

“Absolutely, Everything, All the Time, No Fooling, Sufficient Grace?”
2 Corinthians 9.1-15

ANCIENT Societies believed BLESSED & GUIDED by their gods / deities
Had SENSE of Civic Responsibility to CARE for Others in their Community
GIVING back to Community was Something Talked About and EXPECTED

Let us give in the manner that would have been acceptable if we were receiving.
Above all let us give willingly, promptly, and without hesitation...and our face
clothed with the joy we feel. Seneca, 65 AD

WESTERNIZATION = SECULARIZATION > Varying Degrees Every Country
MODERN Western Society > GIVING is NONE of your BUSINESS

WE HAVE because we are ENTITLED – We WORK HARDER - SMARTER

Ours is the first major civilization built deliberately and self-consciously without
religious foundations. Beneath other civilizations there have always been
religious foundations...idols, gods, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity ... We are
building a world of marvelous ingenuity and intricacy but it is arising over a
spiritual vacuum...so we have rewritten the question of how we might be
consoled in our journey through this valley of tears...Socrates found consolation
in the good...the New Testament in Christ's redemption...Marx in the journey to
just world. But we find it simply in ourselves. We are our own patients and
therapists, deeply committed to the gospel of self-fulfillment. David Wells

FAMILY Member joined a Church, Years Later saw and asked “how's church?”

Went on SUNDAY and they told us to GIVE MONEY so we QUIT Going!

As we STEP into 2 Corinthians 9...

1. Project Gone Cold

Paul spent DECADE Organizing / Collecting OFFERING for Jewish Xtians

Expression UNITY: GENTILES Xtians Help POOR Hebrew Bros/Sis 1 Church

Paul TOLD Corinthians over YEAR BEFORE to start GETTING READY

Now concerning the collection for the saints... 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.
1 Corinthians 16.1-2



Paul LIVED in Corinth Year/Half

Bragged to Macedonians their Generosity

Ch 8 BRAGS to Corinthians about Macedonian EXAMPLE

Paul BOASTED like Proud DAD

Spur Spiritual KIDS to Love & Good Works

a. Strong Start - Paul always SEEKS & SPEAKS the BEST about OTHERS
Sees the LITTLE Good that they BEGAN a year Earlier and PRAISES 1st Step

v. 1 Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints
Concerning THIS Service DIAKONOS, U been There – Done That – Got T shirt
Contagious ENTHUSIASM > Effective Way to ROUSE People to ACTION

Paul EXPECTS them to TURN Good INTENTION into ACTION

v. 2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them.

QUESTION Now about PRESENT Readiness – R U Grow Weary or Distracted?

Word for MILITARY Action – Readiness – On HIGH Alert! – NO Surprises

NOT Unspiritual or Legalistic to ASK church to Make FINANCIAL Promise

NOT Tell them HOW or HOW MUCH but does tell them to be READY

b. Shameful Slack

Paul uses REVERSE Psychology > Prevent EMBARRASSMENT for ALL

So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.
2 Corinthians 8.24

Paul wants Corinthians to Respond **POSITIVELY** to Coming **DELEGATION**

v. 3 But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be.

IMPORTANCE of Saving Face – Corinthians, Macedonians & their Father Paul

From **ALL APPEARANCE** Corinthians had **PLENTY** they **COULD** Give

v. 4 Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident.

Paul wants Corinthians to know you **CANNOT CLAIM** to **FOLLOW** Jesus

And **ONLY** Give when **SHAMED** to Do So by the Pressure of **OUTSIDERS**

c. Sends Servants

Church **BAPTIZED** in CA – Grew in X as HS/College Student

Supported US in Mission for 30 years – Home Every 3 years – Smaller, Smaller

NEXT to Last Visit – New Pastor – 10 People (incl Me & Dayna!)

New Pastor asked Treasurer **RIGHT** to **SIGN** Checks > Name of Property Deed

CHURCH almost became ATM Machine **CON-ARTIST** Called self **PASTOR!**

LAWYERS/ POLICE/ TEARS: Re-Opened Doors New Church Preaching Jesus

MODEL Established in Acts 6 – Servant-Leaders focus on Material Needs

So **APOSTLES** can Focus on **WORD/PRAAYER** – Not be Tempted/Accused

v. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.

