



WEEK 3 - SURRENDERED GIVER

SERIES BIG IDEA

Here is a place of financial stress and anxiety. There is a place of financial peace and freedom. If we hope to get from here to there, we will take the next step in our generosity journey.

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

If we hope to get from here to there, we will continue to take steps to become a surrendered giver.

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

ICE BREAKER AND OPENING THOUGHT

This is designed to get people talking about giving and generosity. If they have several stories to share, all the better.

BIBLE DISCUSSION

The Bible discussion here is interested in how generosity is portrayed. Paul is using the example of some of the very poorest Christians to help other poor Christians. The collection is for Jerusalem church, the very same church that had helped start these churches. Now it is in a bad way due to their political climate and a famine. The Macedonians (who are the poorest of the poor) respond with overwhelming generosity. Paul wants the Corinthians and us to know that anyone, no matter their circumstance, can be generous. And this isn't a command because Paul is giving the Corinthians the chance to follow Jesus' example of grace. After all, Jesus was born in poor circumstances, lived a poor life, and died in poverty; and this was for our sakes, that we might be made rich, rich in the love and favor of God, rich in the blessings and promises of the new covenant, rich in the hopes of eternal life, being heirs of the kingdom – (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, p. 2287). You might also note the difference in the tone of this scripture from last week's passage from Malachi. Here, tremendous generosity has already happened and is used as a positive example of the Christian life and how we live out our love.

LIFE APPLICATION

Allow the stories of generosity to spur people onto thinking about their own generosity. People in your group may have not made it to the initial giver stage but could with encouragement and the right listening mindset. Other challenges with giving could be trust in God due to mistrust in the Church. Still other challenges could be letting go of possessions or re-evaluating goals; downsizing the house; buying a used car instead of new; or the desire to build up a savings account before giving in a sacrificial manner.

CHALLENGE

Take some time to talk through the challenge and see if anyone has "rich" areas to be grateful for. Sometimes just the act of writing it down can spur more gratefulness and a switch of perspective. Hopefully, your group will seriously consider making generosity a daily part of their lives. It might seem impossible to add a percentage point every year, but generosity is something that should grow with us.