

GIVING FOR THE FUN OF IT

2 Corinthians 8:16-9:15

2nd section prepares the church for the collection that is going to be taken to help the brethren in the churches of Judea who are suffering (8-9).

Paul is concerned that the offering for the churches be carried out in such a way that God is glorified, both by their grace giving for their brethren in need, as well as by the way that gift is handled by those who carry it.

APPEAL FOR THE OFFERING 8:1-15

Paul appeals to the Corinthians to participate generously.

Example of Macedonia 8:1-6

They had their own financial needs, yet insisted on giving generously.

Petition 8:7-8

Paul urges the Corinthians to follow the Macedonian example. They abound in every other area of the Christian life, how about this one?

Example of Christ 8:9

Christ who surrendered everything for us encourages us to give up our wealth.

Previous interest 8:10-11

They were eager to give previously, now they should fulfill their promise.

The importance of both **willing and doing**.

Proper motive 8:12-15

A willing mind is of prime importance.

No one will be judged for not giving what he doesn't have.

We're only responsible for how we use what God has given us.

Correct motive: that all the brethren will have enough.

It is not right for some to have abundance while others suffer.

He appeals to God's people to participate generously.

RECOMMENDATION OF MESSENGERS 8:16-24

Paul presents the messengers chosen to take the collection.

He demonstrates the importance of a reputation for integrity among those who handle God's funds.

In 1 Tim. 3, Paul tells us that elders should be free from the love of money.

Deacons shouldn't have an inappropriate desire to get more for themselves.

Those chosen for this ministry should have financial integrity. Kent Hughes tells about the old miser who called his doctor, lawyer and pastor to his deathbed.

"They say you can't take it with you. But I'm going to. I have three envelopes with \$100,000 in each. Just before they close the casket each of you slip you envelope into the casket."

They all promised. At the end of the funeral each put his envelope in. On the way home, the doctor confessed, "I'm building a clinic, so I took \$50,000 and put the rest in the casket.

The lawyer confessed, "I took \$75,000 for a legal defense fund and put in \$25,000.

The minister spoke up indignantly, "I'm ashamed of you. I put in a check for the full amount!" Now that's concern for ministerial integrity!

Hughes also told about a friend who pastored a small church.

The friend told him how he was struggling because of the meager salary.

Concerned for his friend, he wrote him a check for \$2,000.

Later he learned that the guy had scammed \$50,000 from others with the same story.

In order to avoid any *appearance* of questionable financial dealings, over 2000 organizations have made a commitment to adhere to the standards of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

Far too many financial shady deals go on in the name of Christ. Paul knows that special care is needed when it comes to how we handle money. He's determined not to give anyone cause to question our motives and dealings.

He's careful to select leaders known for integrity lest anyone accuse them. He stays away from the collection personally, lest anyone accuse him of using his position to pressure them. Or think he has a personal interest in the profits.

They already know Titus.

Titus has already demonstrated his genuine concern for them.

The others also have a reputation for being trustworthy. It's Important to select trustworthy people with a good reputation.

Paul wants to be careful to handle their gift with integrity. **20-21**

He doesn't want to open the door to criticism.

He wants to do what's right in the sight of God.

He wants to do what's right in the sight of men.

He's concerned that the offering be handled in a way that will result in God's glory.

THE REASON FOR THEIR JOURNEY 9:1-5

Delegation is sent to encourage them to prepare in advance, so they can give generously and without pressure.

Godly, generous giving is based on planning/ preparation–NOT** under last minute pressure of an emotional appeal.**

Paul wants our giving to be *grace giving*, NOT *forced giving*.

Paul wants our giving to be a source of *blessing*, NOT *grudging*.

Paul doesn't send the delegation to *pressure* them, but to *encourage* them to participate in the blessing.

They've already indicated their desire to participate, now he wants them to follow through and receive *the blessing of grace giving*.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE OFFERING 9:6-15

Paul identifies principles which should control our giving.

Basic principle for giving:

***We should give generously,
as God has given to us.***

We must make a distinction between the "prosperity gospel" that tries to manipulate God – "Give to God and get rich!"

The Biblical example–

***When we delight in giving abundantly to God,
He sees to it that we have all we need to give
back to Him.***

9:8; 9:11-14

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL GIVING

1. People who give generously, receive generous blessing from God. 9:6

Sower who buys sparing quantity of seed, gets sparing returns.