Paul **TRUSTING** Church & **TEAM** Sent to **COMPLETE** Important **TASK**

He will **EXHORT** them but **NOT** be **ORGANIZER** > Teacher Not Treasurer

2-fold TASK of Titus:

1. Make Certain Offering READY by time Paul COMES
2. Make sure Gift is given JOYFULLY & GENEROUSLY – NOT Grudgingly

Titus' VISIT will BUY TIME for them to Get Ready before PAUL will ARRIVE

Paul wants to MAKE Sure that is BOASTING is Not 'full of hot air'

2. Promises to Claim

a. Bounty from God

v. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

GIVER Benefits – ALL GRACE ABOUND 'abound' 6 X's / 'grace' 10 X's

READING this VERSE like Drinking from FIRE HOSE of Mercy/Grace

"Absolutely, Everything, All the Time, No Fooling, Sufficient Grace?" YES!

PRIMARY Focus of Context > MATERIAL Benefit – Gospel Truths

Bible > No Spiritual / Sacred Distinction – All FOR God – Seen/Unseen

All of LIFE is under God's Lordship AND Leading > Spiritual PURPOSE

All we POSSESS is BECAUSE of God's Grace > God IS ABLE / Powerful v. 8

You received without paying; give without pay. Matthew 10.8

MORE than Mere REPLENISHMENT – Overflow ABUNDANCE is GIVEN

v. 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

SELF-Supporting > God will give YOU so you CAN be God-DEPENDENT

I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. Philippians 4.11

If we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 1 Timothy 6.8

TV: AMERICAN is WORRIED about TARRIFS Raising Price of Items in USA
 Entire 20-Foot CONTAINER Stacked High Plastic Boxes > Filled Sports Shoes
 All Brands, Colors, Styles – HUNDREDS of Pairs – Costing 1000's of Dollars

WORRIED that Tariffs might RAISE the Cost of BELOVED SNEAKERS

Thought MORE Worried PROBLEM Only has 2 FEET – Time to Short to Wear

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.
 1 Timothy 6.17

NT does NOT Condemn RICHES or RICH PEOPLE > They're RESPONSIBLE

As WE ALL are – God's Gifts ON LOAN – We STEWARD what He Entrusted

NEVER that was RICH till moved to RURAL Uganda during Civil Wars 1980's

Long Way before SEE Equity & Justice Paul prayed for in GLOBAL Church

b. Believe the Gospel

v. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

GIVING is an OUTPOST of the KINGDOM of God – REVEALS His RULE

Giving NOT matter of SHOWING HOW Thankful we ARE

Our job is NOT to PROVE our SINCERITY to GOD

Giving is Act of FAITH in RESPONSE to GRACE

Not Deciding to DO Something FOR the Church – WE ARE the Church

Not MATTER of how MUCH One Gives, but HOW do you Give? Freely?

Not Give PERCENTAGE or TARGET Amount – but a HEART CHECK

Asking "HOW MUCH" we HAVE to Give is to Completely MISS Paul's Point

v. 7 – 3 GUIDELINES for Giving

1. “each one” – INDIVIDUAL Matter – You Decide, You are RESPONSIBLE
How Much? Determined Not by Church or Comparing but Conviction

2. “decided” RESOLVE – Verb found ONLY HERE in NT ‘choose deliberately’
Based on CALCULATED Decision – Not Settled LIGHTLY or IMPULSIVELY
NOT when OFFERING Plate is Coming – Seconds ticking on QR Code > Home!
LOVE that Existential ENCOUNTER > Face to Face with GOD @ Offering Bag
Some Tell Unbelievers in Church – You Don’t have to GIVE --- REALLY??
You OWE Nothing to God? God gave you NOTHING? God ASKS Nothing??

3. “in his heart” PRIVATE – 2 People’s BUSINESS – YOU and GOD
NOT INFO Pastors/Elders/Deacons – Thankful - Confidentiality of COUNTERS
Church Pastored Hawaii: PLAQUES & Tributes to Givers – Bibles, Pews, Pulpit
Many DONATE Buildings or Wing to Hospital so their NAME can be ON IT

To GIVE then have GRUDGE shows GREED NOT GRACE

Contributions under COMPULSION fear Authority of Man or Public OPINION

Paul wants GRACE of God to so Fill Believer overflow Generosity and JOY
TESTIMONY Ananias & Saphira: NOT Honor God, PROMISES/Pocketbook

Paul’s PRIMARY concern was their SOULS > Wants them DELIVERED from
GREED, SELF-RELIANCE, COVETOUSNESS, HARD-HEARTEDNESS

