

Sunday School Lesson for the month of October 2013

Climbing Up The Giving Ladder

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

(Sunday, October 6, 2013)

I am sure that you have heard many times the phrase, “you need to grow up?” In a sense, this is what life is all about. Life is a process of growth from beginning to the end. As soon as we are born, if we do not grow physically, we will die. The same is true in all areas of our life: Mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We need to be continually growing up. There’s nothing sadder than to see an adult who acts like a teenager, or a teenager who acts like a toddler.

The same is true in the area of our discipleship. We sing the song, “Everyday with Jesus is sweeter than the day before,” but is that really true with us? Is that really the way it is? It is a sad picture when people come and accept Christ and then never do anything about it, just staying the same as they were from that moment on. They never seek to deepen their prayer life, service life, or worship life. They stay the same. It’s not meant to be that way. Stunted growth is not a virtue of Christian discipleship.

Paul told this to the church at Corinth, a church with fussing and fighting members, picking at each other. Paul said to them, “you need to grow up.” He said, “*When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways.*” In other words, he said to them, “Quit acting like babies! Grow up!”

That’s a word that many church people still need to hear. He went on to apply that in their giving. Now, we must face the truth; the church depends on the monetary contributions of those who are a part of the body. If you don’t give, we can’t do the ministries we need to do. The more you give, the more we can do. The truth is, we need to do a lot of growing in our Stewardship. We need to do something about growing up in the area of giving. In this passage, Paul talked about it. He gave what I call a “ladder of giving;” certain stages of giving that we can go through. There are certain ways we can give as we grow to be the kind of giver we need to be.

(Sunday, October 13, 2013)

I. The First Stage of the Ladder is that some people give grudgingly.

Paul said, don't give "reluctantly." Evidently, some people were giving who didn't want to give. They didn't see why they had to support the ministry of Paul or that of the early church. Their attitude was, "do I have to?" They gave, but when they gave, they gave with a groan because they really didn't want to give. It was a pain for them to give. There are folks like that now. They can't understand why they have to give their hard-earned money to the church. They believe in God. They enjoy the activities of the church. They like the preacher and the people. But they don't understand why they have to give their money.

A bumper sticker said, "God loveth a cheerful giver, but He also taketh from a grouch." But I'm not too sure that's true. Do you enjoy getting a gift from someone who you know really didn't want to give it to you and complained about it? When people give you gifts like that, you have a tendency to tell them to "keep it." Sometimes this is the way we give to God. Remember, God might be saying the same thing to us, "take it back because you don't mean it."

So many times we give and complain about it. We need to grow up and grow out of that mentality. You are to move up the ladder.

(Sunday, October 20, 2013)

II. We can give out of a sense of obligation.

Paul said not to give out of compulsion. Evidently there were some who were doing just that. There were those who were giving because they felt they had to. They gave, not out of joy, but out of obligation and duty. They did not feel the joy on the inside like they should have felt in giving to the ministries of God. Maybe they gave out of a sense of guilt. Maybe they gave out of pressure. They gave, but out of duty, not love.

And you know, a lot of us may be giving out of a sense of duty. We know the church needs it. We know we need to do it, but we don't enjoy it at all. It's an obligation, something that hangs over our heads. Ask yourself the question, "Do I enjoy giving, or is giving an obligation?" We need to take our responsibilities seriously and there are obligations and ministries of the church we need to perform. But to give to the church out of a sense of duty rather than love doesn't bring any of us what it ought to bring. We shouldn't give just because we should, but because we are glad to give. There isn't much inner satisfaction in attitude you should want to give.

(Sunday, October 27, 2013)

III. “God loves a cheerful giver!”

Now that word cheerful means, “hilarious.” The picture was people who just couldn’t contain the joy of being able to give to God.

*They just loved to give to God.

*They were glad to give to God.

*They just bubbled over because they had a chance to give to God.

They gave to God because of what God had done for them, because they loved Him and knew God was going to provide for their needs. They trusted God to take care of them. As Paul, said, whomever “sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” They didn’t bother to worry about whether or not they would make it. They trusted God to take care of them. They were just beaming with joy at being about to give.

This is what God loves; a cheerful giver! Glad to give! Wanting to give! Trusting God to take care of them when they give. You should want to give. You should be happy to give.

God promised; if we give joyfully, He would reward us joyfully!

God will provide!!!!!!