

## 2 CORINTHIANS - (Chapter 9)

Again we continue studying the most detailed passages of Scripture regarding *grace giving* in the New Testament - *2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapters 8-9*. You know it should be strange for Christians to need to be encouraged to give when God has already given us so much.

### *Administering the Gift (vs. 1-5)*

*Vs. 1-2* – Paul called the financial collection for the Jerusalem saints the

*“ministering to the saints”* – Paul viewed the financial collection as ministry.

The ancient Greek word translated *ministering* (*diakonia*) is the same word

translated *“relief”* in *Acts 11:29* (*Then the disciples, each according to his*

*ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea*). Regarding

the phrase *“It is superfluous for me to write to you for I know your willingness”*

- here, Paul may be showing his sarcasm again. The basic idea is, “I don’t

even need to write this, reminding you about the collection, because you are

already ready and willing to give.” Paul is encouraging them in their manner

of giving that is why in *vs. 2* he says *“your zeal has stirred up the majority”*.

*Vs. 3-5* – Paul reminded the Corinthians to fulfill the commitment that they

had already made (*8:10-12*). They had said they would collect a financial gift

to send to the church in Jerusalem. Paul was sending a few men ahead of him

to make sure their gift was ready so it would be a real gift and not look like

people had to give under pressure at the last minute. He was holding them

accountable to keep their promise, so that neither Paul nor the Corinthians would be embarrassed. The brethren mentioned in vs. 5 is the same delegation mentioned in chapter 8:16-20. It is very apparent from this text that Paul did not see anything wrong or unscriptural about asking people to “promise to give” – or like we do make a capital campaign pledge or pastor anniversary or church anniversary pledge. Paul never told them how much they had to promise but he did expect them to keep their promise. When a person signs up for a cell phone they promise to pay a certain amount each month. If it’s acceptable to make financial commitments for things like telephones, satellite TV, and credit cards then certainly it ought to be acceptable to make commitments for the work of the Lord.

*The Blessing of abundant Harvest to the Cheerful Giver (vs. 6-14)*

Vs. 6 - Paul quoted a proverb from the agricultural world that the people of that era would easily understand. Giving to the Lord’s work is not throwing your money away but it is an investment with the promise of great blessing. Paul wanted the people to not hesitate to give generously to kingdom advancement work due to worry about not having enough money left over to meet their own needs. (Read Galatians 6:6)...Paul assured the Corinthians God was able to meet their needs. The person who only gives a little (*in comparison to what they have*) only receives a little in return. Don’t allow a

lack of faith to keep you from giving whatever the Holy Spirit prompts you to give. Giving is like sowing seed; the amount of the harvest is determined by the amount of seed sown. Now exactly *“what do we reap when we give?”* We reap blessings that are both material and spiritual. *Materially*, we can trust that God will provide for the giving heart. The promise of *Philippians 4:19* (and my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus) is made in the context of the generous hearts of the Philippians (*Philippians 4:15-18*). If we give to God, He will give back to us according to our need and even some wants. *Spiritually*, we can trust that God will reward the giving heart both now and in eternity. Jesus spoke to this in *Matthew 19:29* - *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.* Therefore, don’t be misled by the false teachers of health wealth prosperity who feed off of the greed of people who think if they give to *their ministries* they will get rich. God will bless you in kind to what is needed in your life and He knows our motives for giving.

*Vs. 7* – Regarding the phrase “so let *each* one give.” Giving is to be done by everyone who has been given something. Every Christian should be a giver. Because of small resources, some cannot give much but it is still important that they give, and that they give with the right kind of heart. (*Remember the*

*little boy Andrew found and brought to Jesus who gave of his lunch – 2 small fish and five barley loaves...but yet Jesus, took what he had and feed over 5000 people).* The phrase “As he purposes in his own heart” - Giving should be motivated by the purposes of our own heart. It should never be coerced or manipulated. We should give because we want to give and because God has put it in our own heart to give. We give based on what and how God’s word tells us to give. *This can also be said in the sense that our giving reveals the purposes in our own heart. If we say we love the Lord more than golf, fishing, or shopping, but spend all our money on golf & fish equipment and shopping and do not give as we should to the Lord’s work, then the way we spend our money shows the purposes of our own heart more accurately than our words do.* Jesus said it like this in **Matthew 6:21** - *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* The phrase *“Not grudging or of necessity”* - God does not want our giving to be grudging (*reluctantly or regretfully given with plenty of complaining*) or of necessity (*given because someone has made us or manipulated us into giving*). This is more the spirit behind taxation, not Biblical grace giving. The phrase *“For God loves a cheerful giver”* - Instead of giving in a grudging way or out of necessity, God wants us to give cheerfully. The ancient **Greek** word for *cheerful is hilaros*, used only here in the New Testament)...it is the root for our English word *hilarious*. God wants us to

give happily because that is how God Himself gives. True giving comes from a happy heart, and it also gives us a happy heart. When you talk to God in prayer about what you should “*lay aside at the beginning of every week*” (according to *1 Corinthians 16:2*) God directs you to what you should give thus your giving becomes joyful because you are doing God’s will.