If you sow stingily, you get a stingy return!

If you sow abundantly, spreading blessing everywhere,
you get a blessed, rich return.

We ought to plan to give as we believe God is leading us to give.

If our giving is based on how much we can keep for ourselves—on how much is left over after sowing, our reaping will always be small!

Oriental legend: A farmer decided to keep small potatoes for seed.

That way he could enjoy large ones for meals. He ate big ones and planted little ones. Eventually they began to notice: Although small seed potatoes produce a crop, new potatoes gradually reduce to the size of marbles. He learned a costly lesson. We can't expect to grow large potatoes if we eat the best ones and use small leftovers for seed.

All the way through this passage Paul assures us that abundant giving results in abundant blessing

What he *doesn't* say is that giving is a way to get rich.

He *doesn't* say that MONEY is the measure of the blessing.

God's blessing isn't measured in dollars and cents!

2. God wants us to give cheerfully, from the heart.

9:7

We should give *cheerfully*—not out of fear of what God will do to us if we don't.

"Hilarious giving"

– Not "with pain"—giving shouldn't be a sad, painful thing.

– Not "from force"—We shouldn't give because we're pressured into it!

Giving should be a cheerful, happy experience.

As in sowing, we give up the seed,

expecting a rich harvest which is far more valuable!

"*HILARIOUS*"—Cp. "dynamite"

HA! HA! giving.

This is a derived word. The original is richer than that.

The root is used to describe the gods—they are gracious, giving gods.

They gave freely to their faithful subjects, and enjoyed it.

They also had many cheerful times.

Joy and merriment were common.

Paul's idea is that we should be like that.

We should give graciously, freely, and cheerfully.

– Not a sad, "goodby dear dollar" experience!

3. God supplies all we need to do what He wants us to do. 9:8-10

When our giving is Spirit-directed,

God sees to it that we get enough to give that much.

Don't miss the "**ALL**" verse—v. 8!

"He who supplies"

Refers to lavish giving of the one who provides for the Greek chorus.

God provides lavishly ALL WE NEED to fulfill His purpose through us!

As we give generously, God supplies an abundance of seed, so that our harvest of righteousness will be abundant.

4. God gives enough to allow us to be generous.
9:11-12

Purpose of riches— so we can GIVE liberally.

When we give liberally, God receives thanks from those who receive.

R.G. LeTourneau began as a young man giving a tithe, as the years progressed and God blessed his life he gave more, until eventually he kept a tithe to live on and gave 90% of his wealth to the Lord. **God allowed him to be generous.**

One of our men told me that their prayer is that God will allow them to give 75% of what they earn to the Lord, and keep 25% for themselves.

Paul assures us, ***“You will be made rich, so you can be generous.”***

5. God receives glory and praise, because of our generosity. **9:13**

This *isn't* a *natural* human response.

God produces that generous attitude; therefore, He gets the glory!

I often hear people comment, “I thank God for the generosity of the people at Pleasant View.”

God receives praise from the other side of the world, when we are generous.

6. Others pray for our welfare, when we use our resources for God's glory. **9:14**

Giving unites God's people.

Those who are blessed by our generosity pray for our welfare!

7. Grace giving is the result of recognizing that God gives first. 9:15

JDP-"The context does not suggest that Christ is the gift.

The unspeakable gift is the gift of grace to be able to give to others."

Whichever gift is in view, GOD IS THE SOURCE of all true giving!

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO ABOUT THIS TEACHING?

* ***Giving ought to be the most satisfying, joy-producing activity in life.***

* ***God delights in giving us more, so we can afford to give to others, so we can enjoy real satisfaction!***

I have often told the story of the businessman traveling in Korea who observed a young man in a field, pulling a crude plow, while an old man held the handles.

"These people are very poor," he said.

"Yes, but more important, they're Christians."

"When their church was being built, they were eager to give, but had no money.

They sold their ox so they could give. Now *they* pull the plow themselves."

The businessman responded, "What a sacrifice!"

"They didn't call it that.

They considered themselves *fortunate* to have an ox to sell!"

FAITH PROMISE GIVING

A way of giving-giving *BY FAITH!*

1. It's NOT IF giving—"If God... then I"—not conditional

2. It's FAITH giving—"We believe God wants"

3. It's seeking God's direction

4. It's believing God will enable us to do whatever HE asks us to do.