

## **Stewardship Series Bible Study**

### **1 CHEERFUL GIVERS**

2 Corinthians 9:6-12: <sup>6</sup>The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup>Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup>And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. <sup>9</sup>As it is written, “He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” <sup>10</sup>He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup>You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; <sup>12</sup>for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

*Read the text above several times.*

What words do you notice or wonder about?

Where have you sown bountifully?

Where have you sown sparingly?

In verse 7 Paul refers to a “cheerful” giver. The Greek word is literally “hilaros”, related to the English hilarious.

What do you think Paul was trying to communicate?

When were you able to be a hilarious giver?

When have you seen God/someone else be a hilarious giver?

The Church in Macedonia was very generous to the Jerusalem Church as they were collecting funds to care for widows and orphans. In Chapter 9 of II Corinthians Paul appears to be challenging the Corinthian Church to do the same. Read further in II Corinthians and consider the ways that Paul in an eloquent fund raiser.

What does he do?

How does he motivate people?

Would you give to Paul’s campaign for the Jerusalem Church?



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**2 First Fruits**

One of the purposes of the book of Deuteronomy is to prepare the Israelites to re-enter the land God had promised to their ancestors. Their ancestors were in Egypt for many generations. After the exodus, Moses guided the people in the wilderness for 40 years. He sought to form them into a community of faith. In Deuteronomy 8 Moses states that commandments and directions for living in the community are meant so that the people do not forget God, or who they are as the people of God, especially as they enter back into the Promised Land and experience prosperity. Deuteronomy 26 gives specific directions for honoring God and remembering who they are.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

26When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, <sup>2</sup>you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. <sup>3</sup>You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." <sup>4</sup>When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, <sup>5</sup>you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. <sup>6</sup>When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, <sup>7</sup>we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup>The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; <sup>9</sup>and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. <sup>11</sup>Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

What stories do you tell about how your faith was shaped?

What family stories do you have that tell of your family's faith journey?

What rituals and practices happen in your family to remember who you are as people of God?

Who was most influential in teaching you the faith?

Who taught you about generosity?



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**3 The Love of Money**

We don't really talk about money in the church much. Jesus talks more about money than he talks about heaven or hell. Timothy writes pastoral letters to the fledgling churches in Asia Minor. He outlines behavior that can draw people away from faith. We live our lives with gratitude for all that God has done for us.

I Timothy 6: 2b-10

Teach and urge these duties. <sup>3</sup>Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, <sup>4</sup>is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, <sup>5</sup>and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

<sup>6</sup>Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; <sup>7</sup>for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; <sup>8</sup>but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. <sup>9</sup>But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

The classical reading of verse 10 is "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." With further research the better translation is "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil."

What are the evils "the love of money" can bring?

What does money represent to you?

How does the "love of money" tempt you?

What is the difference between the love of money and good financial money management?

How do you reconcile money and faith?

Share examples of ways advertising promotes the love of money and possessions.

The way we use money says a great deal about our faith. Money is a resource, a valuable resource. Talking about money and connecting it to our faith in Jesus is vital. Giving money away is a way to not let money own one's life.

