

Giving Faithfully  
May 20, 2018  
Allen Power

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

In this passage Paul addresses a topic many church members want to avoid: giving our money to meet the needs of others.

**Why is giving such a sensitive subject in the church? When the subject is giving, what very real human fears and emotions can come to the surface? How can being a cheerful giver to those in need grow us as a believer?**

Big Idea: Believers using our resources to meet the needs of others demonstrate our trust in God and blesses all concerned.

- Let's begin with some context. Paul is writing to the church in Corinth regarding a missions offering.
- He was urging the churches he had planted to help the new converts to Christianity in Jerusalem who were in dire financial circumstances.
- John MacArthur: *"...the Jerusalem church had a great need. Many of its members had gone to Jerusalem as pilgrims to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, had been converted through Peter's message, and had then remained in the city without adequate financial support. Many residents of Jerusalem had undoubtedly lost their jobs in the waves of persecution that came after the martyrdom of Stephen. However, the Corinthians were wealthy enough (they had not yet suffered persecution and deprivation like the Macedonians) to help meet the need with a generous monetary gift."*<sup>i</sup>
- The wealthy Corinthians had made a pledge to give to this Jerusalem missions offering but hadn't given the funds. Paul was concerned they were letting their commitment slide so he's giving them a little "push."
- He begins with an interesting approach:

2 Corinthians 9:1–15 (Reading this week in the NLT)  
*The Collection for Christians in Jerusalem*

I really don't need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving.

- **How was Paul motivating them in verses one and two? How did he incorporate the church in Macedonia to motivate them? Was Paul stirring up a little competitive pressure? Would that be wrong? Why?**
- Giving shouldn't be a competition among believers, however Hebrews 10:24 tells us: "...let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works..." The Macedonians who were poor had actually made more progress on the offering while the rich Corinthians were procrastinating.
- Paul didn't want to be embarrassed himself, or for the Corinthians to be embarrassed, so he sent his "finance committee" to collect:

<sup>3</sup> But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don't want to be wrong in my boasting about you. <sup>4</sup> We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren't ready after all I had told them! <sup>5</sup> So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly.

- Sometimes we feel a little strange when we're asked to make a pledge commitment to giving to God's work. Obviously, Paul didn't see anything "*wrong or unspiritual about asking people to give.*"<sup>ii</sup>
- He also didn't hesitate to press them to fulfill their pledge.
- Verse five: Paul didn't want to show up and have to put pressure on people to give "*grudgingly.*" He had laid out a plan for this fundraising: 1 Corinthians 16:2 (ESV) "*On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store*

*it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.”*

- Also in verse five, the word “gift” comes from the Greek word **eulogeō**; *to speak well of, praise*:—bless(9), blessed(25), blessing(3), giving a blessing(1), praise(1), praising(1), surely\*(1).
- Wiersbe: “...a generous gift.” *Was Paul perhaps hinting that the Corinthians give more than they had planned? However, Paul was careful not to put on any pressure. He wanted their gift to be “a matter of bounty [generosity], and not as of covetousness [something squeezed out of them].” High-pressure offering appeals do not belong to grace giving.*<sup>iii</sup>
- Some would say it’s wrong to be this public about a fundraising campaign. Jesus said in Matthew 6 (ESV) <sup>3</sup> “*But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,* <sup>4</sup> *so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*”
- **Why was it not wrong for Paul to publicly encourage this church to give based on what other churches were doing?**
- We should always be motivated to give to please the Lord, but sometimes hearing that others are giving causes us to be more generous ourselves. There’s nothing wrong about congregations announcing they have given as a group, an example would be the SBC’s Cooperative Program.
- Now Paul begins to tell them how giving blesses the giver:

<sup>6</sup> Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. <sup>7</sup> You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”

- How do I decide how much to give to the Kingdom work of Christ?
- Paul used the example of sowing seed. Sow a little and the crop will be small; sow a lot and crop is bigger.
- Jesus said in Luke 6:38 (ESV) <sup>38</sup> *give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running*

