

Generous with God

Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

2 Corinthians 8:10–12 (NIV)

August 29th 520 B.C. – IT'S NOW OR NEVER

An important question – Is this the time ...?

Some important principles regarding generosity toward God in giving and in service

If you are **too busy** for God, don't expect **fruitful living**.

Haggai 1; Prov 21:13

If you **are generous with God**, God will be **generous toward you**.

Malachi 3:8-12; Prov 11:24; 2 Cor 9:6-8

One of the most neglected practices in everyday life: *"Give careful thought to your ways."*

What happened when they gave careful response: They obeyed God; they listened to God's messenger; they completely trusted in God.

Their response showed they were **ready to obey God**; they just needed to **wake up!**

They started work on September 21st.

October 17th – TAKE HEART AND WORK HARD

When the result doesn't meet expectations ...

Some hard lessons to learn:

It doesn't have to be perfect to be good. (But we don't strive for mediocrity)

When God is with us, he makes our work greater and more expansive than we could accomplish alone, even though we might not see it.

November 18th – FROM NOW ON ...

When a willing heart isn't enough

Two questions and an answer

Working hands without pure hearts lead to frustrated lives.

God says, "From this day on, give careful thought to how things were before."

God's promise says, "From this day on, I will bless you."

God says "give careful thought to your ways." As you consider today's study, what comes to mind as a special area of life that you might consider either positively in God's blessing or negatively in what is holding you back from a heartfelt obedience and trust in Jesus Christ?

Small Group Homework
For the week of October 25, 2015

Getting to know you

Did you (or do you) have a nickname? What is it and who gave it to you?

Digging in

In the study this week Jim we saw people who were too busy to God and had too many financial stressors to support his work. Read Matthew 6:19-24.

Matthew 6:19–24 (NIV). “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

1. Jesus laid out an interesting point: our heart follows our treasure; it's not that we treasure what our heart wants. Think hard on this one: Why is that; why doesn't our heart set the agenda?

If that's the case, how can we tell what we really treasure? What are the things that compete for the title of treasure in your life?

Why is frustrated living part of the consequence of having the wrong treasure?

Proverbs 23:4–5 (NIV). Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness. ⁵ Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

2. Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-3.

2 Corinthians 9:1–3 (NIV). There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord’s people. ²For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. ³But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be.

What were the positive results that flowed from the Corinthians’ generosity for God’s people?

Can you describe a time how God used you as a blessing in the life of another person or ministry at a special time of need?

Can you describe a time when you were particularly blessed by the generosity of another toward you?

3. What principles of generosity can you pull out of the following passage?

2 Corinthians 9:6–8 (NIV). Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Prayer Requests

- Keep your requests concise but complete
- Keep your prayers concise – don’t try to impress
- Feel free to springboard off another’s prayer as God brings different insights to mind
- Feel free to pray more than once

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