

2 Corinthians 8-9 ***Financial Ethics***

1. **What was the collection Paul spoke of going to be used towards? See also Act 11:27-30, 24:17, Gal 2:10. Do you see a pattern?** It was a "sharing in this service to the saints," (8:5). From 8:13-15 it can be seen that some were hard pressed and needed help. It was an effort to supply the needs of God's people (9:12).
 - a. **Act 11:27-30** God through the Holy Spirit predicted a severe famine and the church at Antioch sent a gift to the church in Judea to help out.
 - b. **Act 24:17** Paul brought gifts for the poor and offerings when he came to Jerusalem.
 - c. **Gal 2:10** When the leaders of the Jerusalem church publicly endorsed Paul's gospel and ministry, they added nothing to his message, recognizing it as genuine. They agreed with Paul's calling to evangelize the Gentiles and asked that they should continue to remember the poor.

2. What principles regarding giving can you find in Chpts 8-9, Matt 6:1-4, and 1 Jn 3:16-20

Principles: Give as God directs. Give yourself to God first. Keep your commitments know that God is concerned with your attitude, not the amount. Give willingly. Maintain accountability, Give from your heart as God directs, willingly, not under compulsion. Know that God blesses a generous heart. Know that what you do from your heart for God will result in praise and thanksgiving.

- a. **What sort of giving is being described in these texts?** Not regular offerings, supporter tithes but a special offering for a specific need.
- b. **How is this different than the tithe (Dt 14) or offerings for the Lord's work?** In Dt 14, each household was to put aside 10% of their increase annually. This was set aside for family worship (Dt 14:22-27). They themselves consumed the lion's share of the set aside monies/goods. But, every third year, they were to earmark their tithe for the support of the Levites and priests (who taught the law of God, administered justice and dispensed assistance to the needy, e.g., 2 Chron 31:2-21), and for the relief of orphans, widows and foreigners in need. See also Dt 26:12-15, Ne 10:37-39 and Am 4:4 for further examples.

3. What is said specifically in these verses:

- **2 Cor 8:5** The Macedonian believers gave themselves first to God.
- **2 Cor 8:12** God accepts our offerings irregardless of amount or percentage. What He is concerned with is the attitude of our hearts. He loves a willing heart.
- **2 Cor 8:13-15** God wants us to put our faith into practice and care for one another.
- **2 Cor 8:16-21** God desires that we handle money with integrity and accountability.
- **2 Cor 9:6-9** God loves a cheerful, willing and generous giver and blesses such.
- **2 Cor 9:10-12** God blesses those who give from their hearts for the right reasons.

- 3. What does God promise to do for those who honor Him with their resources (9:8, 11)?**
- **2 Cor 9:10-12** He blesses abundantly so that their "harvest of righteousness" will be enlarged.
- a. What is meant?** That those whose giving is a matter of willing worship will be blessed.
- b. Are any promises made to reward the believer *materially*? Explain.** Only in very general terms. He states that the obedient will be made rich *in every way* so that they can be generous on every occasion. Just as in verse 10 where God says that He will increase the harvest of righteousness. That may or may not include a monetary increase. It could include anything: money, good health, the fruit of the Spirit, wisdom etc. Look at Paul's commendation of the Macedonians in 8:1-7. They were experiencing severe trials, extreme poverty and yet were commended. They were not out of God's will. Some modern teachers (Whom I would call false prophets) insist that God wants believers to experience material prosperity. Yet Jesus Himself said that we would have the poor among us always, the church is commanded to care for the poor and Jesus didn't even have a place to call home (Lk 9:58). In 1 Tim 6:3-10 believers are warned against those who teach that godliness is a means to financial gain (vs 5)

Homework
Chapter 10-13:10
Paul defends his ministry
Section 1 (10:1-18)

Read chapter 10:1-18 and answer the following questions:

- 1. What kind of people is this letter addressed to? (1:1).**
- 2. How does this world engage in conflict? Give some specific examples of the world's way of handling conflict.**
 - a. What are some ways that people try to get ahead (good or bad)?**
 - b. In what ways do people attack others?**
 - c. In what ways do people defend themselves?**
- 3. God says that our warfare and weapons need to be different.**
 - a. List our weapons (See Eph 6:10-18):**
 - b. Where do these weapons originate?**
 - c. Look up Rom 12:9-21 and Lk 6:27-36 and describe God's way of dealing with conflict.**
 - Rom 12:9-21
 - Lk 6:27-36

- d. What should be the believer's focus? (See 1 Jn 2:15-17).
4. God has called us to a new basis of thinking. I call it, "kingdom thinking."
- a. How does this way of thinking differ from the world's (2 Cor 10:2-3 and the other passages that you have looked up in Rom and Lk)?
 - b. In Act 6, the infant church was directed to seek out seven men who were known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. If you were give that mandate, what would you look for?