

## Guidelines for Generous Giving, part 2

Today, we'll finish this center section of 2 Corinthians. Chapters 8-9 deal with rich generosity toward Christian ministry. We are about ready to finish up these chapters. Last time we looked at a few guidelines for generous giving:

We should give like we want to harvest a bumper crop. Money that we give to the Lord's work is like a seed. We plant generously so we can reap bountifully.

We give as we purpose in our hearts, that is, intentionally, with the right motives. We want to be glad givers, not sad or mad givers.

We give expectantly. We trust that God will provide what we need. If God provides abundantly, we in turn give generously. God will provide sufficiently for us even if we give generously.

### IV. .10-11 Ask God to help you participate in generous giving.

God is the ultimate source of everything we have. We can be generous only because God provides for us generously. We are dependent on God for providing the seed to sow.

A. .10 Trust God to supply the basic resources for living—seed for sowing, bread for food.

1. This is likely an allusion to Isa 55:10, which uses similar language. God gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater.
2. Most of us work for a living, but still, God is the ultimate source of whatever we have.

B. .10b Ask God to supply and multiply your resources.

**Quote:** *Money is seed.* If we give it according to the principles of grace, it will multiply to the glory of God and meet many needs. If we use it in ways other than God desires, the harvest will be poor.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 661.

- C. .10end Ask God to increase the fruits of your righteousness. Our righteousness is shown in good works. The good work in view here is rich generosity.
1. All of us should be seeking to increase our fruits. I.e., we should see if we could be more generous. We should pray for more resources so that we can give more generously.
  2. Perhaps God will provide more abundant resources for you. I.e., a better job, more income, a pay raise. If that happens, you can increase your generosity.
  3. Lack of generosity, especially when you have abundant resources, calls into question whether we are truly righteous.
- D. .11 Ask God for the ability to give more generously. If we are “enriched,” it’s “for all liberality.” The more God gives us, the more generous we can be.

Christians should think deeply about how to live if they earn more money. If God provides abundant financial resources, do you increase your standard of living, or do you give more generously? Maybe you can do both. We should keep in mind that God enriches us “for all liberality/generosity.”

1 Timothy 6:17–18 *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,*

If God provides for us abundantly, his purpose is that we can be more generous. His purpose is not for us to live in luxury and opulence. When God gives us wealth, his intent is that we use some of it to finance the Lord’s work. We should not hoard it or spend it all on ourselves. We should not jack up our standard of living every time we get a pay raise. We should use the excess resources God gives us to fund God’s work.

**Illus.:** One writer tells about a wealthy Christian who daily, at family devotions, prayed for the needs of the missionaries that his church supported. One morning, after he had concluded family prayers, his little boy said, “Dad, if I had your checkbook, I could answer your prayers!”<sup>2</sup>

We certainly should pray that God would meet the needs of the missionaries and all those serving in Christian ministry. But our prayers have to be backed up by our giving. God meets the needs of those in ministry through our prayers and our giving.

- E. .11end Thank God for what He will do through your generosity—“thanksgiving through us to God”

Our liberality/generosity should extend toward things that result in thanksgiving being offered to God. Christians should intentionally support Christian charities. We should make sure *not* to give to a charity that opposes the work of God. Many charities support people and programs that stand in direct opposition to God. E.g. United Way.

Our giving should go to those through whom the work of God is being done. Notice the little phrase “through us.” The Corinthians were collecting this offering for this project that Paul is heading up—financial relief for the poor, suffering saints in Jerusalem. We want to direct our financial support to those who are serving God—people like Paul, projects like this.

**Trans.:** All of us ought to want to be involved in generous giving. If God supplies abundantly, we should give generously.

- V. .12-15 Appreciate the results of generous giving.

- A. .12 Abundant giving supplies the needs of the saints.

1. The offering Paul was collecting would alleviate the poverty of the suffering saints in Jerusalem.

---

<sup>2</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 663.

2. Interestingly, the word for “service” here (λειτουργία) often refers to spiritual service, service for God and for his church; worshipful service. Our offerings are spiritual sacrifices.
3. The word “administration” (διακονία) could also be translated as “service.” It’s the basis for our word “deacon.”
4. So financial giving is a spiritual ministry; it’s a means of worshipping God and of benefiting God’s people. When we give, it’s an act of worship and it’s a practical way to help those in need.

