

Extravagant Giving (Part 2)

Three Challenges for 2007

1) Lead a person to Christ

- You can only tell someone what Christ has done in your life.
- **Once we truly understand how much God loves us, we will in turn live that love in our relationships with others.**- Stuart Briscoe

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children; and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."
Ephesians 5:1

- Every where you go, you are a witness.
- Dismantle a religious attitude and stop focusing on doctrinal battles.
- Destroy a lazy, dormant or disconnected habit of serving Christ

2) Connect in a greater way through Christian and Spiritual Fellowship.

- Sheep on their own is wolf food.
- We need each other in accountability and relationship.
- A Coal goes out faster when it is removed from the bunch.
- **Life Groups, Church and building relationships through our equipping classes**

3) Grow In Giving

- There are **many great givers** at Cornerstone Church.
- **Many have grown in your giving.**
- **80% of Christians do not give** at the minimum of obedience to God.
- In giving, be a part of the **Generations: Fulfilling The Vision** stewardship Campaign
 - We are in the midst of one of the most exciting times in the history of Cornerstone Church. In the **last few years** we have been experiencing a **consistent increase** both in **spiritual growth** and **new members**. I believe God is telling us that we are to **make more room and plan for the future**. We are to make room for the vision and ministry that God is giving us by **building a multipurpose ministry facility that will assist us in reaching people of all ages and from all walks of life in our city and region.** Now is the time to focus on the task at hand, to build a better tomorrow starting today!
 - **The opportunity is ours. How can we refuse such a great privilege and miracle in our lives? I believe we will see things that we will tell our grandchildren. Better yet, we will set an example of perseverance and faith for generations to follow.**
 - **GENERATIONS GOAL: \$1,100,000**
 - **Pledges Received- \$294,743.66**
 - **Building Fund Offering- \$172,183.31**
 - **Interest Earned- \$17,473.38**
 - **Outstanding Pledged- \$346,190.62**
 - **Total Funds Received- \$484,400.35**

TOTAL PLEDGED: \$830,590.97

“So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.”

Nehemiah 4:6

- They were halfway there.
- Everyone had worked with all their heart

Disturbance Of A Dream

“But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.”

Nehemiah 4:7-9

- The enemy were publicly opposed and they built allies
- Jerusalem's walls were repaired and the gaps were being closed!
- **Disturbance:** The enemy plotted a fight and trouble

Discouragement Of A Dream

“Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.” Also our enemies said, “Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.” Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, “Wherever you turn, they will attack us.”

Nehemiah 4:10-12

1. (Vs. 10) They were becoming weak and the work was becoming overbearing
 - Not enough strength and too much work!
2. (Vs. 11) They were threatened to be killed- terrorist were in their midst.
3. (Vs. 12) They were consumed with the threat more than with the DREAM!

Development Of A Broken Dream

“13 Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. 14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

15 When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work.”

Nehemiah 4:13-15

- (Vs. 13) **Safety**- Nehemiah brought a sense of well being back into Jerusalem.
- (Vs. 14) **Encouragement and Focus**- Nehemiah spoke to the leaders and everyone else and reminded who they were fighting for...*your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.*”
- (Vs. 15) **Results**- The enemies plan was frustrated and the work was restored.

Division Of A Dream

*“16 From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. **The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah** 17 who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, 18 and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me.*

19 Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.

20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"

*21 So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. 22 At that time I also said to the people, "Have every man and his helper **stay inside Jerusalem at night**, so they can serve us as guards by night and workmen by day." 23 Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water."*

Nehemiah 4:16-23

- Because of the **Disturbance** and because of the **Discouragement**, there became **Division**. The Division came not in everyone stopping, but in everyone making it possible to complete the task.
- It took people to continue the work all over the wall. The work was... *“extensive and spread out, and widely separated from each other along the wall.”* It's easy to get lost in what you are doing and lose connection with the rest of us. **It's hard to try and stay encouraged when you are alone on your wall and no one has your back.**

Message Intro: When you understand the the principles I will be sharing with you today, no one will ever need to stir you up again about giving. When you understand these two keys, you will not have a problem being an extravagant giver again.

Four Levels of Christian Response In Giving

1. Shock and disgust.-

You find yourself just disgusted with the whole idea of giving or a message on giving.

