

***BRIGHT HOPE FOR TOMORROW:***  
***The Corinthian Challenge – Sowing Bountifully***  
*May 8, 2022*

**Overarching Theme:** 2022 – *The Year of the Lord’s Favor* (Luke 4:19)

**Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

**Core Point:**

As the world begins awakening from 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming “the year of the Lord’s favor” is a message whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the ‘year of jubilee’ of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can envision new *possibilities* with God this Easter season and always.

**Reflect on this Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 NIV <sup>6</sup> *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

**This Week:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Paul, lover of metaphors, develops his thoughts about generosity around the motif of sowing and reaping. His first step is to place the responsibility directly upon each Corinthian. In so doing, he expands his earlier disclaimer that he is not commanding them what to do (8:8) and that the Corinthians need, like the Macedonians and like Titus, to take part in the collection by their own free will (8:3). Concisely, Paul provides three guidelines: (1) “each just as he has decided in his heart,” (2) “not reluctantly nor out of compulsion,” and (3), embracing what Proverbs 22:8 says as true: “God loves a cheerful/gracious giver” (9:7). Because the claim about God’s love is so directly interlaced with personal dispositions, we can conclude that Paul’s moral reasoning does not spring simply from internal feelings, reckonings, and calculations. The decisions that flow from a discerning,

prayerful soul, freely and personally embraced, are nevertheless inspired, framed, and defined by God's love.

– *Adapted from the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Vol XI p. 129-30*

### **Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:**

1. In this passage, Paul writes of the importance of sowing seeds in others. What are some of the ways that God has sown generously in humanity?
2. Can you think of a person in your life who sowed generously in you during your formative years? How would you like to pay it forward?
3. Paul advocates a kind of generosity this is prayerful, thoughtful and based on personal conviction (rather than one that is reluctant or coerced). Why do you think Paul makes this point? How would this lead to more 'cheerful' giving?
4. Paul writes that "*God is able to bless you abundantly... so that you will abound in every good work.*" How is Paul's understanding different from the so called 'prosperity preachers' who tend to stress personal accumulation as an end in itself? What good work would you like to abound in more? What good work might our church abound in more through the Bright Hope for Tomorrow campaign?

### **Activity for the Life of a Disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC
2. Pray for how God's will can be done through us in the Bright Hope for Tomorrow campaign.
3. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: 2 Corinthians 9:7 *Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*