B. .12end Abundant giving results in many thanksgivings to God.

1. The word “supplying” (προσαναπληρώω) is an emphatic word meaning “to supply fully in addition.” The needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem was great, and this generous gift would supply this need.
2. And the results would be thanksgiving to God. When the poor saints in Jerusalem received this generous gift, their thanksgiving would arise to God for the Corinthians’ generosity.

**App:** Our giving results in greater thanksgiving. We may never receive a thank you note from those who receive our gifts, but we believe that the recipients of our giving are thankful to God for these resources.

Our giving results in greater thanksgiving.

C. .13 Abundant giving results in glorifying God.

1. Abundant giving is a mark of genuine Christianity.
  - a) .13a “through the proof of this ministry” – this generous gift would provide evidence that the Corinthian believers were genuine Christians.
  - b) This is what Christians do—we give generously. Such giving proves/validates our faith. This is Christ-like giving. Those who give this way are proving their faith.

2. .13b Abundant giving encourages others to glorify God. They praise God because of our generous giving. Many churches around the world exist because people like us give. Our “liberal sharing” makes it possible for people to be saved and to bring glory to God.

E.g., the Booths in Portugal, Steve Myers in S. Africa

3. .13c Abundant giving is a confession of the Gospel—the only reason these people in Greece are giving to the saints at Jerusalem is that they shared the same faith, i.e., they were saved, and this giving was a practical evidence of that.
4. Rich generosity is an evidence of salvation. Because we appreciate the grace of God, we want to be gracious to others.

**App:** If abundant giving were an evidence/proof of genuine Christianity, how much evidence would you have of it in your life? I.e., if we could judge whether you are a Christian by your generous giving, would there be evidence in your life to show that you are a Xn? Would anyone conclude that you are a Christian because of your generous giving?

- D. .14 Abundant giving results in unity among believers.

1. Others will be praying for you.
  - a) When the poor saints in Jerusalem received this gift, they would thank God for the Corinthians and others who gave so generously. They would be more prone to pray for those who helped them in this way.
  - b) Do you think missionaries pray for their financial supporters? Of course they do. Those who receive the funds we give pray for us; they ask for God’s blessings upon us.
  - c) I do that. Those who receive a generous blessing pray for the people who give it.

2. Others will care about you. “long for you...” – i.e., in the sense of caring or being concerned. The saints in Jerusalem will have a new concern for the saints in Greece. This will bring them together.

One of the benefits of this generous giving was that it helped unify the churches. Gentiles and Jews typically didn't get along well together. Some of the Jewish Christians still thought of Gentile Christians as second class citizens. But a gift like this could change peoples' attitudes. The people in Jerusalem would really appreciate this generous gift, and it would draw them closer to their Gentile brothers in Christ.

Likewise, there is a unity among believers when they are all giving generously to support the work of the ministry. Unity is the result when a group of people support a project with their financial resources; it draws them together in a common cause.

**Trans:** There are many benefits that accrue to us and to others when we give generously.

- VI. .15 Reflect on how our generous giving pictures God's “incredible gift” of his own Son.
  - A. It's interesting that Paul does not thank the Corinthians for their generosity; instead, he thanks God for his “incredible gift.”
  - B. The supreme expression of God's grace is Jesus Christ. He who was rich became poor for us, that we might be rich (8:9). This gift is “incredible,” that is, beyond our ability to understand.
  - C. When we give generously, we are being Christ-like. Generous giving is a mark of godliness. If we have experienced God's generous grace towards us in Christ, we must be willing to give generously to support God's work in the world.

- D. So the final appeal here, the last word about this offering, is a reminder about God's incredible, gracious gift to us. As we think of God sending his Son for us and Christ leaving the glories of heaven to come to earth for us—he that was rich became poor—we should be motivated to be richly generous in our giving.

This 2-chapter section on giving ends (9:14-15) where it began (8:1), with a statement of God's grace. The word "gift" here is the same as "grace." Grace is a gift. The Bible teaches grace giving. God's grace is what compels us to give graciously and generously.

The main principles in this passage is summarized in 2Co 9:7 *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Did the Corinthians ever come through with this gift? Paul was rather concerned about it.

Romans 15:26 *For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.*

Yes, the Corinthians finally made this contribution, and we can assume that the poor saints in Jerusalem glorified God for it, thanked God for it, and prayed for God's blessings on those who contributed.

Likewise, when we give, others glorify God, thank God, and pray to God for us. Rich generosity is a blessing for us and a benefit for others. It's a mark of Christ-likeness that all genuine believers share.

I trust that our study of these two chapters have reminded us of some important principles of giving to the Lord's work. I hope that this study will spur us on toward rich generosity.