- **Pastor of Trinity Fellowship in Amarillo, TX, Pastor Jimmy Evans tells the story of one of the first times he went to church after being saved. The preacher was preaching on giving, they had just done their income tax and made a whopping \$7,000 that year living in government housing. They could not afford a house and had one daughter. When they looked for houses, it was the most depressing thing in the world. He and Karen looked for housing and the Government had housing available for those who were completely broke, and they instantly qualified. Then he heard this message on giving. He realized that he had never thought about who paid for everything in the church and was satisfied with the thought that “rich people and fanatics” are the ones who give to the church. The rich ought to give because they have plenty and the fanatics give because they are nuts anyways.**

- “In general, **the more money a person makes the less likely he/she is to tithe.** While **8 percent of those making \$20,000 or less gave at least 10 percent of their income to churches,** that proportion dropped to **5 percent among those in the \$20,000-\$29,999 and \$30,000-\$39,999 categories;** to **4 percent among those in the \$40,000-\$59,999 range,** down to **2 percent for those in the \$60,000-\$74,999 niche;** and to **1 percent for those making \$75,000-\$99,999.** The level jumped a bit for those making **\$100,000 or more,** as **5 percent of the most affluent group tithed in 1999.”** (George Barna, Evangelicals Are the Most Generous Givers, But Fewer than 10 Percent of Born Again Christians Give 10 Percent to Their Church, news release by Barna Research Group, April 5, 2000)
 - The **two groups** in the United States that **give the highest percentages** of their income are the **poor** (those making less than \$20,000 per year) and the **rich** (those making more than \$100,000 per year). **Middle-class Americans (those making between \$40,000 and \$100,000 per year) are the smallest percentage givers.** (Tim Stafford, The Anatomy of a Giver: American Christians Are the Nation’s Most Generous Givers, but We Aren’t Exactly Sacrificing, Christianity Today, May 19, 1997)
 - Pastor Jimmy **didn’t see himself as rich nor did he see himself as a fanatic so he didn’t see himself qualifying as a giver in that particular church, and found himself disgusted with the whole thing. All he saw was that the preacher wanted his money** and no matter what the church was doing, he said that **he felt more sorry for himself.** He wanted to feed his hungry children... mine! **Karen had a different attitude, she wanted to give.**
2. **Grudging obligation at a minimum level** (vs. 5)
- Jimmy was a grudging giver, Karen was an open giver. They gave out of Karen’s faith
 - **A grudging giver has to feel pushed into giving because giving has never become an act of freedom but one of bondage.**
3. **Committed giving at a level of obedience to God**
- The **minimum giving is tithing which is 10%** of income, some believe it is on the gross amount and others on the net, what ever your faith, so be it. **The minimum level of giving is the tithe.** Because of your spouses faithfulness, God will honor and provide. **When you give, like pastor Jimmy, he felt that he had become the poster child for Christian obedience.** I have reached the pinnacle of faith in God. Some people believe they are giving an offering when the tithe has not been paid. Offering is anything above tithe. But you give out of obedience to God with faith. But remember Solomon, he did not experience God any more at a higher level because he just became a giver of what the law of Moses required.
4. **Extravagant Giver**
- This level is where you live to give.** You understand that **you cannot out-give God.** There is a place where you **become an excited, extravagant giver.**

Once you learn that you are part of an eternal picture that God has for you to affect the world, you actually release His power on this earth. Nothing happens on accident with God. You and I are Kingdom builders and our lives are living out here on earth what has already been done in heaven.

Like a group of guys about to go out to war, the commander of the army stands and gives them one last speech and everyone yells and runs to their post. I'd like to be that commander today and say, "Give'em Heaven!"

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5

Once you celebrate what God has done in you, you can activate what God can do through you!

God has set you apart for a great Kingdom purpose! It's so easy to forget that we have been chosen by God and in the process we move from an Extravagant, excited giver into a minimal, obedient giver much like Solomon.

Three Necessary Keys To Become A Happy, Extravagant Giver:

- 1. We must understand the living nature of money.**
- 2. We must understand the limited nature of man.**
- 3. We must understand the loving nature of God.**

- Giving is a "good" thing and a "God" thing and it is part of the natural process of what a Christian does!

Paul's Challenge in II Corinthians 9

In II Corinthians 9, you will find that this part of Paul's letter is talking to the Corinthian church about giving an offering. Paul is raising money from all the churches he was over as an apostle and was now talking about them giving. He is trying to ignite a heart of the Corinthian Church to give and in the process, inspiring others to give.

"...and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them, (other churches), to action."

II Corinthians 9:2c

But Paul also thought it would be good that they live up to their vow.

"So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly."

II Corinthians 9:5

We believe that Paul's writings are inspired by the Holy Spirit to say what he says. As he was writing to the Corinthian Church, he was also writing to us. What he has written in the New Testament- we believe to be God inspired, we consider it God's Word! Here's what he says in Hebrews 4:12:

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it

penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12

Understanding The Living Nature of Money Comes In Two Ways:

- Getting wisdom and putting faith in what the Bible says.

“Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no desire to get wisdom?”

Proverbs 17:16

- Experiencing it by application.

Key #1- Understanding The Living Nature Of Money- II Corinthians 9:6

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously...”

II Corinthians 9:6

Paul Uses The Word “Remember” 10X's As Key Points of Maturity of a Believer:

1. Ephesians 2:11-12- Remember that you were in sin, separated from God
2. Hebrews 10:32- Remember the early days of your walk with God, when you stood the ground in faith facing uncertain future and suffering.
3. Galatians 2:10- Remember the poor
4. Hebrews 13:3- Remember those in prison and who are mistreated
5. Colossians 4:18, I Thessalonians 2:9- Remember my chains, the toils and hardships, be inspired by them
6. Hebrews 13:7- Remember your leaders and imitate their faith
7. II Timothy 2:8- Remember that Jesus raised from the dead!
8. James 5:20- Remember that if you turn a sinner from his ways you will save him from an eternal death and cover a multitude of sins
9. Jude 1:17- Remember the prophecies of the Apostles
10. II Corinthians 9:6- Remember the keys of giving

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously...”

II Corinthians 9:6

People see money Differently:

Static Instrument- \$20 is \$20, if I put this \$20 into the offering container I'm just dropping \$20 into the offering container and you lose \$20. But the apostle Paul talks about the money we give to God's kingdom and he doesn't talk about it in Static terms.

Living Seed- you don't lose the money you put in the offering. There is only one way to make your money seed and it is placing it in God's Kingdom.

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously...”

I Corinthians 9:6

- Giving= Sowing Seed (money)

- Seed becomes dynamically alive and productive when it is sown into God's Work

• **There are only three things you can do with money (seed)-**

1) Spend (eat/consume it) 2) Save (store) 3) Sow (give)

1) What you spend ends!

2) What you save sleeps!- It could be a retirement, savings and other investments that we should be taken seriously. If you have a saving account, it can't take care of you. There is not one investment that can't dissolve.

3) What you give lives! What ever you give to God lives.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously..."

I Corinthians 9:6

If you have \$500 dollars and you take \$50 of that money and put it into that offering container, represents 1/10th of your money, a tithe. You do not have \$450 dollars left. You have \$450 to consume or save, but you have \$50 dollars invested as seed that will come back to you. You have invested \$50 dollars in the universes greatest investment company.

• Many people see that giving is losing, that money is a static/dead instrument. And when you give that \$50 dollars, now you can't do something with that \$50 dollars.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously..."

I Corinthians 9:6

Here's What Every Farmer Understands:

● **The secret in meeting my future needs is in planting my present seeds!**

● You might be saying that I have kids, I have a wedding, I have college, I have a vacation...it is better to plant it than it is to keep it!

● **This is the only guaranteed money that will meet you in your future.**

"...Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously..."

I Corinthians 9:6

If you find a farmer who is consuming and keeping all their seed, they will not be a farmer very long. A lot of farmers stores up seed, but he knows what he puts in the ground is what his future will be.

Important Truth: The only guaranteed way to dynamically expand your seed supply is to sow it!

● **We must stop looking at *money as static* and at *giving as losing*. Money is living and giving is sowing a guaranteed crop for increase.**

"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

Proverbs 3:9-10

- **Honor the Lord with your wealth, possessions-** then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and brim over with new wine.
- **Do you know that the ability for you to do anything comes from God?** The idea that you can wake up tomorrow and do what you do on your job, is recognizing that God has given you that ability. For you to give says that you recognize that it is God's blessing in your life that you have anything.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Luke 6:38

- The Bible does not say that when you give to grieve over it and say good-bye to it because that is the last time you will see it. Many people feel this way. They say in their heart that there is not enough of this and you can't possibly understand what I am going through. If you knew our financial situation you would take an offering for us and not try to get an offering from us!
- **Yoggi Cho, pastor of the worlds largest church in Korea** was speaking to God about speaking on giving. At that time he had three hundred of the poorest people in Seoul, Korea in his church. He argued with God, but God said, "You do what I am saying." And they started bring pigs and chickens and rice bowls, and out of the three hundred of that original church, he now has a church of 700,000, he has several millionaires and a billionaire.
- **Give your best story to God and you know what he will say? "Plant seed!"**
Giving has life in it, it is a seed, it activates the law of reciprocity- to every action there is a reaction.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."

II Corinthians 9:6