

Sermon Questions: Ground Rules for Giving

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

1. Share a time when you were on the receiving end of someone else's generosity. How did that make you feel? How did you express your gratitude?
2. Pastor Mark points out that Jesus talked about money and material possessions more than any other single topic, including heaven, hell, and prayer. Why do you think this issue was such a frequent topic of Jesus' teaching?
3. Money is never condemned in the Bible. But certain attitudes about money and certain behaviors with money are the subject of warning. What are some attitudes or behaviors around money that might be damaging to a person's character and soul?
4. Every year during the month of November, Virginia Beach invites people to prayerfully consider how God might be leading them to financially support the work of the church in the upcoming year. Why is this an important part of personal discipleship?
5. Pastor Mark suggests that we should give thoughtfully, "deciding in our heart what we should give" (2 Corinthians 9:7). What factors do you think about when you consider supporting the church financially?
6. Pastor Mark points out that charitable giving to churches has decreased from 68% of all charitable giving in 1960, down to 29% in 2018. Why do you think fewer charitable dollars are going to churches these days?

7. Pastor Mark points out that schools, the arts, and hospitals are able to solicit charitable donations from a wide variety of people, but churches are typically dependent on their active and committed members for almost all of their financial support. How do you think this dynamic impacts the church's ability to offer ministry to its community?
8. We should not only give thoughtfully, we should also give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). Why do you think God loves a cheerful giver?
9. Pastor Mark describes the way African Christians dance and sing as they bring their financial gifts to the altar during worship. Why is it important to have a joyful and celebratory mood when we give?
10. How does financial generosity reflect our love for God?
11. We should not just give thoughtfully and cheerfully, we should also give generously (2 Corinthians 9:11). Pastor Mark points out that if you live in America and earn \$40,000 a year or more, you are in the top 1% of the wealthiest people on the earth. How does that make you feel?
12. While the Bible often suggests that tithing (giving a full 10% of our income to the work of the Lord) is the standard, less than 2% of American Christians actually tithe. Why do you think it is difficult for many American Christians to give a full 10%?
13. Why do you think God encourages us to "test Him" on the tithe, to see what He will do if we fully tithe (see Malachi 3:10)?
14. Read 2 Corinthians 9:11. Why does God "enrich us in every way?" Why is God more interested in raising our standard of giving rather than our standard of living?