A Picture of Generosity 1.11.09

"We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints- 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. 6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. 7 But as you excel in everything- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you- see that you excel in this act of grace also. 8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. 9 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 by his poverty might become rich. 10 And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. 11 So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. 12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. 13 I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness 14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. 15 As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack." 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Paul uses the example of the Macedonians' generosity to encourage the Corinthians to give generously to the struggling Christians in Jerusalem.

P: Grace should be the greatest motivator to our giving (v.1-2).
Am I currently giving because of the grace of God?

P: Give proportionally, sacrificially, freely and joyfully (v. 3-4, 12)
Could these words be used to describe your giving?

The tithe: "A great place to start but a terrible place to stop."

P: Give yourself to the Lord first—then your money (v.5).
The best question is not: "Is God getting my money?" but "It is God getting me?"

P: Accountability in giving will lead toward growth (v.6-7).
Upgrades: Quarterly giving statements. Envelopes. Follow up.

P: Our generosity flows from the generosity of God—the Cross (v.8-9) *Do I make the connection that I give back to God because He gave everything for me?*

P: Giving to the Gospel benefits us. (v.10-11)

9:6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.
2 Corinthians 9:6-11 ESV

Do I give in faith recognizing that God will give back to me in some way? As God gives me more, am I growing in my ability to give more away?

P: We are to follow through on financial commitments. (v.10-11)
Am I someone that follows through on my commitments, financial or otherwise?

P: We should manage our finances in such a way that we can help one another in hard times (v. 13-15)
Am I managing money in such a way that my extra can become someone else's enough?

Works Consulted: *"Giving and the Gospel Message by Daniel Montgomery, Stewardship Resources by Tim Keller, Generous Series by Mark Driscoll, Change You Can Believe Series In by Steven Furtick, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible*