

PRAYER: Begin with a few moments of sharing thanks and praises in prayer.

Leaders: it's your call; you may choose to incorporate more information/scriptures as time allows for your small group lesson. **Reflecting:** Someone once said if you want to make church people nervous, talk about children or finances. Many people are so defensive when it comes to their money that they never really hear what God's Word teaches on the subject. Satan has done a masterful job lying to God's people about their giving. Lies such as "if you give, you won't have enough to meet your own needs," or "that church doesn't really care about you. All they want is your money." Or there are other people who are better off than you. Let them take care of supporting the church" have kept many of God's people from experiencing the joy and blessing God intended them to have as a result of a giving lifestyle. Giving will never push you backwards in life; it will always propel you forward. You cannot lose by giving. You can only gain.

Paul was traveling to the different churches he had established and was collecting offerings for the Christians in Jerusalem, who had fallen upon extremely hard times. In speaking to the Corinthians, Paul used the Macedonian believers as an example of giving and as an encouragement to the Corinthians.

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:1-5

OPENER: What is one lesson about money you can recall learning from your parents?

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6-9

In his teach on "sowing and reaping" is Paul saying that if you give \$100 you will get \$1000? (why? or why not?)

(Re-read verse 8) What do you make of the three "alls" in this verse?

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:10-11

For what purpose will God materially bless these people?

How does generosity affect righteousness, and the ever-widening circles of people giving thanks to God?

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:12 - 15

How is giving contagious?

How does it reflect God's grace?

Why is being able to receive also important (verse 12)?

Read: 2 Corinthians 8:12-13

Notice that when it comes to a giving an offering, God wants it to come from a willing mind. When we stop to consider all that Christ has done for us, can there really be any other response?

How can we withhold from others the truth that has set us free? To do so is a great act of selfishness on our part. But God won't demand an offering from us. He wants it to come willingly.

PLAN for ACTION:

As Christians we do have an obligation to give offerings towards the spreading of the gospel and helping those in need. But when we understand what God wants to accomplish in our own life through our giving, the obligation turns into opportunity. Because of what Paul wrote to them in Philippians 4:15-19, the Macedonians knew that this offering would cause fruit to abound in their heavenly account, and that God would supply all of their needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

What have you reaped by being generous to others?

How can God's promise (verse 8) enable you to be more generous? To persevere in your work?

How do generosity and financial planning and responsibility fit together?

How can this group pray for you this week?

To view the complete teaching from the Sunday services go to www.centralcommunity.org/media/index.html

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