

**Giving to the Cause of Christ**  
*Philippians 4:14-20*

How do you view giving to the church? Is it sort of like paying the bills? Is it payment for services received? Is it a way to pay God back for the good things that He has done for you? Maybe all of us at one time or another have slipped into thinking about it in one of these ways, but the reality is that Scripture suggests that there is a more God-honoring way to think about our giving. Today, we are going to consider a more intentional, God-centered way to give to the cause of Christ. This is the second of a two-part study on living lives of intentional generosity (**Note:** We will return to our study in Hebrews after the first of the year).

**Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5**

1. Philippi was one of these “churches of Macedonia” (v. 1) that Paul praises here. How does he describe their heart for generosity in this passage?

**Read Philippians 4:10-20**

2. What does this passage add to our understanding of the Philippians’ heart of generosity (vv. 14-20)?
3. In what ways do we see the Philippians expressing an active, ongoing participation in the cause of Christ through their giving (vv. 14-16)?

Steve said:

We would do well to think of our giving in the terms Paul uses here in these verses. Giving to this church or to missionaries or to some other ministry should not be like paying your bills. Giving should not be mindless and obligatory. Rather, we should think, “When I give, I am an active participant in the cause of Christ.” When you give to the church, for example, the better you understand the mission of the church and what ministries your giving supports, the better you will be able to give in this way. Instead of giving because “that’s what Christians are supposed to do,” you are able to give as a conscious, active participation in the cause of Christ.

4. As you think about your giving to the church, would you say you are more inclined to do it because “that’s what Christians are supposed to do” or would you say you do give out of a sense of participation in the cause of Christ? Explain.

5. In verse 17, Paul says that he seeks for the profit that increases to the Philippians' account through their giving. What do you think he means by this?
  
6. Why do you think Paul uses the language that he does in verse 18 to describe the financial gift that the Philippians had sent to him?

Steve said:

Earlier (verse 16) Paul had spoken about how the Philippians' gift had met his needs. Here he speaks about how God would meet the Philippians' needs. We get the sense that the Philippians already knew that God would meet their future needs - otherwise they wouldn't have given in the first place. We know from 2 Corinthians 8 that the Philippian church was poor. They weren't dipping into their savings accounts in order to give to the poor in Jerusalem. They gave out of their poverty. They gave far and above what even Paul expected them to give. Paul even says that they had had to beg Paul for the opportunity to give. Why would anybody give away money that they themselves might need in the future? Because they believed that God would "supply all [their] needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Their faith that God would take care of them freed them up to give. Fear about the future is one of the biggest hindrances that people have to giving. "What if I begin tithing and then I find out next month (or next year) that I really needed that money?" Have you ever thought that? Do you hold too tightly to your money out of fear of the future?

7. Does fear about the future ever affect how you think about giving?
  
8. Steve gave two points of application. First, he encouraged us to pursue a life of "ongoing, systematic giving." In this approach we seek God for how, where and how much we will give and then commit to doing so. Secondly, he encouraged us to be open to "giving to needs that arise." In this approach we respond more spontaneously to needs as they arise. Do you sense a need for growth in either of these ways of giving? Explain.
  
9. What do you feel/think is the main thing that God has been saying to you through the past two weeks and our look at living a generous life?