

Relationships: A Mess Worth Making

Time and Money

2 Cor. 8:1 – 15

Main Idea: How we use our time and money in relationship to people says a great deal about our relationship with God.

I. Introduction

- We have more resources (i.e. money) than any generation in history.
 - The average American makes four times what the average American made in 1921 (after adjusting for taxes and inflation)
 - Real incomes have doubled since the late 1950's
 - Today's average, middle-class citizens live like the rich banker of our grandparent's generation
 - We have more clothes, bigger homes, and dine out more often
 - Yet we give less (percentage) than Americans did just 20 years ago
- We have the same 24 hours in a day and 7 days in a week that have always existed
 - We have more "time-saving devices" than we could imagine even 10 years ago
 - Yet we are busier and give less time to others than ever before

II. Money and People (Ephes. 4:25 – 32)

- *Ephesians 4:28* ²⁸ *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*
- The broader context is one of relationships
- A thief is no longer a thief when he stops stealing, gets a job, and starts giving to others
- Paul seems to indicate here that we really haven't starting loving others with money until we start giving it away to help them

III. Signs of Generosity (2 Cor. 8:1 – 15)

- 10% is the foundation for giving in both the O.T. (Mal. 3:8 – 10) & the N.T. (Lk. 11:42)
- Jesus calls us to go beyond that with a radical lifestyle of giving to others
- Because of the radical grace we have received, we can be radically generous to others
- Two comparisons of Gospel generosity in 2 Cor. 8:1 – 15
- Comparison One: The Giving of the Macedonians
 - Their giving encouraged unity
 - Their giving was a supernatural work of the Spirit
 - Their giving was surprising
 - Their giving was sacrificial
 - Their giving was spontaneous
 - Their giving was an act of submission
 - Their giving was a spiritual barometer
- Comparison Two: The Giving of Jesus
 - Jesus gave all to us and in our gratitude we should give sacrificially to others
 - "Nothing left over... nothing lacking..."

IV. Time and People (Ephes. 5:15 – 21)

- Like money, the way we use our time reveals to what degree we are being transformed
- Unlike money, time is a resource we all have in equal quantities
- We are called to "make the best use of the time because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16)
 - It is not a calling to frenetic activity
 - It means that you see your life in light of your various callings
 - It means that you are to seize the little moments of life
 - You must see the context in which these things take place
 - We live in a "war zone"

V. Illustration: The Gospel's application to Time and Money

- All of the Christian's life should be centered around the gospel
- God's focus and priority is His glory
- He sent His Son to redeem people to participate in His glory
- He lavishes His resources on us so that we might participate in His Kingdom work
- Therefore, our calling is to love God and use His blessings to love others
- Our temptation is to use others to get things that we can love in place of God

VI. Conclusion (Application):

- Look at your relationship to money. What does it say about your relationship with God?
- Look at the way you spend time. What does it say about your relationship with God?

