

Are We Giving Frozen Turkeys? **2 Corinthians 8:7-9** **Small Group Discussion Guide**

Warm-up question:

- How do you feel about discussing the topic of money and giving? On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your comfort level? (10 being most comfortable, 1 being least). Why are you okay talking about it OR why are you reluctant?

TAKE TURNS READING 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-15 below as background for our questions.

1. What seems to be the setting in this passage? What is Paul asking of the Corinthian church?
2. Pastor Josh had two main points on Sunday. First, “recognize that God already owns everything you have.” What is your initial reaction to this statement? Agree or disagree?
 - a. What does it mean to “transfer” ownership of your possessions back to God? What did you think of the “quit-claim deed” that Josh showed on the screen?
 - b. Josh mentioned two benefits of “transferring ownership back to God.” The first benefit of doing so is “it changes our perspective; we don’t cling to things so tightly.” To what possession are you most likely to cling? One way of thinking of this is to ask, is there some possession that you wouldn’t be willing to share with someone? Of which you’re very possessive?
 - c. What spiritual habits, experiences, or choices might we adopt that would allow us to hold these possessions more loosely?
 - d. The second benefit Josh says that we gain from understanding that God owns everything is that we recognize the potential of our resources for long-term kingdom impact. How do you feel about your potential to use your resources for long-term impact?
 - e. Read [this brief description](#) of Emmanuel Mutangana. Due in large part to a \$35/month sponsorship, Emmanuel went from being a bitter, fatherless child in a war-torn country, to being a pastor of a community of international diplomats and difference-makers in Washington, DC, where he is today. What does this story say about our potential for impact?
 - f. Application: Pastor Josh suggested that your group might want to pray and talk about ways that you could pool your resources—above and beyond your monthly tithe—to meet some special need. Take some time to discuss this as a group. Some suggestions: World Vision or Compassion sponsorship; Lighthouse Mission (numerous specific endeavors); other special projects?
3. Pastor Josh’s second main point was “God wants you to give in a way that is proportionate to what you have been given.”
 - a. To do so, Josh says you need to have a plan, which tracks your income and includes a strategy for giving, saving, and spending. Can anyone share what purposeful strategy they have landed on and how they came to that?
 - b. A “tithe,” or 10% of one’s income is a baseline Biblical practice of giving (Lev 27:30, Mal 3:9-10, Mt 23:23). The Malachi passage calls for people to tithe and give in order to restore

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their corrupt hearts. Why do you think there is such a tie in Scripture between our giving and our hearts? (See Matthew 6:19-21).

- c. What was Pastor Josh's explanation of the importance of the tithe to the functioning of the Temple and the worship of God, throughout the biblical story? Based on this principle, Josh stated that it generally requires about 10% of a congregation's income—regardless of how big or little the church—to support the work of ministry in that church. How do you feel about that?
- d. The general consensus among leaders is that you should support your home church first and best. That's the place you are nurtured each week.
 - i. Agree or disagree? Explain.
 - ii. How would you define "first and best" to your home church? Describe.

4. One enlightening point during Pastor Josh's sermon:

If we all were to give a tithe or close to it, here are some things we could do:

- Keep our current operating budget
- Completely sustain 5 people to plant new churches on LI
- Fund 2 new HIV clinics in Africa
- Provide clean water wells to last a lifetime for 20 villages in Africa or South America
- Hire a f/t Pastor of Mission and Outreach
- Fully fund 3 people every year to get a seminary degree and come back to pastor on LI
- Still have 1 million left over to ask God what he wants us to do with it

Please respond with your initial reaction after reading all these bullet points. Is there any "dream" project or ministry that you would like to see on that list? Do you think that we could actually get to this point?

5. Read the following verse aloud: "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich*" (2 Cor 8:9).
 - a. Why did Paul cite this as motivation for the Corinthian Christians to give?
 - b. How does the gospel re-frame our decisions about giving?
 - c. Let's take turns sharing the ways in which we are "rich" in Christ.
 - d. Is there any practical step that God may be asking you to take in your financial stewardship?

SHARING AND PRAYER

Among the prayer requests, let's take time to thank God for the way he has made us rich. Joyful hearts are giving hearts.