

The Secret Principle
2 Corinthians 9:6-15
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I. Intro

A. Two weeks ago ...

B. Where we are – Stewardship

1. Attendance traditionally drops
2. People hate talking about money. They hate it more when “clergy” is talking about money!
 - a. Lots of reasons – Televangelists, unhappy with the service they’re getting, bad experience, etc.
 - b. But, there is no ignoring it ...
 - c. What we’ve looked at ...
 - 1) Macedonian churches – our level of our affluence does not dictate our generosity.
 - 2) Giving is a planned thing – which takes discipling.

**The way we hold and release our money is inextricably linked to the condition of our hearts and how we view God.

II. The Secret Principle

A. What parents do ... (v. 6-7)

1. Universal principle or law
 - a. Spell it out ...
 - b. Then do what you think is best ...
2. They do this to give children a choice – the choice does not change the reality but it does give them an opportunity to display what is in their hearts.

B. Biblical concept of giving

1. How not to give ... (v. 6-7)
 - a. Sparingly
 - 1) The desire to hold back

- 2) Example
 - a) Spare my life = let me keep it
 - b) Spare no expense = don't hold any expenditure back
 - c) God did not spare His Son = God did not even hold back Jesus
- b. Giving sparingly comes from a heart that wants to hold back.
2. How to give ... (v. 6-7)
 - a. Generously – Literally to give on the basis of blessing
 - b. Giving generously comes from a heart that wants to share things. Share as much as possible rather than keep as much as possible.

**The Question: Which heart do you have? Criteria? Do you give sparingly or generously?

- Sparing = heart is driven to hold back

- Generous = heart is driven to share

3. Why is this so important? **Your heart condition determines how you perceive your heavenly Father.**
 - a. Sparing heart
 - 1) Sees God as a taker
 - 2) God is demanding and exhausting, therefore I must hold back in order to survive.
 - b. Generous heart
 - 1) Sees God as a giver.
 - 2) When I look up to God I feel replenished not drained.
 - c. What do you feel God to be when you look up into his face?
 - 1) Reality: God is a giver.
 - 2) He enables our giving with His blessing and He rewards our giving with even more blessing.
4. Example of what Paul is talking about ...
 - a. v. 8 – God is able.
 - b. v. 9 – Generous giving is equal to righteousness

- c. v. 10 – God supplies the capital and brings the harvest of your righteousness (again righteousness = generous giving)
 - d. v. 10 – He will increase your store of capital and enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.
- 5. Taking a step back ...
 - a. With me ...
 - 1) The tithe – 10%
 - 2) Giving – beyond the tithe
 - a) Possible giving – what you can.
 - b) Impossible giving – what you must trust God for.
 - 3) The tithe reminds me weekly of Whom I belong to, possible giving reminds me of whose mission I am on, and impossible giving is what makes me more like Jesus. Sparing givers cannot become like Jesus.
 - b. *Chance Video* ...
- 6. Harvest of Righteousness (result of generous giving)
 - a. v. 11a – Greater ability to be generous
 - b. v. 11b – More thanks to God
 - c. v. 12 – Joy from seeing God meet His people’s needs
 - d. v. 13-15 – Affection and love among God’s people!

III. The challenge

- A. We are in a stewardship series ... aren’t we?
 - 1. Yes and no.
 - 2. Peeling away the layers ...
 - a. How do you give? Sparing or generous?
 - b. Leads to what kind of heart you have, sparing or generous.
 - c. Leads to how you see God, as a giver or a taker.
 - 3. ... which brings you to who is the bottom of your joy.
- B. The bottom of your joy ...