

LIFE IN THE CHURCH

Rich in Poverty — 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

October 28, 2018

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. - **2 Corinthians 8:9**

- **Backdrop to 2 Cor. 8:1-15.** Paul had asked the Corinthian church to take up an offering for the beleaguered church in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The Corinthians had not followed through on the offering, and now Paul is encouraging them to follow through with their pledge.

I. THE GRACE OF GIVING

- The motivation for giving is joy, not guilt (vs. 2).
- Even in difficult circumstances and extreme or “deep” poverty we can be generous (vs. 2).
- Giving is “graceful” only when it is done cheerfully and in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (vs. 5; 2 Cor. 9:7).
- As believers, we should try to excel in all the acts of God’s grace. Stewardship and generosity are no exception (vs. 7).
- Our best example in giving and generosity is Jesus (vs. 9).
- If we see God as a taker—as demanding things from us—we tend to give sparingly.
- If we see God as a giver—as a bountiful promise maker and deliverer—we tend toward generosity.

II. TO TITHE OR NOT TO TITHE

- The tithe in the temple era was beyond what we probably imagine (Gen. 14:19-20; Deut. 12:6; 14:22-23; 26:12-15; Num. 18:26).
- The command to tithe (the “tenth”) is not repeated in the New Testament.
- Church-age instructions are to give cheerfully, consistently, and in proportion to your income.

KNOW: The Old Testament concept of tithing is not a New Testament mandate. We are called to be devoted to Christ, and then to allow that relationship to dictate our stewardship.

DO: Learn to be a consistent, generous, and cheerful giver.

Suggested Reading:

The Treasure Principle by Randy Alcorn (LifePoint Library #332 ALC)

Decision Making and the Will of God by Gary Friesen

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

1. What is Paul’s main point in this section about stewardship? What does he want to pass on to the church?
2. I spoke on Sunday about guilt not being a strong motivator to generosity. Do you agree with that? How then should we encourage generosity in the church?
3. In 2 Cor. 8:8 and 8:10, Paul says he is not commanding the Corinthians to give and then gives them his “advice.” Why do you think we are not commanded to give now that we live under the new covenant?
4. We talked about the “Law of the Harvest” from 2 Cor. 9:6. How do we keep this teaching from becoming abused?
5. Read Luke 12:15. What is the warning here? What does our world teach us concerning what we base our value on in life? Now read Luke 9:25. What is the warning here? Are there implied promises in these two passages?
6. What is your main takeaway from the teaching on Sunday?