

# FOR GOD'S SAKE GROW UP

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## CONNECT BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING

- If you had the financial resources to change one thing in your life, what would it be?
- Can you tell about a time when someone was generous to you in a meaningful way?
- What was the approach to money you saw from parents or others as you were growing up?

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## TRUTH UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING

*No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (Matthew 6:24)*

Money is often referred to as a necessary evil in society today, though in truth, money isn't really evil at all. The Bible does make clear, though, that serving money is. Jesus spoke about money often, and the truth of the matter is that if we don't learn how to approach money in a mature manner, we simply won't mature as Christians. There seem to be three major dysfunctional views of money today—loving God *for the sake of our money* (the false gospel of prosperity), loving God *and hating our money* (the false gospel of austerity), and loving God *only slightly less than our money* (the false American gospel). In this week's passage, however, we will attempt to discern God's truth about money—namely, that Jesus calls his disciples to love God *with* their money.

## WE LOVE GOD WITH OUR MONEY BY BEING HONEST ABOUT GREED

**READ:** 2 Corinthians 9:1-5

**DISCUSS:** What is Paul's message to the Corinthian church in these verses?

We are all called to be generous and self-sacrificing disciples of Jesus, and the reality is that generosity is hard. The Corinthians stepped out in faith to give freely and generously because of their trust in God's provision. However, there are times when we all need help, including accountability. As Paul insinuates, accountability is not necessarily as a correction of weakness, but more about remaining strong and becoming stronger because of others. The Corinthians needed accountability to stay committed to the gift they agreed to give, and Paul sees to it that they have exactly what they need because of his love for them.

## WE LOVE GOD WITH OUR MONEY BY SOWING, NOT SPENDING

**READ:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

**DISCUSS:** In these verses, what does God promise will happen as we sow in generosity, and what does he not promise?

Initially, this passage almost seems to promise earthly prosperity for my earthly generosity. However, as we read on, it becomes more clear that not only is this generosity is not merely characterized by money, but that it is hardly an earthly matter at all. Simply, as he meets our needs, it is for the purpose of freeing us to live generous lives on behalf of others, and in thankful worship of God with our time, labor, and money.

## **WE LOVE GOD WITH OUR MONEY BY GIVING TO GOD'S MISSION**

**READ:** 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

**DISCUSS:** How does giving generously bring glory to God?

Generous giving by followers of Christ results in God's glory through gratitude and worship, but also from others who see and experience this generosity. God's grace supplies not only for our needs, but as we obey Christ and give to God's mission on Earth, God's glory is multiplied to all those who witness and receive it.

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## **GRACE** SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

In verse 13, Paul describes our giving as something we do in response to the Gospel. It can be tempting to believe that our giving somehow makes God love us more, but the reality is that his love for us is complete in Jesus. And so, our giving is in response to having been given everything in all of eternity to share in as an inheritance alongside Jesus as his brothers and sisters. God has given all that he has ever had—all that has ever been—in order to win a people for himself who give as we were taught.

**DISCUSS:** Do you most often give in response to God's generosity, or in an attempt to earn his love and blessing?

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## **CHANGE** APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS

- In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to trust in God to provide for your needs?
- What sort of support do you need from those around you to remain disciplined about giving?
- Are there practical steps you need to take in order to free yourself to step into greater generosity?

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## **PRAYER** RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Pray that God would teach us eyes to see the needs of others around us that God may be calling us to meet.
- Pray that we might learn to love the discipline of giving, and that it may stir our worship for God.