

Faithfulness

How does God change your perspective on giving?

GIVING and THANKSGIVING are inseparable.

The heart and soul of financial stewardship is grace. We joyfully give because he joyfully gave us so much. Take grace out of giving and you remove the engine from the car.

Our response to grace is a measure of faithfulness. That's the fruit we examine today. I dramatically changed my view of money when I realized I had not been faithful, a good steward of what God entrusted to me.

This fruit of the Spirit- faithfulness- is about stewardship.

Do you care fully, wholeheartedly, for what is entrusted to you?

Faithfulness is about completing assignments.

Nowhere is this more true, is faithfulness more on trial or display, than your wealth.

2 Cor.8 captures the essence of what I'm saying. Paul's approach is to hold up the Macedonians; as he points to their financial faithfulness, their gifts, he calls them:

v.1 "the grace of God".

v.6 this gracious work

9:14 the surpassing grace of God in you

No doubt it was nothing short of the grace of God:

v.2-3 in affliction and deep poverty they had the wealth of liberality with abundant joy. It is safe to say, money had no grip on their hearts.

How did the Macedonians come to be transformed by the grip of grace?

1. They knew money

2. They knew Jesus

1. They knew Money

What's money's place?

Money is a power to be released in your life, either constructively or destructively.

It is designed to contribute to your DIGNITY: we all need to have a part of the world to care for. Money empowers us to do that.

BUT, because of sin money can become your DEFINITION.

The more money God entrusts to you, the more empowered you are to help others (not yourself). That's faithfulness.

Faithfulness is doing with your money what God directs.

What does God direct?

a.. That you thankfully give him the first tenth (or tithe) of your increase.

b. Offerings are also accepted. These are voluntarily expressions of your experience of God's rich grace and supply. In this text Paul gives two helpful principles to define generosity:

a. 8:11-12 *according to your means.*

b. 9:6-7 *purpose in your heart.*

2. They knew Jesus

The only possible way to enjoy this lifestyle is by the grace of Jesus.

v.5 *first gave themselves to the Lord*

v.9 they knew Jesus the rich man: