2nd Corinthians

Series: More Than Extravagant

July 29, 2018

Message 5:

**The Gross Generostic Product**

2nd Corinthians 9

*Guests - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Growth Track - Step 1 Next Week!*

*Generosity -*

*Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

Series Title comes from 2nd Corinthians 9:10-11 MSG - This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.

I’ve invented a new word! …

**Gross domestic product** (**GDP**) is a monetary [measure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measurement_in_economics) of the market value of all [final goods](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Final_goods) and services produced in a period (quarterly or yearly) of [time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time).

The result of production - what is produced by the economy?

Paul answers this question: What is produced by generosity?

Coin a new phrase - **Gross Generostic Product**

**Big Idea: Generosity compounded leads to the ultimate reward!**

You know about compounding interest …

The more you save … the same is true with the more you give …

T.S.: Let me show you - as Paul shows us - as he was taught by the Holy Spirit of God Himself -

5 statements -

**> You already know the truth about giving.**

2nd Corinthians 9:1-2 - I really don’t need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving.

You know what the Bible says ..

You know it’s a blessing …

You know it brings joy …

You know that when you give - and experience joy - and experience blessing - it encourages others to give -

Then, not only is the purpose of God provided for - but others receive the same joy you receive!

You don’t want to be the only one receiving joy do you? That’s stingy! That’s the opposite of generosity!

So we give, so that we can have joy - others ask about the joy - “It’s because I’m having so much fun giving!” - then they want to give and get in on the joy!

It is more blessed to give than to receive!

I much more love the joy on the face of those who receive my gifts, than having all attention focused on me while I receive a gift. I really hate that!

I’m always wondering if my response is good enough! ….

Is it a test? Of course!

Malachi 3:10 - Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!

How is this a test? We know it must be a test because so many people have trouble doing this -

* How many plagues were there in Egypt?
	+ In other words, how many times did God test Pharoah’s heart?
* How many Commandments are there?

The next ones you might not know right away, but there is a pattern developing that might give away the answers -

* How many times did God test Israel in the wilderness?
* How many times were Jacob’s wages changed?
* How many days was Daniel tested?
* How many bridesmaids were tested in Matthew 25 when the bridegroom was coming?
* How many days of testing are mentioned in Revelation?
* How many disciples were there?

Just checking to see if you’re listening!

So, God develops tithing to test us, and when it comes to our finances this is a bigger test than anything else He could have developed. But He knew what He was doing. And every week or every couple of weeks, or every month - we get to take the test!

At this point in my life, this is no longer a test! I’ve seen the results so many times, I wouldn’t want to live without the results! God honors His Word! He blesses!

God is not just thinking about the provision of the ministry - He is desiring to bless His people - He promises He will - all He is looking for is the evidence of our faith in obedience.

Seems crazy - God is sometimes looking for crazy - He will bless!

We need to prepare for this -

**> Preparation leads to generosity.**

2nd Corinthians 9:3-5 - But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don’t want to be wrong in my boasting about you. We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren’t ready after all I had told them! So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly.

Budget! Prepare! Put God first!

* My experience as a child.
* My experience in giving to building pledges …

1st Corinthians 16:2 - On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don’t wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.

Plan - prepare - don’t spend the tithe before you give it - Give the tithe before you spend it!

Here’s another principle - the tithe is the first tenth - not the third - the eight - or the last -

If you pay every other bill and then give 10%, you are not truly tithing -

The principle is not just ten percent - it is the first ten percent - it is giving to God first -

Again - from last week - who are we trusting - God or ourselves?

If we are trusting ourselves, we are not trusting God.

If we think we can handle our money better than God’s financial advice - we are not trusting God - we are even saying we are smarter than God - we are committing blasphemy and idolatry!

Strong words - but true!

God is smarter than me - I will not put my wisdom above His.

“I don’t have the money!” - You have ten percent of whatever you have!

“I can’t afford to give it!” - Then you need to pray - because that is evidence that you are trusting yourself to be your provider and not trusting God to be your Provider!

Why do you think it’s called faith? If it all got figured out with pencil and paper, and the best budgeting program and app you could find - if you made it all work out with comfortable room to spare before you gave it - no trust would be required - no faith would be required - God would not be required!

He wants to not only test you - but MAKE YOUR FAITH GROW!

Do you want your faith to grow? Do this! That’s what Paul is writing to the Corinthians!

**> Generosity is an attitude, not an amount.**

2nd Corinthians 9:6-9 - Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say,

 “They share freely and give generously to the poor.

 Their good deeds will be remembered forever.”

“I want to give, I just don’t have it!”

No - a generous attitude is, “I’m going to figure out a way to do this!”

When I am generous with what I have, God will give me more.

My prayer … God test me - let me show you how much I want to give. Bless me so that I can give even more - I’ll be faithful with what I have now - so that I will give you the opportunity to bless me so that I can give more!

It’s such a joy to give what I have - I know it will be an even greater joy to give more!

**> Generosity gives birth to generosity.**

2nd Corinthians 9:10-12 - For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

 Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.

Faithful with little, given opportunity over greater things … Jesus’ parable …

Matthew 25:14-30 - “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

 “The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master’s money.

 “After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’

 “The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

 “The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.’

 “The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

 “Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’

 “But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’

 “Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver.

Matthew 25:29 - To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.

Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

* If you don’t think you can give anything, give something.
* If you don’t think you can tithe, then tithe.
* If you don’t think you can give more than the tithe, give 11%

Some of you think I’m just talking to those who haven’t yet learned or practiced this … some of you have been giving for a long time - tithes … offerings … you’re saying amen - you’re not sure you really need to hear this -

Let me ask you:

If you have been proving this for years - and you have seen God’s faithfulness - when is the last time you increased your giving? When is the last time you stretched yourself?

When is that last time you tested God’s promises here?

Malachi - test me!

**If you’ve stopped increasing your gift, then you’ve stopped increasing the potential for God to increase your generosity.**

**> Generosity is rewarded by grace - the ultimate gift.**

2nd Corinthians 9:13-14 - As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!

The ultimate result is not me receiving more - my bank account growing - not even inspiring others to give -

The ultimate reward of my generosity is seeing others come into the Kingdom of God.

There is a gift of giving - I want it -

We talk about all our gifts - and how all our gifts result in people coming to know Jesus - when that happens we all rejoice.

When you give - it results in people coming to know Jesus.

People come to know Jesus - end up going to heaven instead of hell, because of every gift that is given.

The more gifts that are given, the more souls are turned from darkness to light - receive the ultimate gift - and heaven gets more crowded!

That’s why we should not worry about ourselves, and give as much as we can - and even more!

Paul says it’s too great to even describe!

**Invitation** - if watching by video pray with us.

Connection Card - if watching on video - let me know via email.

**Blessing**