credit card debt by transferring the

debt balance to a new card with 0% interest for 12 or so months, then doing it again

It enabled foolish money management and we found ourselves about 17 years ago in significant

debt and it was putting a strain on our marriage

A couple from our church noticed that strain and sat down with us to find out was going on

In doing that they discovered the financial mess we had gotten into

What happened next changed our lives: they gently exhorted us to manage our finances better,

and then they wrote out a check and wiped out our $10,000 debt

Because of their challenge and generosity, we’ve never accrued debt again except for a mortgage

The Apostle Paul challenged the Corinthians to give generously, and I wonder if you have

anyone in your life that is doing the same for you?

Is your attitude that your money is yours and you will do with it what you want?

If so, you have yet to gain the freeing perspective the of the gospel that Christians are to hold

each other accountable and encourage each other to give

But how are we to give, and how are we to encourage each other to give?

**PP 3-The Freedom of Generosity**

**PP *“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows***

***bountifully will also reap bountifully.”* 9:6**

It would not be unusual for a foolish farmer to have used too much of his grain instead of saving

it for spring planting, which would yield a sparse crop

Paul’s point is that if we spend too much on ourselves there will be little for others and we will

miss out on God’s blessing, and that word blessing is important

**PP *‘bountifully’*** means *blessing*, and those who give as a blessing to others will experience

God’s blessings in return

**PP *“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and***

 ***only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will***

 ***himself be watered.”* Proverbs 11:24-25**

But those who hold onto their possessions with an ownership mentality will experience God

 holding onto His blessings

In God’s kingdom, prosperity does not come from greedy self-indulgence, but generous giving

But the farmer says to himself, if I scatter too much seed, the birds will eat it, or the ground may

not be fertile enough, so I should keep the seeds in storage and make myself bread

Sowing generously is an act of faith, and Paul teaches us how to do that wisely

**PP *“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion,***

***for God loves a cheerful giver.”* 9:7**

Let me offer you a principle that we learn from this passage: **PP** Give from the lys and not from

the ions: *Not out of condemnation, coercion, or manipulation, but personally,*

*thoughtfully, willingly, and joyfully*

**PP** *a. Give personally…****‘Each one must give’***

There are two sides to this principle which are both the responsibility of every believer to give

generously, and unique abilities each believe has to give an amount they can

Not every Christian can give $10,000 each year, but every believer can give what is generous to

what they have

**PP** *b. Give thoughtfully…****‘as he has decided in his heart’***

Not giving emotionally or impulsively, but with great thought and careful consideration

Visualizing the impact your gift will have on the recipient, the relief they will get, the hope they

will feel, the ministry they can accomplish for the kingdom of God

Impulsive giving is often not done in wisdom and discernment, nor is it often very generous

However, impulsive buying is usually foolish, and extravagant beyond our true means

**PP** *c. Give freely…****‘not reluctantly or under compulsion’***

One of my son’s baseball coaches told me that he left his church and gave the reason why

The church required each member’s income, and calculated how much they should give

This coach sent in a $500 check, which was returned uncashed, with a note that he was not

giving the amount he should

Each of us is to give freely under no condemnation, coercion or manipulation

No body of authority applying some distorted biblical socialism through extraction

No false promise that if you give you will get back a hundredfold for your pleasure

God does not delight in a miser grudgingly opening his wallet and giving to someone in need

**PP** *d. Give cheerfully…‘****for God loves a cheerful giver.’***

Jesus said, **PP** ***'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*** **Acts 20:35**

It’s true…how enjoyable it is to be able to bless someone you know will receive it wisely

But the most amazing statement is this, ***‘God loves a cheerful giver’***

There is something about His people who give generously that pulls affection from His heart

But when God gives bountifully to generous givers, He will do so for a reason

***God loves a cheerful giver***, one whose heart has been set free by the gospel we heard last week

**PP *“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 by His poverty might become rich.”* 2 Cor 8:9**

**PP** **How do we apply these truths?**

**PP** 1-Go through your house and put a sticker on anything you no longer need and consider

giving it away or selling it and giving the money to God’s kingdom or the poor

**PP** 2-Consider giving up a monthly expense (I.e.-Netflix, Disney+, Magazine subscription, etc)

and decide as a family where to invest that money

**PP** 3-Invite an Elder to help you self-examine to see if you are a generous giver

**PP** 4-Discern wisely with discretionary purchases (wants vs needs)?

**PP** Have I sincerely prayed, asking God if He agrees with me using His money this way?

 **PP** Is there potential for this purchase to draw me away from serving God faithfully?

I have a friend who has the means to buy a vacation home, but hasn’t because he

and his wife know it would pull them away from committed service in our church

 **PP** In making this purchase, would it decrease the amount I have to give to those in need?

Christian brother, if you are walking closely with the Spirit of God, and He is giving you the

desires of your heart, then give what and how you want, and God will love you for it!

Lord’s Supper:

There is an aspect of the Lord’s Supper that has great significance for generous giving

We are about to remember and celebrate the union we have with our Lord Jesus Christ

But the Lord’s Supper is also about the union we have with each other as Christians and that is a

neglected truth of the this ordinance

In fact the Westminster Confession states: **PP** *“All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their*

*Head…and being united to one another in love…[be] relieving each other in outward*

*things, according to their several abilities and necessities”*

To participate in the Lord’s Supper is to participate together, as one body, loving each other and

helping each other as there are needs among us
It would hardly be accurate to say that I love Jesus if I have do not love fellow believers and help

them when I see needs arise

Let us eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus together then, with eyes open toward each other,

looking to encourage generosity, and helping each other as we ought