

It is worth remembering that the generosity that Paul urges here is not for their local church – but rather for people they have never met. (Elsewhere Paul will talk of giving to church as an obligation rather than an act of generosity- see 1 Tim 5:17-18).

1. Do you find it difficult to be generous towards the saints in places outside your locality? Why/Why not?

2. Does your church find it difficult to be generous towards God's work in other places? Why/Why not?

3. Finally, how should you respond to God's Word to you today?



give

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15

Introductory Brainstorm

What things stop people from being generous with their money (and other possessions, time etc.)? Come up with as many as possible, then asterisk the ones you think are the most significant.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Paul writes to the Corinthians because they have made a pledge to give to the collection he is making for the saints in Jerusalem who have been enduring a famine. He now writes to remind them of this pledge, so that when he arrives they will have the money ready to give as a willing gift, rather than being an unwilling obligation. He also teaches them the motivations and thinking that should underpin our giving.

1. Read through the passage again. List all the phrases that relate to the idea of 'abundance' or 'increase' or 'all'. What clues does this give us to the central message of the passage?

2. What is the basic principle Paul outlines in verse 6. How would you put it in your own words?

Have a closer look at verses 7-11

1. How is God described in these verses?

2. Paul quotes from Psalm 112. Read this Psalm. What is the righteous man like (especially from verses 5-9)?

3. What is Paul saying in these verses? Is he advocating a type of 'prosperity' teaching – that those who give much will gain much?

4. From these verses, why should a Christian resist the urge to be a stingy sower?

Have a closer look at verses 11-15

As well as meeting the needs of people, what other impact will the generosity of the Corinthians have? Why is this the case?

What is the connection between the gospel and the generosity of the Corinthians from these verses (see also 2 Corinthians 8:9)?

Conclusion

Coming back to our opening question, how does this passage deal with the reasons that prevent generous giving?

'Ultimately, it is our understanding of God that will have the most significant impact upon our generosity'. What do you think of this statement?