



"What are we here for in the first place? The fundamental answer...is to become genuine human beings, reflecting the God in whose image we're made, and doing so in worship on the one hand and in mission, its full and large sense, on the other; and that we do this not least by 'following Jesus.' The way this works out is that it produces, through the work of the Holy Spirit, a transformation of character. This transformation will mean that we do indeed 'keep the rules'—though not out of a sense of externally imposed duty, but out of character that has been formed within us. And it will mean that we do indeed 'follow our hearts' and live 'authentically'—but only when, with that transformed character fully operative (like an airline pilot with a lifetime's experience), the hard work up front bears fruit in spontaneous decisions and actions that reflect what has been formed deep within. And, in the wider world, the challenge

we face is to grow and develop a fresh generation of leaders, in all walks of life, whose character has been formed in wisdom and public service, not in greed for money or power."

– N.T. Wright

2 Corinthians 8:1-5,7

1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will...7 just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Excels in the "grace of giving"...

- **Loosens the grip that money/possessions have on our lives.**
- **Sets the climate of your interior world.**

Hebrews 13:5

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

your life = *tropos* = character, inner life, environment of your life

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Giving is like a thermostat for the soul—it helps set the climate of our interior world in such a way as to choke out envy and greed while growing generosity and freedom.

- **Moves God's mission forward in this world.**

Matthew 6:3

But when you give to the needy ...



1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Gospel Patron = a person who is using some of their financial resources to invest in Christ-centered ministries and people

Every great movement of God in history was funded by Gospel Patrons.

Romans 16:1-2

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor [patron] of many people, including me.

Luke 8:1-3

1...Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.