***The Right Kind of Giving is Always Blessed (vs. 8-9)***

**Vs. 8** – Regarding the phrase “*God is able to make all grace abound toward you*” - as we give, we must be persuaded that God is able to reward our giving. Just as God is able to make the sowing of seed abound to a great harvest, so God is able to bless our giving. God will see to it that the generous cheerful giver will not suffer need. Instead, God will generously supply the need for those who give to support God’s kingdom growing. Jesus taught that even the smallest gift, if given with the right heart, would not go without a reward; He said in *Matthew 10:42* – “*And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.*” (Illustration: I can remember my grandmother always providing ice water and coffee...she would cook tea cakes for the men who worked in the cotton fields in front of our house – my older brother and I would stop them when they got near our house during the sweltering hot days...although financially we were poor; I never remember not having what

we needed; I never remember going to bed hungry, or not having clothes...acts of kindness to others for the right reason; God will always reward them...like the bin of flour of the widow of Zerephat there are some blessings that have outlived the person blessed...we are beneficiary's of some of great grandmother's Godly deeds). In rewarding our giving, God does it with all grace. Our giving is rewarded in many different ways, materially and spiritually. Materially, God may bless our giving with promotions for better pay & benefits, unexpected gifts of money, or by making things last so we don't suffer the cost of replacing them. Spiritually, God may bless our giving by freeing our hearts from the tyranny of greed and materialism, by giving us a sense of blessing and happiness, or by storing up rich reward in heaven. There is no end to the ways we can be blessed when God is able to make all grace abound toward us. Regarding the phrase "*Always having all sufficiency in all things*" - the ancient Greek word for sufficiency (*autarkeia*) may also be translated contentment. This is how the same word is used in *1 Timothy 6:6* – "*Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*" God gives a special gift to the giving heart" - *always . . . all contentment in all things*. That is a lot of all! Regarding the phrase "*May have an abundance for every good work*" - God blesses us materially and spiritually so that we will have an abundance for

every good work. *We are blessed so that we can be a blessing to others.* *God wants us to be channels of blessing, not reservoirs of blessing.*

**Vs. 9** – Paul quoted a proverb from the agricultural world. Giving for kingdom advancement purposes is not throwing your money away but it’s an investment with the promise of great blessing. Paul is quoting from ***Psalm 112:9***. Regarding the phrase “*He has given to the poor*” – this is a reference to why we should always have a benevolent fund...*we can’t help everybody, but we can help somebody.* And God will provide for our need to help the ones He sends if we are walking and talking with Him. Regarding the phrase “*His righteousness endures forever*” - Paul is not trying to say that generous giving makes us righteous, but it gives evidence of a right standing with God. Although when you give money God can certainly bless you by giving money back to you but it may not always be money that God gives you. Health wealth prosperity preachers teach a false “*seed theology*.” Instead of money when you give, God may give you in return favor on your job; car maintenance and household appliance grace; God knows exactly what you need and He knows what you want. Don’t give to a particular ministry with the sole purpose you think God has to give you back money (more money than you gave) in return.

*Paul prays for blessing for the giving Corinthian Christians (vs. 10-11)*

**Vs. 10** – Regarding the phrase “*May He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food*” Paul recognizes God as the great supplier. Whatever we have to give was first given to us by God. **Psalms 24:1** affirms *the earth is the LORD's, and everything in it. The world and all it's people belong to Him.*

Regarding the phrase “*Supply and multiply the seed you have sown*” Paul prays that God would supply resources to the Corinthian Christians so that they may give, and at the same time multiply what they give. Whatever the church feel it needs that it does not have we should pray to the *Lord of the Harvest*. Paul is praying God would increase these fruits that grow from their giving.

**Vs. 11** – The phrase “*while you are enriched in everything*” Paul prayed that the Corinthian Christians would be enriched by their giving, both materially and spiritually. The phrase “*For all liberality*” this is the reason why the Corinthian Christians should be enriched in everything. Not for their own riches or lavish lifestyles but for all liberality – that is, for all generous giving. You see, no man ought to live to himself; the two great ends of every Christian's life ought to be, the glory of God, and the good of others especially, those who belong to the household of faith as stated in **Galatians 6:10**. The harvest the Corinthians will enjoy is not necessarily monetary profit but the privilege of having more opportunity to do works of



righteousness. The blessing is the cheerful or hilarious thrill of giving again and again.

***The Blessing of Thanksgiving (vs. 12-15)***

**Vs. 12-14** – in **vs. 12-14** we see **4 benefits**: **1<sup>st</sup>** - on the most practical level, the giving of the Corinthian Christians will supply the needs of the saints. A Grace giving Christian will do whatever he/she can to meet needs when God reveals them to him. **Secondly**, their gifts also caused thanksgiving to God (“*many thanksgivings to God*”). They were giving more than money for food; they were giving people a reason to thank God. ***Matthew 5:16*** says, “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” This is a beauty of *corporate church giving*; no individual gets the glory that belongs to God. **Third**, the giving of the Corinthian Christians was evidence of God’s work in them (“*the obedience of your confession.*”) When those in need received the gift, they would glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing. The thanksgiving coming from the gift of the Corinthian Christians would be for more than the gift itself. They would also glorify God as they understood the gift meant the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and it meant the Corinthian Christians had hearts of liberal sharing – the ancient **Greek** word for liberal sharing is **koinania**. This is the

same word used for the ideas of fellowship and communion – it means the sharing of things in common. And the fourth benefit from the gift of the Corinthian Christians was that it would prompt the Jerusalem Christians to pray for them. Paul expected that the Jerusalem Christians would pray for the Corinthian Christians. This is something that we can do when others give to us, and when we need their gifts. We can pray for them.

Vs. 15 - Salvation is the indescribable gift. We do not earn a gift. We receive Jesus and we receive salvation exactly as we would receive a gift. If we earn it, it is not a gift. Paul isn't saying that we shouldn't describe the gift of Jesus or the gift of salvation. He is simply saying that it is impossible to adequately describe the gift. It is beyond full description. Jesus and salvation are so awesome when Paul writes His indescribable gift, the ancient *Greek* word he uses for *indescribable* (*anekdiegetos*) is not found in any ancient writing before this time. Apparently, Paul made up the word to describe the indescribable. If we really understand and appreciate the indescribable gift God gives us, our lives will be saturated with gratitude.