

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



How To Know Your Love Is Genuine

2 Corinthians 8:8-13

Sunday, May 1, 2016

One of the toughest challenges we face is that of keeping ourselves from becoming small, harsh, and caught up in our own little materialistic worlds. God calls us to look beyond ourselves and become aware of the crushing needs of others. Then, with God's help, do something about it.

THE TEST OF GENUINE LOVE

2 Corinthians 8:8

I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches.

The best way to know that you are sincere in your love for others is to have an opportunity to fulfill another person's need. Those who love Him welcome the opportunity to demonstrate His love.

THE MODEL OF GENUINE LOVE

2 Corinthians 8:9

You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.

The idea is that though He was the owner of the universe, He willingly left it all and became impoverished. He had few resources, but chose to rely completely upon the Father. Ultimately He lost all things in His suffering and death. As a result, we have become rich by receiving the benefit of such a sacrifice. We are now heirs of all things and should be willing to part with our earthly possessions in order to benefit others. This glorifies Him.

BALANCE IN SHOWING LOVE

2 Corinthians 8:11b-13

^{11b}Give in proportion to what you have. The ¹²Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. ¹³Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality.

The Corinthians were able to contribute more than many other churches, so Paul presses upon them the duty of giving based on their means. He emphasized, however, that the entire burden should not be laid on them.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

Christians should contribute liberally while they have the means. Life can change without warning and leave you with a situation where you may be unable to give. There is no guarantee that at some point you will not become dependent on the charity of others. George Washington Carver wisely said, *"How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong because someday in life, you will have been all of these."*

The Bible commentator, Barnes said, "Perhaps that is why poor people generally seem to have a greater ability to identify with those in need, have a greater longing for the coming of the kingdom of God, and, as a result, tend to release their finances more easily. Indeed, statistics bear out the fact that it is the poorer segment of any given congregation that supports the ministry."

Luke 6:38

Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full-pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

Take Abraham, for example. He was completely ready to sacrifice the life of Isaac, the one thing in his life that meant the most to him, because pleasing God became his only goal. We know how that all turned out!

When your love is genuine and God is your only passion, He can send anything your way, knowing that you will be faithful with it.