

# PRODIGAL

## CHURCH II

A SERIES IN 2 CORINTHIANS



### PRODIGAL CHURCH (SEASON 2) - JESUS TAKE MY LIFE (SAVINGS)

#### Community Group Study Guide 2 Corinthians 9 – Week of November 21, 2021

##### Bible Verses Used in the Sermon Introduction:

2 Corinthians 8:12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

- The amount doesn't matter to the Lord, as much as the desire in the heart to be as generous as possible.

Luke 21:1-4 1 Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, 2 and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

- The poor widow gave all she had to live on, to the work of the Temple. Have you ever even considered giving everything you have to live on, to the work of the Lord?

##### **2 Corinthians 9:1** Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints,

Cross references:

"Now it is superfluous for me to write to you"

- 1 Thessalonians 4:9 Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another

Lesson: sometimes you just need a reminder to do what you already know

"the ministry for the saints"

- Romans 15:25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.

*Commentary: The saints (Christians) in Jerusalem had a real financial need. Paul was marshaling Christians in all the churches he planted to pool funds to help fellow brothers and sisters in need.*

##### **2 Corinthians 9:2** 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.

The Corinthian Christians have said they will give generously to the need. Paul knows

##### BIG IDEAS

God has been so extravagantly generous with Christians, we in turn should desire to be as generous as possible to God, His children, and His Great Commission. When a clear need arises, we should be ready to give.

Christian generosity isn't just expected, it's inevitable once you understand God's generosity to you. Paul knows some of the Corinthians have means and stirs their hearts to give generously. However, he also calls those with limited means to give as generously as those who are better off..

##### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Sign up here to volunteer** to help with the preparations, setup and teardown for our **December 4 (at 6pm) Members' Meeting:** <https://mosaicboston.churchcenter.com/people/forms/300579>.

their readiness to give. Now he appeals to them to give: this is the time to put your money where your mouth is (so to speak).

Paul was so sure of the Corinthian Church's generous hearts, he's already told everyone about their commitment. Now, it's their opportunity to confirm their generous sentiment with generous action.

"Your zeal has stirred up most of them."

Zeal is the holy, fiery, burning passion to fulfill God's will. One Christian's zeal ignites another Christian's zeal, if they are open to it. Is your zeal for the Lord contagious? Your zeal will never stir the hearts of everyone, but it should stir the hearts of most people, especially those closest to you.

Cross references:

- 2 Corinthians 8:24 So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.
- 2 Corinthians 8:10 And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it.

**2 Corinthians 9:3** 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.

"prove empty" = vain, same word used in 6:1 to describe receiving the grace of God "in vain"

*Commentary: If you're truly blessed with salvation, by grace through faith, you have a new, generous, giving heart. A generous heart is often proof of salvation. A stingy heart is usually a sign of an unregenerated heart, or a regenerated heart full of sin and selfishness.*

Zacchaeus didn't become a Christian through generosity. He became a Christian because of Jesus' generously saving him, which made his heart generous.

Luke 19:8-10 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Cross references:

- 2 Corinthians 8:6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace.
- 2 Corinthians 8:17-18 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. 18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel.
- Corinthians 8:22 And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you.
- 1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

**2 Corinthians 9:4** 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.

Cross references:

- Acts 20:4 4 Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

*Commentary: on the one hand, Paul didn't need to remind them to be generous with the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. He knew these people well, having lived with them for almost two years. Paul was so sure of their generosity, he's been boasting about them to the Christians in the Macedonian churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. On the other hand, how embarrassing if the materially poor Macedonian brothers, who had been so encouraged by the example of the richer Corinthian believers a year before, should arrive in Corinth and find Paul's boasting to be premature.*

Paul's understanding of "humiliation" has nothing to do with the fear of man; in his mind humiliation is: not following through on your faith and commitments.

Are you ready to give cheerfully? "Ready" is used in the context of a soldier, ready for battle (ἀναρρασκεύαστος - military term - battle ready).

**2 Corinthians 9:5** 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.

Note: "gift" used twice in this verse is the Greek word *eulogian*, which just means "blessing." You've promised to bless the Jerusalem church; make sure it's a willing, eager blessing. A stingy, unwilling blessing is a contradiction in terms.

*Commentary: The "brothers" are Titus, and the two other men mentioned in the second half of chapter 9. Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to prepare the gift in advance, because motive is everything in Christian good works. Of course, God wants you to do the right thing, but He also wants you to want to do the right thing. Giving begrudgingly, no matter how much you give, is neither pleasing to God nor likely to bring blessing. Jesus called out the Pharisees who were glad to give gifts, as long as everyone knew about it and praised them for it. The selfish motive cancelled out any virtue of the gift in God's sight. However, there's nothing wrong with sharing how much you give if the intention is to stir the hearts of other believers to give to the Lord's work (see 1 Chronicles 29:1-9 where David tells how much he is personally giving to build the house of God.*

Cross references:

- Genesis 33:11 Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.
- Philippians 4:14-20 14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 2 Corinthians 12:17-18 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

**2 Corinthians 9:6** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

*Commentary: To sow is to plant in hopes of reaping a harvest exponentially larger than what was sown. The more you sow, the more you'll reap. Do you believe this is true? Do you act accordingly? This kind of giving takes faith that God is true to His word. Are you sowing with your fingers pinched, or with hands full and arms swinging?*

Therefore, giving isn't losing; giving is investing in your future.

Deuteronomy 15:10-11 10 You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

Cross references:

- Proverbs 11:24-25 24 One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. 25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.
- Proverbs 22:9 Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.

- Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.
- Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
- Malachi 3:6-12 6 "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. 7 From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' 8 Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. 10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. 11 I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. 12 Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.
- Luke 6:37-38 37 "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

**2 Corinthians 9:7** Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Not reluctantly = not with sorrow, sad to part with your wealth

Not under compulsion = not forced to give, under pressure or duress

Commentary: Generosity always starts in the heart. You must first decide to be generous in your heart. This is always the hardest step. The old Latin adage reads: *Quicquid cor non facit, not fit*. Literally, it reads, "whatever the heart does not do, is not done" or "Willingness is the soul of obedience."

God loves a cheerful giver, because God is a cheerful giver. Cheerful giving is godly. This is the only kind of giving God wants. God doesn't need our money, time, effort. There is nothing God *needs* you for. Not one of us is indispensable. It's a gift to get to participate in the work of God.

You can't earn a relationship with God by your giving. You are saved by grace through faith when you repent of your sins (including covetousness and greed), and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. However, God does share more of His presence with His obedient, generous, and cheerful givers. God cheerfully gives more of Himself to His cheerful givers.

#### Psalm 50:7-12

7 "Hear, O my people, and I will speak;

O Israel, I will testify against you.

I am God, your God.

8 Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you;  
your burnt offerings are continually before me.

9 I will not accept a bull from your house  
or goats from your folds.

10 For every beast of the forest is mine,  
the cattle on a thousand hills.

11 I know all the birds of the hills,  
and all that moves in the field is mine.

12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you,  
for the world and its fullness are mine.

#### Cross references:

- Deuteronomy 15:10 You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake.
- 2 Corinthians 8:12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.
- Exodus 25:2 "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.

**2 Corinthians 9:8** And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

*Commentary: God loves to bless His generous children by providing richly for them, prospering the work of their hands, and accomplishing the purpose for which they give. He's not saying give God \$x and He'll give you \$10x. He's not promising money for money. Paul's not promising only financial blessings in return—he's promising something so much deeper, sufficiency in all things. He's promising God's blessing and favor for money. God gives more of His favor to His children who are cheerful givers.*

Cross references:

- Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**2 Corinthians 9:9** As it is written,

"He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever."

The citation is from Psalm 112:9 and reads like an epitaph for a Christian philanthropist, for Gospel patrons, who give significantly to the work of the Lord, not just out of their salary, but from their wealth.

Cross references:

Psalm 112

1 Praise the Lord!

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,  
who greatly delights in his commandments!

2 His offspring will be mighty in the land;  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches are in his house,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

4 Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;  
he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

5 It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;  
who conducts his affairs with justice.

6 For the righteous will never be moved;  
he will be remembered forever.

7 He is not afraid of bad news;  
his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

8 His heart is steady; he will not be afraid,  
until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.

9 He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever;  
his horn is exalted in honor.

10 The wicked man sees it and is angry;  
he gnashes his teeth and melts away;  
the desire of the wicked will perish!

The righteous man or woman of God is through and through, generous to the needy. Some people are needy physically. All people are needy spiritually. Most people are spiritually bankrupt and we need to be spiritually generous with the Gospel and financially generous to the work of the Gospel.

**2 Corinthians 9:10** He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

Cross references:

- Isaiah 55:10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater
- Hosea 10:12 Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

**2 Corinthians 9:11** You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

Don't give to be rewarded; give cheerfully. God wants to cultivate in His children a heart like His—to live for God and others, as Jesus Christ lived for God and for others, and died for you. He will reward you by enriching you in every way to be generous in every way. The reward doesn't stop with you, but through your generosity, many will give thanks to God for you. This is real wealthy living because your heart wells up with rich satisfaction and joy, and those who are blessed by your generosity thank God for providing through you.

Cross references:

- 1 Corinthians 1:5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge
- 2 Corinthians 1:11 You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

**2 Corinthians 9:12** For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

Cross references:

- 2 Corinthians 8:14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.

**2 Corinthians 9:13** By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,

Confession of the Gospel of Christ, leads to submission, leads to generosity.

Cross references:

- Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- 1 Timothy 6:12-13 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession
- Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,
- Hebrews 4:14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.
- Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

**2 Corinthians 9:14** while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

When a Christian blesses you, bless them in return with love and prayer.

**2 Corinthians 9:15** Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Cross references:

- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
- 2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.
- 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- 2 Corinthians 8:9 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.

*Commentary: Given what the Lord has done for us, we cannot but be generous to others. You've been given so much grace, why wouldn't you want to take part in "the act of grace" or the grace of giving. Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe. All. Everything. Everything He entrusts to you, He calls you to steward well.*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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### **Read 2 Corinthians 9.**

1. We have been discussing the topic of Christian generosity for the past three weeks. What are some of the lessons that you have been meditating on the most in this period?
2. Do you feel convicted to change how to give to the church or generously in any specific ways? If so, how?
3. **Read verse 6.** What is the relationship between sowing and reaping? Is Paul promising riches and prosperity to the Christian who gives a lot?
4. What are the specific ways that God has generously provided for you throughout your life?
5. Why was sending Jesus to the cross God's most generous act to his children? What principles about generosity and giving can one arrive at by reflecting about Christ's sacrifice?
6. **Read verse 2.** Paul commends the Corinthians for their zeal, and for the way it stirred up the Macedonians. If you asked someone who knows you really well what they think you are zealous for, what do you think they would say?
7. Pastor Jan spent a lot of time casting a vision for the way that Mosaic, or any local church, could generously function when the body properly is properly acknowledging God's generosity toward them. Were you excited or motivated by any specific elements of the vision that he cast?
8. What other thoughts from the sermon or pieces of the scripture stick out to you? How are you engaging them?