

SCRIPTURES FOR 4/22/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

2 Corinthians 9:6-14

6Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 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. 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.

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

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

OPENING:

ICEBREAKER or GET YA THINKIN' QUESTION: _____

OPENING PRAYER NOTES: _____

INTRODUCTION:

Jeff's sermon was pretty succinct so I decided to take the primary scripture he used, 2 Corinthians 9:6-14, and do a word search on it to look for new insights. If I found something interesting in my word search, I included it in the lesson; if I didn't mention anything, the translation is probably pretty straight-forward. What my study uncovered was four promises and two progressions, as described below. Enjoy!

DIG DEEPER:

PROMISE 1: Return (v. 6)

If you are generous, God will be generous in return. This word, generous, is from the Greek word *eulogia* (pr: you-law-GEE-uh [hard "G"]), which means to "benefit" or "give blessing."

Q: Do you think this passage necessarily dictates a certain motive, that is, do you think the literal definition of "generous" implies more than just quantity?

PROMISE 2: Love (v. 7)

God loves you for giving cheerfully; "love" here is the Greek word *agapao*, (pr: ah-gah-PAH-oh), which means "to welcome" or "to be fond of." God welcomes and is fond of the cheerful giver.

Q: Here it suggests we should decide, not based on outside pressure (when Paul uses the word translated "compulsion" it usually implies external influence, and the word translated "reluctantly" is actually the word for "away from"), but on your "heart." So do you think it is healthy to impose a tithe on yourself or should you just wait and see what God lays on your heart each Sunday (or whenever you give)? (*there's probably no concrete "right" answer here; it depends on the person, I believe – Ed*)

PROMISE 3: He's able (v. 8)

God can provide you overflowing grace, so that you are able to overflow in deeds.

Q: What role do you think you play in your "abounding in every good work?" (*deeds are your response to God's grace*)

PROMISE 4: Provision (v. 10-11)

He provides seed, you sow it, and He will enlarge the harvest, not of material things, but righteousness; wherever Paul uses this word, it seems to apply to righteous behavior as an example to others, either set by God or us. So in other words, God will give you what you need to set an example of righteous behavior, and you will reap further ability to continue to provide that example.

Q: Can you give an example of God providing you strength for righteousness, as a result of previous righteous behavior?

The words "made rich" come from the Greek word *ploutizo* (pr: ploo-TID-zoh), which CAN mean to provide material riches, but when Paul uses it in chapter 6, he is clearly talking about spiritual riches, so I think it is reasonable to conclude that he is at least including spiritual riches here.

Q: In what ways can we be made "rich" that are not strictly material? (*having the right thing to say; having skills for a certain situation; being physically available; etc.*)

THEN, IN vv. 11-14, PAUL SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING "PROGRESSIONS":

God's provision → Your generosity → Provision for others → Thanksgiving to God

Your example (obedience & confession & generosity) → Praise to God & prayers for you

CONCLUSION:

God does not need our money, time, talents, or even our glorification; He is fully self-sufficient. So, perhaps the greatest reason for giving to God is that it brings Him glory; not because He *needs* it, or even because He *requires* it, but because He *deserves* it.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: _____ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: _____

WHO'S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____