



INTRODUCTION

Two men were marooned on an island. One man paced back and forth worried and scared while the other man sat back and was sunning himself. The first man said to the second man, "Aren't you afraid? We are about to die." "No," said the second man, "I make \$100,000 a week and tithe faithfully to my church every week. My pastor will find me." While we may laugh at this story, it illustrates our tendency to think giving will make us a "good" person to be cherished by God and others. Yet, as we learn in this week's message, our money belongs to God in the first place. He's given us the opportunity to express our gratitude and trust by investing in His Kingdom work. By doing so, we grow in faith and channel blessings to others while reaping the benefits of a grateful heart.

DISCUSSION

1. **Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 and 9:6-11.** While challenging the Corinthians to help the poor of Jerusalem, Paul gives two examples of generous giving. What is remarkable about the example of the Macedonians? Why would they plead with Paul to allow them to give in light of their own circumstances? According to 8:9, what did Jesus give up by coming to earth and giving His life for us? How can we value others above ourselves through selfless giving?
2. **Read Psalm 24:1.** What does King David declare to be God's possessions? How does a mindset of God's ownership influence our attitude toward giving? If we commit all our possessions and income to God, how does this affect our tendency to worry? What risks do we take by doing this, and how do we reaffirm our trust that He will take care of all our needs?
3. **Read Matthew 6:19-21.** In this passage, Jesus gives a succinct lesson on the dangers of materialism. Share examples of how earthly treasures will deteriorate or disappear. What does Christ mean by investing treasures in Heaven? How does a giving attitude influence our attachment to money and material things?

DO SOMETHING

1. If you're giving regularly to God's work, calculate the percentage of total income you're contributing. Prayerfully ask God to examine your motivations for giving and to show you what steps to take in future financial commitments. Then, follow through in faith as He leads you. If your income goes up, keep pace by increasing your giving.
2. If you don't have a sustained giving plan, consider starting with a small, fixed amount. Then, gradually accept the challenge of increasing your faith – and giving – as God leads you. Take inventory of what you learn as you give and especially look for unexpected blessings – material and otherwise.
3. Perhaps you've had a recent life event that's increased expenses and/or reduced your income. Prayerfully consider how God might continue to stretch your faith through giving during this challenging time. Seek the counsel of a pastor or trusted Christian friend to exercise proper wisdom in moving forward.

RESOURCES

1. *Fields of Gold* by Andy Stanley
2. *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn
3. *The Key to Blessing* by E.M. Clark