

Date: _____



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Sunday After Christmas Series, Lesson 32

Lesson Title: More Satisfying to Give

Take Home Point: It is more satisfying to give than to receive.

Warm-Up:

Imagine I am extremely wealthy. (You'll really have to use your imagination!) I come to you with an offer. I tell you, "I would like to do something for you, but I need you to do something, too. Here's my offer. I want to give you as much of my wealth as you need. I have set up an account in your name connected to mine. From your account, you can withdraw one dollar at a time, either for yourself or to give to someone else. Each time you withdraw one dollar in order to give it away, I will automatically transfer two dollars to your account, one for you to keep and another to give away again. So you see, I will provide for your immediate needs, and each time you give to another, you both gain. Does that seem like a good deal to you? Are you interested?" What do you think? Is that a good deal?

Read: Acts 20:32-36

Observation (What happened?):

What group of people did Paul say we must help?

Who did he quote as the source for giving over receiving?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think it was important for Paul to communicate that he had supported himself and others?

To what "weak" people do you believe Paul was referring?

Insight:

We tend to focus on the amount of wealth a person has. But God is generally not too concerned about the amount. What does interest him is how it is SPENT. That's why we don't have to be wealthy for money to be a problem. God gives us the little stuff of earth to help us learn to trust him, using it to invest in an eternity we can't see yet. He also gives us the free will to use it as we choose. However, in Matthew 25, Jesus teaches that God wants us to be faithful in how we use the wealth he grants us. He does not give us his gifts to be hoarded or squandered on ourselves. We are to use them to bring people into God's kingdom, and to enrich the lives of those God gives us the opportunity to bless. Beyond the stewardship aspect of what God has given, he also tells us that it is more satisfying to give than to receive. On top of the spiritual and emotional benefits, there is the benefit of relationship with someone who needs God's grace far more any physical item we could give. It is true that HOW our wealth is spent is a good measure of a person's spiritual life and an important part of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you help the weak? Who are the weak to you? What do you give?

What blessings have you received because of your giving?