

Overview

The following is from the NIV Application Commentary.

“The fact that Paul devotes so much of 2 Corinthians, his letter of restoration and apologetic for the truth, to the issue of the collection should be a sober reminder of the significance of this aspect of our Christian life. Nowhere is our materialism challenged more directly, and nowhere do we skirt the issues more often, than when it comes to expressing the genuine nature of our faith and the unity of the church through our giving.”

“The example of the Macedonians is still instructive today. In a radical role reversal of the world’s values, the abundance of their *poverty*, fueled by the *riches* of their joy in God, led to a *wealth* of generosity. We usually think of “fund raisers” as encouraging those who can afford to give to give more; in the Macedonian churches those who had nothing begged to give. Why? Paul’s answer is the grace of God. Indeed, the “also” of 8:7 shows that giving is just as much a spiritual gift of grace as any of the other charismatic gifts the Corinthians had received. Giving is not merely an expression of compassion for the needy. Nor is it simply a reflection of our own concern. Rather, the spiritual gift of giving to others is to be the reflex of our own joy in the grandeur of God’s gift to us in Christ. As we have seen, the Macedonians’ joy led to giving, not the other way around. For this reason, throughout Paul’s discussion, the collection is termed a “grace” and a “ministry!””¹

Bible Study: 2 Corinthians 8-9

1. Define as a group what it means to be a generous person. Is it defined by a certain amount, giving out of need, a person’s attitude or a combination?
2. Is there a difference in being a giving person or being a generous person? Why or why not?
3. Discuss as a group the following statement: “If a Christian struggles with being generous they don’t need a lesson on money or giving, but a bigger picture of God.”
4. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Why does it matter more ‘why’ someone gives rather than just that they give?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-2. What was the basis for giving in the Macedonian churches?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 8:8. Paul states that he is testing the genuineness of the Corinthian church’s love. In what ways is giving or not giving a test of one’s love?
7. How is contentment and generosity connected in your life? If you had the goal of becoming a more generous person how would it impact other financial decisions in your life?

¹ Hafemann, S. J. (2000). *2 Corinthians* (p. 350). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.