*over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”*

- (Wiersbe) *“The “good measure” He gives back to us is not always money or material goods, but it is always worth far more than we gave.”<sup>iv</sup>*
- Paul instructed how to decide how much to give: *“<sup>7</sup> You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”*
- We have to pray and ask God what he would have us to give, and our motive in giving is important because God loves a “cheerful giver.”
- **Does that mean God can’t use money given for the wrong reasons? Why is it important to be a cheerful giver? Does this mean God only loves us if we give cheerfully? How does a cheerful giver benefit?**
- *“Paul wanted the Corinthians to receive God's blessings in response to their generosity, but this would not occur if they gave reluctantly or under compulsion because God loves a cheerful giver.”<sup>v</sup>*
- Wiersbe: *“Certainly God can bless a gift that is given out of a sense of duty, but God cannot bless the giver unless his heart is right.”<sup>vi</sup>*
- **What if I don’t feel cheerful about it? How do I deal with that in my heart?**
- Paul’s use of the farming metaphor reinforces giving as generously as we can afford to because the more we invest in the Kingdom the more “fruit” will be produced for our good and God’s glory. How much to give is a personal decision between God and me.
- **What is one of the greatest fears we have when we’re deciding how much to give to God’s work? Why should we NOT be fearful?**
- *“A giving attitude is more important than the amount given. The person who can give only a small gift shouldn’t be embarrassed. God is concerned about how a person gives from his or her resources (“widow's mite” in Mark 12:41-44).”<sup>vii</sup>*
- As Johnny Hunt says: *“You don’t have to be rich to be generous; you just have to be generous to be generous.”*

<sup>8</sup> And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

<sup>9</sup> As the Scriptures say, “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.”

<sup>10</sup> For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

- Paul says we don't have to fear poverty because we give to the Kingdom.
- Note, he said God would provide all we “need” not all we “want.”
- In verse ten he reminds us God is the source of all we have (seed to sow and provision for our needs) and as we give he will produce a “great harvest of generosity” in us. **Will giving a “seed offering” make me rich in money and stuff? What do you think Paul means in verse ten?**
- Here's what Paul says will result from generous giving to those in need:

<sup>11</sup> Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. <sup>12</sup> So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.

<sup>13</sup> As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you.

- Generous giving results in meeting the needs of God's work.
- Generous giving results in those who are helped thanking God.
- Generous giving results in those who are helped giving glory to God.
- Generous giving also proves that believers are truly obedient to God.

- The Corinthians were Greeks (Gentiles) and the believers in Jerusalem might have doubted if these gentiles were really followers of Christ. This generous mission giving was more evidence of that the gospel had taken root and changed lives in Corinth.

### So, What's the Takeaway?

- Using our resources to meet the needs of others demonstrates our trust in God, and blesses all concerned.
- We don't have to fear poverty from giving to Kingdom work; God promises to meet our needs with enough left over to share with others.
- Deciding how much to give is a matter of conscience. Paul reminded us that like a farmer sowing seed, the more we're able to sow the more impact it will have on the needs and on us as the giver.
- Paul taught us that God loves a cheerful giver. That's because our generous, giving God sets the example Himself: Romans 8:32 (ESV) <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
- Giving to God's work demonstrates trust, obedience, and gratitude to God. It also allows God to bless us with "overflowing grace" (v. 14.)
- Ultimately, generous giving will result in souls being saved.
- That thought caused Paul to break out in praise in verse 15 saying: <sup>15</sup> *Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!*
- That "*inexpressible gift*" is the gift of Jesus Christ Himself dying for our sins and making it possible for us to receive his free gift of salvation! It is indeed the gift "*too wonderful for words!*"

---

<sup>i</sup> MacArthur, John. The MacArthur Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 54015-54019). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

<sup>ii</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 660). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>iii</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 660). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>iv</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 660). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

---

<sup>v</sup> Pratt, Richard L., Jr.. Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 & 2 Corinthians: 7 (p. 405). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

<sup>vi</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 661). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>vii</sup> Tyndale. Life Application Study Bible NKJV (LASB: Full Size) (Kindle Locations 172374-172378). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.