

Showcase, Showdown

Core Competency

Stewardship

I Tim 6:17-19

Core Competencies

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- **Stewardship**

Core Practices

- Worship Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Dear Fellow Good Stewards,

We are heading into the final stretch of our series on stewardship. I trust you are realizing that all of our lives and everything we are belongs to God—not just our pocket-books or our tithe.

I don't know about you, but when I look at my entire life in light of Paul's words to "... offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God... (Romans 12:1), I am reminded and convicted that my decisions, my time and my heart needs to be realigned with God's call to "...make disciples of all nations."

I trust you are able to set aside time each day to spend time with God in prayer for our church, in meditation on His Word and in meaningful relationships and conversations that will have eternal impact.

Our church is in full swing preparing to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. Hundreds of hours will be dedicated to planning and preparing a week that reminds us of God's sacrifice for each of us. Let's be intentional in our prayers for our neighbors and co-workers that God will direct us into conversations that will lead us to invite them to attend one of Grace's four Easter Services.

As a church, let's all conclude our "Forty Days of Prayer" and begin the week of Easter by attending our Concert of Prayer on Palm Sunday Evening at 6:00pm. Our time together will provide an opportunity to connect each other and with God as we pray for Him to continue using us as His instruments to reach our friends, neighbors, co-workers and the world for Christ.

As we all continue to make our lives a sacrifice, may more people come to a personal and life-changing encounter of the risen Christ.

Juno

Engaging Our Minds & Hearts

Day 1

Last week we looked at 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 and saw some clear principles regarding giving money for God's work on earth—expressed specifically in the church. We were also challenged to approach giving not with a mindset of duty or obligation, but seeing our involvement as an immense privilege to participate in God's work. As we complete our series dealing with the **Core Competency of Stewardship**, we will take a closer look at five verses within that context. This week's core scripture passage is **2 Corinthians 9:10-14**.

Today, as always, begin your time with God's Word in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to clearly show you the truth contained here and to apply that truth specifically to your minds, your hearts, and your actions. The desire of our heart must be, to not simply see God's truth, but to be changed by that truth! We should earnestly desire Romans 12:2 for our lives. *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."*

We will once again begin our time by reading through the text in various versions and within the context. Today read through the entire chapter of 2 Corinthians 9 at least three times in different versions. If you have internet capabilities, you can go to www.biblegateway.com, and access a variety of versions. You might try *The Message* for a very current vernacular, *The New King James* for an easy to understand and accurate translation, and or *The Amplified Version* for a very detailed account.

Both verse 6 and verse 10 begin with the same Greek word which the New American Standard translates as “Now.” This is a conjunction that may be used to mark an addition sometimes implying a contrast or a marker of a summary statement.

Write out the truths that you see in each of these sections (vs. 6-9 and vs. 10-15) and note the similarities and differences. How do verses 10-15 seem to build upon and expand the truths in 6-9?

Day 2

Today’s Passage: (2 Corinthians 9:10-15)

Pray first!

1. Today will be spent in observing closely the truths in these last few verses of 2 Corinthians 9. Tomorrow we will spend time in careful interpretation of those truths and then seek to apply these truths to our lives. Read through the passage and mark in a distinctive way the word “**God**” and all pronouns that refer to Him. List all that you learn about God from this passage as it relates to your giving.
2. Read through the passage and mark in a distinctive way the word “**saints**” and all pronouns that refer to them. List all that you learn about saints from this passage.
3. Read through the passage and mark in a distinctive way the pronouns “**you/your.**” List all that you learn from this passage as it relates to you and your giving.

Day 3

Today's Passage: (2 Corinthians 9:10-15)

Pray first!

Read through the section "ENGAGE THE CONTEXT" at the back of this study guide, if you haven't already done so.

Today, we will look at some of the Greek words and their meanings that are used in this passage. As you read through these, take the meanings back into the passage and see if that doesn't help to enlarge your understanding of the truths God is showing you. (New International Version unless otherwise noted)

Verse 10:

seed - *sperma*: from which a plant germinates, the seed i.e. the grain or kernel which contains within itself the germ of the future plants.

harvest - *genēma*: fruit, produce

righteousness - *dikaïosynē*: in a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God. The doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God. Integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting.

Verse 11:

generosity (NIV) **liberality** (NAS) - *haplotēs*: simplicity, sincerity – not having an ulterior or double motive - It is rather faithful benevolence out of proper motivation.

Verse 12:

supplying - *prosanaplēroō*: To supply abundantly

needs - *hysterēma*: deficiency, that which is lacking, in reference to property and resources, poverty, want, destitution.

Verse 13:

praise (NIV), **glorify** (NAS) - *doxazō*: to think, suppose, be of opinion. To praise, extol, magnify, celebrate. To honour, do honour to, hold in honour

generosity (NIV), **liberality** (NAS) - *haplotēs*: see same word in verse 11

sharing - *koinōnia*: a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship.

Verse 14:

hearts will go out to you (NIV), **yearn for you** (NAS) - *epipotheō*: to long for, desire. To pursue with love, to long after.

race - *charis*: of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues.

Day 4

Pray first!

Today take time to personalize these truths to your life.

Do you recognize the hand of God in your life as He provides for you for the ministry of giving? What is the seed that He has provided and multiplied to you? In what ways are you sowing that seed? Have you seen increase in the harvest? What are the areas of growth that you would like to see in your life as it relates to this? Write a prayer to God that reflects that desire.