See Everything as GIFT of GRACE and TRUST God for the FUTURE

c. Bestow Grace

v. 6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Quote? MAXIM? Known Saying? NOT Exactly QUOTE of Hebrew Scripture

PRINCIPLE – We HARVEST in PROPORTION to our PLANTING

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.
Galatians 6.7

2 Ways to SOW --

One – Take Precious SINGLE Seed like Gold Coin – Carefully place in Furrows
Other: Recklessly GRAB Overflowing Handfuls, Wildly Throw in All Directions

Whenever fleshly reason calls us back from doing good through fear of loss, we should immediately oppose it with this shield: *But the Lord declares that we are sowing.*
John Calvin

“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.”
Luke 6.38

With what zest he broke the tough-fibered prairie sod, which had never been broken before since the beginning of time... And with what reverence he held up the beautiful seed which he was to sow on his own ground. The plump kernels appeared to glow with some inner golden light as the warm rays of the sun struck full across them, and they seemed to be squirming in the hand that grasped them as if they were charged with a life, suddenly roused from slumber, that was seeking release there.
O.E. Rolvaag, *Giants of the Earth*

Christians who Believe PROSPERITY Theology – Health / Wealth Gospel

See LACK of Emphasis in Mainstream Evangelicalism as LACK of FAITH

If you REALLY Believed in God/Power you would CLAIM his PROSPERITY

Non-Prosperity Xtians accuse P's of MATERIALISM / Manipulating GOD

BOTH > Connect MONEY and FAITH > Both Extremes have WEAKNESSES

Evangelicals Give from GRATITUDE for What God HAS already GIVEN

Prosperity Gives in Anticipatory Gratitude for What God WILL Give

One LOOKS BACK @What they Have, Other looks FORWARD @WILL Have
 Evangelicals FOCUS on PAST – Prosperity LOOKS to FUTURE
 Both see GIVING as RESPONSE to Money – DO HAVE or WILL HAVE

BOTH make IDOLS Out of MONEY!

One its PROOF of His Truth/Power // Other, it's PROMISE of His Truth/power
 So REMOVE Money – Remove GOD, Blessings, Truth, Power, FAITH

Paul is calling Corinthians to TRUST God NOW to Meet their Needs
 AND also to Meet Needs of POOR Jewish Christians in JUDEA – Here & Now
 GIVE NOW Because your JOY and SECURITY are IN GOD who Cannot LIE
 TRUST in Heavenly Father who CLOTHES FIELDS and FEEDS the BIRDS

v. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way,
 which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

Call to GIVE > FLEE Idolatry of TRUSTING Self & Savings – Not Savior

What Paul PROMISES the GENEROUS Giver is NOT Wealth-in-Return

But having ALL YOU NEED to be GENEROUS to Others

The key to generosity is not in caring less about what we have in the world, but
 caring more about God's purposes in granting to us his gifts. Kent Hughes

3. Possessions to Cherish

a. Righteousness

v. 9 As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his
 righteousness endures forever."

Def: Moral Uprightness – Covenant Blessing – Goodness – Eternal Life

NOT Saved by WORKS – But True Salvation WORKS > Received > GIVE

NOT Self-Dependence but GOD Dependence > HE is Jehovah Jireh our Provider

Giving must be generous and joyful because only such giving is an expression of faith in God as the one who provides the gracious means to being righteous.

Scott Hafemann

ANY Righteousness WE have is a GIFT from our God of RIGHTEOUSNESS

v. 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

FARMER has to WAIT for the HARVEST

GRACE GIVER begins to REAP God's Gracious Harvest IMMEDIATELY

Sure there ARE Long-Range BENEFITS – but they begin RIGHT AWAY too

Paul's thoughts are SHAPED by ISAIAH and HOSEA...

Paul sees CHURCH as NEW Covenant Community > JUBILEE in Jesus

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater”

Isaiah 55.10

“Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.”

Hosea 10.12

‘seed’ and ‘harvest’ NOT JUST Material Possessions > Seed of God's WORD
PROMISE Not to Make People Rich > Make the Instruments of SALVATION

Summary moves from COLLECTION TO EVANGELISM

No such thing as SECULAR & SACRED in Xtian Life > ALL is FOR God

MONEY used for God's Glory & Kingdom SPIRITUAL Tool HE will USE

"All the money needed to send and support an army of self-sacrificing, joy-spreading ambassadors is already in the church."

