

Grace and Glory in Christian Generosity

What we can learn about Christian generosity from the Relief Offering at Corinth

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- How would you summarize the central idea of this week's message in one sentence? Was there anything significant that stood out to you from the message that you would share with the group? (Hint: What was your personal "aha" moment?)
- The theme of this week's message was Christian generosity. Let's prime the pump by briefly identifying what we know already about a believer's attitude in giving. Share your thoughts with the group, but keep it Biblical.

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- We began our lesson this week by talking about the historical backgrounds of the early church. We learned that the offering in Jerusalem was being collected to help in their trouble, because persecution had scattered the Fellowship. Paul, formerly Saul, was a participant in their persecution. To what degree do you think Paul's former conduct against the church motivated him to assist in their hardships now that he has become a Christ follower? This is an opinion question...so there are no right or wrong answers.
- The Macedonian churches participated in generous giving, in large part, because they had a rich understanding of the grace that had been given to them by God in salvation. How does a heart of gratitude for God's grace received lead believers to deeper generosity towards others when grace is required? In other words, how does our vertical relationship with God impact our horizontal relationships with others...with regards to generosity, and beyond?
- Perhaps the greatest eternal example of generosity is the incarnation of Jesus, who took on flesh in order to save mankind from sin. In doing so, Jesus set aside some of the attributes of His divinity to take on all of the attributes of his humanity. Theologians call this the Kenosis (pronounced Keen-Oh-sis). Let's dig a little deeper by looking at Philippians 2:5-11. Taking this piece by piece, what can we learn about the incarnation and what Jesus set aside to become one of us? Remember, in the incarnation, Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. Let's be sure to discuss in light of this indisputable Biblical truth.
- As we moved into chapter 9 this week, we learned that everything we do as believers is supposed to glorify God. When we walk out the giving principles that Paul shared with the Corinthian fellowship, we more greatly glorify God. Let's discuss Paul's giving

principles briefly and discuss any breakthroughs that God may be showing us as we comprehend them. Here they are again as a reminder...

- You'll find more abundance in giving than in keeping, because giving bears its own harvest in season.
- God loves it when His people give freely and cheerfully, but disdains begrudging gifts.
- There are no needs that you have which God cannot supply. Giving bless others, but also stretches our faith to greater trust in God.
- One of the qualities of Godliness is the value of helping others over hoarding possessions.

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Proverbs 22:9 Blessings in generosity.
- Proverbs 11:24-26 The secret to becoming rich.
- Luke 6:38 Give and it will be given to you.
- Ephesians 4:28 Work so that you may give.
- 1 Timothy 6:18 The wealthy are to be rich in good works.

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- How do we need to let our reflections on God's grace given so richly to us transform our thinking so that we are generous in our giving to others? How would God challenge you in being more like Christ in this way?
- Which of the giving principles related to Christian generosity resonate with you the loudest, and what commitments would you make as you meditate on them? Can you share one commitment that you have made tonight with the group?