

The Principle of Equality
2 Corinthians 8: 13-15

Paul felt there was something wrong among his church when some Christians were overly wealthy while others were starving. He believed those with greater resources had an obligation to help those suffering from want. In other words, God provides some people with more money that they might be of greater help. There should be equality of sacrifice. Those with money (like the Corinthians) should give more. Those with less (like the Macedonian churches) should give less. Those in dire need (like the church in Judea) should receive, knowing that in the future they may be called on to give sacrificially even as they had received.

Those who have been entrusted with more if this world's goods will give more those who have little. Everyone should give according to their ability. Not equal giving, but equal sacrifice is called for.

The Principle of Integrity
2 Corinthians 8:16-24

Paul reassured the Corinthians about his handling of the monies raised. He told them he was sending trustworthy Titus to oversee the collection, along with a second leader of high reputation who had been entrusted by the churches to transport the offering to Judea (v.18). In verse 22, yet a third man was appointed. Therefore, at least three men of integrity conducted this campaign alongside Paul.

DISCUSSION:

- In other passages in his letters, Paul seems unconcerned about his reputation or about what other people think of him. For example, in *Galatians 1:20*, he said, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying

LESSON 3:
Three Principles Found in Paul's
Stewardship Drive

The Giving Journey

- to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.” Yet here he seems very concerned, wanting to avoid any criticism. Why is he more sensitive about how others perceive him here than in other places?
- Why does he assign at least four people to administer and transport this offering?
 - In what ways is our church demonstrating similar integrity during our current stewardship effort?

The Principle of Generosity
2 Corinthians 9:1-5

In this passage there are six characteristics of giving that please the Lord and bless both the giver and recipient. Can you isolate six words or phrases that describe this kind of giving?

- 1. _____ v. 1
- 2. _____ v. 2
- 3. _____ v. 3
- 4. _____ v. 4
- 5. _____ v. 5
- 6. _____ v. 6

CLOSING:

Three Principles Found in Paul's Stewardship Drive

These words and phrases may not represent our natural reaction toward giving. We're prone to ask ourselves, "How little can I get by with? What is the least amount I can reasonably promise to give?" The Lord does not want gifts "grudgingly given". He wants eager, enthusiastic, generous gifts. How can we learn to give this way?

How can we work on our own attitudes about giving so that they match these scriptural standards?

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