Verse eleven says that we are made rich in every way. Think “outside the box” for a few minutes. What are some of the ways God has made you rich, that are not financial. How are you being generous with that “wealth”? On what occasions and in what ways are you being generous with all that God has given to you? Is it resulting in praise and thanksgiving to God?

Although this passage is speaking specifically about saints/believers that were experiencing incredible financial and physical needs, something that may be quite foreign to most of us, all of us have received in real ways because of the obedient and sacrificial giving of brothers and sisters in Christ. Evaluate **your** response to those gifts and the givers. Are **you** overflowing with praise and thanksgiving to God? Do **you** glorify God because of the ministry of others on your behalf? Do **you** pray for **them**? Yearn for them? Is this an area of your life that needs to change or be enlarged?

Day 5

Pray first!

Start today’s time with praise and thanksgiving to God for the many “riches” He has poured into you and your life. Then ask Him to give you His heart for others and eyes that will see the opportunities He has and will place before you. Ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit and empower you to walk in obedience to all that He asks of you.

As we complete our series on Stewardship, read the following two stories, and allow God to continue to speak truth and life to your heart in this area.

God Provides

In the latter part of the 17th century, German preacher, August H. Francke, founded an orphanage to care for the homeless children of Halle. One day when Francke desperately needed funds to carry on his work, a destitute Christian widow came to his door begging for a ducat—a gold coin. Because of his financial situation, he politely but regretfully told her he couldn't help her.

Disheartened, the woman began to weep. Moved by her tears, Francke asked her to wait while he went to his room to pray. After seeking God's guidance, he felt that the Holy Spirit wanted him to change his mind. So, trusting the Lord to meet his own needs, he gave her the money. Two mornings later, he received a letter of thanks from the widow. She explained that because of his generosity she had asked the Lord to shower the orphanage with gifts. That same day Francke received 12 ducats from a wealthy lady and 2 more from a friend in Sweden. He thought he had been amply rewarded for helping the widow, but he was soon informed that the orphanage was to receive 500 gold pieces from the estate of Prince Lodewyk Van Wurtenburg.

When he heard this, Francke wept in gratitude. In sacrificially providing for that needy widow, he had been enriched, not impoverished.

Source unknown

When a Man Finds Jesus, It Costs Him Everything

"So when man finds Jesus, it costs him everything. Jesus has happiness, joy, peace, healing, security, eternity. Man marvels at such a pearl and says, 'I want this pearl. How much does it cost?'"

"The seller says, 'It's too dear, too costly.'"

"But how much?"

"Well, it's very expensive."

"Do you think I could buy it?"

"It costs everything you have—no more, no less—so anybody can buy it."

"I'll buy it."

"What do you have? Let's write it down."

"I have \$10,000 in the bank."

"Good, \$10,000. What else? 'I have nothing more. That's all I have.'"

"Have you nothing more?"

"Well, I have some dollars here in my pocket."

"How many?"

"I'll see: Thirty, forty, fifty, eighty, one hundred, one hundred twenty—one hundred twenty dollars."

"That's fine. What else do you have?"

"I have nothing else. That's all."

"Where do you live?"

"I live in my house."

"The house, too."

"Then you mean I must live in the garage?"

"Have you a garage, too? That, too. What else?"

"Do you mean that I must live in my car, then?"

"Have you a car?"

"I have two."

"Both become mine. Both cars. What else?"

“Well, you have my house, the garage, the cars, the money, everything.”
 “What else?”
 “Are you alone in the world?”
 “No, I have a wife, two children...”
 “Your wife and children, too.”
 “Too?”
 “Yes, everything you have. What else?” “I have nothing else, I am left alone now.”
 “Oh, you too! Everything becomes mine—wife, children, house, money, cars—everything. And you too. Now you can use all those things here but don’t forget they are mine, as you are. When I need any of the things you are using, you must give them to me because now I am the owner.”

Juan Carlos Ortiz, Call to Discipleship, (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975), pp. 42,43

Feedback

What is helpful?
 What could be better?
 What is missing?
 Is it helping you be more prepared for Sunday?

Send your feedback to
engage@gccaz.org

Engage the Context

2 Corinthians 9:10-14

We must again remember that Paul is writing this letter to the church in Corinth. While there is a wide range of income levels represented in this church (1 Cor 12), they are relatively rich. Corinth was a growing city located on a trade route with a mix of people from all walks of life. In many ways, it mirrored Grace Community Church in that it had a variety of income levels but most were well off compared to the “Third World.” Paul wrote to give advance warning of a collection he was going to take for the Jerusalem church. Relatively speaking, the Jerusalem Christians were the “Third World.” The Judean area was in a serious famine. Paul writes these words to encourage the Corinthian believers to give in abundance. He is requesting they give an exorbitant gift to the struggling Jerusalem Christians.

¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

This is the only time in the NT the phrase “harvest of your righteousness” is used. Paul may have been alluding to Hosea 10:12.

¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Paul writes these words to the relatively well off Corinthians. They were already rich financially, but he promises riches on a spiritual level that will exceed the benefit of their material wealth. Paul uses a similar phrase to “you will be made rich in every way” in 1 Corinthians 1:5, “for in Him you have been enriched in every way.”

¹²This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

Paul’s hope is that the gift of the Corinthians and other churches to the Jerusalem church would supply more than enough for the Christians in Jerusalem but overflow to those outside the church. Cross-reference Matthew 5:16.

¹⁴And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

Deuteronomy 15:9-10 says that God hears the prayers of the poor. The Jewish believers would have known the blessing of having the poorer believers offer prayers on their behalf. There is reciprocity in the giving: Corinthians give financially, Jerusalem but overflow to those outside the church. Cross-reference Matthew 5:16.