John Piper

b. Rejoicing

v. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

Collection is GOSPEL Ministry because it RESULTS in PRAISE to God

Praise for WHAT He's DONE in Past – PRAYER for what He'll do in FUTURE

Very WEALTHY Xtian Man prayed Daily/Faithfully for Many Mission Works

One day Son said, "Dad, if I had YOUR Money I could answer All your Prayers"

Might be GOOD Exercise to ASK who is Thanking God for YOUR Generosity?

WHO is Thanking God for GIVING of BICF – esp ZGC English Congregation?

WHO will we SEE in Heaven because WE Gave?

Who is Moving Forward in STRENGTH and Wholeness because We HELPED?

Love is the overflow of joy in God which gladly meets the needs of others...It originates in the grace of God which overflows because it delights to fill the empty...The contentment of a Christian...is not a Buddha-like serenity, unmoved by the hurts of others. It is profoundly dissatisfied contentment...whenever it perceives human need...it starts to expand in love to fill that need and bring about the joy of faith in the heart of the other person. John Piper

Not ONLY does GIVER Benefit > but ALSO the RECIPIENTS

SPECIFIC Service Paul has in Mind is HELPING Jewish Xtians in JUDEA

Paul calls it LITURGY – SERVICE – Work for PEOPLE

v. 13 By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,

GOD is also BENEFICIARY > Many Expressions of PRAISE and THANKS

ONLY God can Turn GREEDY People GENEROUS

ONLY God can Turn PREJUDICED People into those who PITY Strangers

ONLY God can Turn those WORRIED about Tomorrow to WORSHIP Today
 HUMBLING / Touching > Xtians we Served Uganda KZ thank God for Senders
 PRAISE is Because...

1. OBEDIENCE Accompanies CONFESSION of the GOSPEL

to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's
 sake...so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith
 Romans 1.5, 16.26

faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead James 2.17

Jewish Christians PRAISE God that GENTILE Church is REAL, Living, Giving
 and that IN JESUS They are Brothers and Sisters who SHARE ALL things.

AFFECTION for Corinthians > they WILL PRAY for YOU

Paul wants GENTILE Church be Good SAMARITAN Rescues Jewish Brothers
 Wants to SEE Middle Wall of Hostility FALL – Both Embrace Jesus their Peace

10 years of EFFORT by Paul > Luke hardly Mentions in Acts > FAILED Unity
 Reminder: Don't GIVE for RESULTS > Because is RIGHT & GLORIFIES God
 10 Lepers came for Healing, Jesus the Healer KNEW in Advance 9 Not Thanks!
 Healed ALL > Demonstrate Unconditional Loving, Healing, Grace of GOD
 RECEIVED Praise > ONE Samaritan RETURNED to say THANKS!

2. GENEROSITY in Sharing with them and EVERYONE Else

Ties back to Ch 7 – VINDICATION – they Have RIGHT Standing with God

v. 14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace
 of God upon you.

Impact of Surpassing GLORY and Surpassing GRACE

We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving. Linda Belleville

HEARTS will GO Out to GIVERS & PRAYERS Go Up to God for the Givers

Paul speaking about GIFT of MONEY > Can be applied to ALL God's GIFTS

Let us take Our Gifts – Given by God, Recognized by Church – Share Them

As we give GENEROUSLY, CHEERFULLY Lord of the Harvest is Praised!

“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever”

Westminster Shorter Catechism, question 1

v. 15 Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Paul's THEOLOGY and PRAXOLOGY always ends in DOXOLOGY

Paul needs to INVENT a NEW Word – Never in NT or other Greek Literature

WORDS cannot DESCRIBE Gift of GOD that is BEYOND Description

The DIVINE Gift Exceeds ALL OTHER Gifts

WONDER of God's Gift Far EXCEEDS Every Attempt to Describe It

GREATEST Example of GIVING – God gave SON – JESUS gave LIFE –

SPIRIT gives All GLORY to Jesus – Transformed Christians give STRANGERS

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? Romans 8.32

2 Corinthians 9.¹ Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, ² for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. ³ But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴ Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. ⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” ¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Psalm 112

1 Praise the Lord. Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
who find great delight in his commands.

**2 Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

3 Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

**4 Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.**

5 Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

**6 Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.**

7 They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

**8 Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.**

9 They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.

**10 The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.**