

Praying Together

Spend time praying together with your group, making sure you include those who continue to be affected by the devastation in Montecito. Also take into account people's personal requests. Then, make sure you take some time to lift up one or more of the following requests for our church life together, especially during this interim phase:

Prayer for Each Other

Prayers for the Church

January 29: *Pray for our denominational leaders who are assisting us in the pastor search process*

January 30: *Praise and thank Jesus for being the head of our church!*

January 31: *Pray that Community Covenant will truly become a praying church*

Pray for our community and the world



How To Get Rich, Part 2

2 Corinthians 9: 1-15

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Opening Up:

In the church(es) you've been part of, what were the messages you received about the use of your money, especially regarding giving to the church?

Digging into The Text:

Read 1 Corinthians 9.1-15. Based on the first five verses, summarize what appears to be the background situation behind this passage. Look back to chapter 8.1-7, to see how those words help you understand the situation at hand. (If you have some extra time, read 1 Corinthians 16.1-4 and/or Romans 15.25-29).

Read 2 Corinthians 8.9, and describe why it is that this profound thought should have an effect on the giving of our financial resources to Kingdom work. How does that motivate, or not motivate, you? Another motivation to generous giving is found in 2 Cor. 9.6. What does he mean by that statement? Read at verse 10. How does that add to your understanding?

Paul is clearly indicating that when we give generously, we are blessed. Can you see in this passage indications of how Christians are blessed when they give? (Note also Proverbs 22.9, Psalm 112.5). In Acts 20.35, Paul records Jesus saying that it is more blessed to give than to receive. How do you think that truth expresses itself in real life? Have there been times in your life when you have been blessed (in whatever way) for your giving?

In our giving, God reminds us that he has our basic needs covered. Have you ever given to a need that set you back financially (only some will be comfortable with sharing this in Life Group)? Take a look at Philippians 4.19: What do you think it means that God will satisfy our needs when we give? Is it possible to give so much that you could become destitute?

Take a careful look at 2 Cor. 9.7, and jot down the guidelines that you see there for giving. Do you think that Paul is essentially saying that Christians have free reign to determine what they should give and not give? Are you cheerful (glad) in your giving? Does this mean that if you can't give joyously, a person shouldn't give at all?

Have you ever practiced the discipline of tithing? What was your experience with it (did you find it helpful or a hindrance?). If you read Malachi 3.8-12, you will see that God meant business when instructing the Jews to maintain the tithe. Why isn't the tithe in force in the New Testament? Does that let Christians off the hook when it comes to giving? Is there legitimacy in giving according to a set percentage?

Getting Personal:

Remember that our own church body is 100% sustained by the giving of its people. In light of what you studied, does that affect your thinking about giving to our church? In 2 Cor. 9.7, we're told to carefully determine what to give. Is your giving based on careful decisions you've made ahead of time?

Things to Ponder:

How much of your income did you give to God's Kingdom work in 2017? Considering what you've studied, and taking a look at your personal budget, can you increase your generous giving to God's purposes this year? If you dare, make a settled and prayerful decision!