

## STUDY ON THE BOOK OF CORINTHIANS

### Second Corinthians – Chapter 9

#### Offering

*“Now it is unnecessary for me to write to you about the offering [that is to be made] for the saints [in Jerusalem]” (v1 AMP)*

The specific offering Paul has in mind is the financial support of the Jerusalem saints. Paul will be in Corinth to pick up this collection for the Jerusalem saints, which he wrote of in 2 Corinthians 8 and in other previous passages (such as 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Paul is writing to the church in Corinth on a giving that he considers unnecessary however, it became necessary because one-year on, he is still waiting on their vows or pledge to give.

*“for I know your eagerness [to promote this cause], and I have [proudly] boasted to the people of Macedonia about it, telling them that Achaia has been prepared since last year [for this contribution], and your enthusiasm has inspired the majority of them [to respond].” (v2 AMP)*

“Achaia,” the Roman province where Corinth was situated. Paul is stating here that he had boasted to the churches of Macedonia that the church in Corinth has been preparing their offering for a year now... and the expectation is that it would be a great and generous offering hence even, the churches of Macedonia are challenged to do better.

*“Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready; lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.” (vv3-5)*

Paul is giving a little sarcastic twist. It is as if he says, “You all are so ready and willing to give that I’m sure you would bring the collection to me. But in any regard, I’ll send the brethren to come pick it up. After all, I don’t want all my boasting about you to have been in vain.” His sarcasm continues. “After all, Corinthians, you don’t want the Macedonians to see that you were unwilling to give. We don’t want a case where we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.”

Paul wanted the whole business of the collection completed before he arrived so that there would be nothing even remotely manipulative in his receiving the collection.

The key point to note here is that Paul was concerned that giving be a matter of generosity and not a matter of grudging obligation. God Himself never gives out of an attitude of grudging obligation, and neither should we. To be generous, in the Biblical idea of the word, has more to do with our **attitude** in giving than with the **amount** that we give, so God wants a willing attitude from givers.

#### Giving Generously

*“Now [remember] this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows generously [that blessings may come to others] will also reap generously [and be blessed]. Let each one give [thoughtfully and with purpose] just as he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver [and delights in the one whose heart is in his gift].” (vv6-7 AMP)*

“Here’s my point. A stingy sower will reap a meagre harvest, but the one who sows from a generous spirit will reap an abundant harvest. Let giving flow from your heart, not from a sense of religious duty. Let it spring up freely from the joy of giving—all because God loves hilarious generosity!” (vv6-7 TPT)

In verse 6, The Aramaic can be translated “the one who sows with a storehouse of seed” (remaining). This describes a farmer who is stingy with his sowing. Since he has a storehouse of seed, he can afford to sow liberally. If a farmer planted only a few seeds because he wanted to “hold on” to as much seed as he could, he would have more seed in his barn after sowing time. But at the harvest, the one who planted more seed would have much more grain in his barn.

**What do we reap when we give?** We reap blessings that are both *material* and *spiritual*.

1. **Materially**, we can trust that God will provide for the giving heart. The promise of Philippians 4:19 (*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 to us materially.
2. **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.* Jesus obviously did not mean that we would receive a hundred houses if we gave up our house for Him any more than He meant we would receive a hundred wives if we gave one up for Him! But He did mean that we are never the losers when we give to God. The Lord can never be in debt to any man, and we should never be afraid of giving God “too much.” Spiritually or materially, you cannot out-give God.

### **The 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 (*hilaros*, used only here in the New Testament) is the root for our English word *hilarious*. God wants us to give *happily* because that is how God Himself gives.

There are seven things in the Bible that God loves:

1. The Stranger (Deut. 10:19),
2. Righteousness in our affairs with others (Ps. 11:7),
3. Justice (Ps. 37:28),
4. The gates of Zion (Ps. 87:2),
5. His righteous people (Ps. 146:8),
6. A hilarious or cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7),
7. Those he disciplines (Heb. 12:6).

### **God’s All Grace**

“And God is able to make all grace [every favour and earthly blessing] come in abundance to you, so that you may always [under all circumstances, regardless of the need] have complete sufficiency in everything [being completely self-sufficient in Him], and have an abundance for every good work and act of charity.” (v8 AMP)

“Yes, God is more than ready to overwhelm you with every form of grace, so that you will have more than enough of everything—every moment and in every way. He will make you overflow with abundance in every good thing you do.” (v8 TPT)

When Paul used the phrase “complete sufficiency in everything” or “enough of everything”, the Greek word Paul uses is *autarkeia*, and it is found in classical Greek as meaning “independently wealthy, needing nothing.”

As we give, we must be persuaded that **God is able** to reward our giving. Just as **God can** make the sowing of seed **abound** to a great harvest, so **God is able** to bless our giving.

Jesus taught that even the smallest gift, if given with the right heart, would not go without a reward: *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.* (Matthew 10:42)

In rewarding our giving, God does it with **all grace**. Our giving is rewarded in many ways, materially and spiritually. Materially, God may bless our giving by promotions with better pay, unexpected gifts of money, or by making things last so we do not 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**.

### Paul’s Prayer

*“Now He who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed for sowing [that is, your resources] and increase the harvest of your righteousness [which shows itself in active goodness, kindness, and love]. You will be enriched in every way so that you may be generous, and this [generosity, administered] through us is producing thanksgiving to God [from those who benefit].” (vv10-11 AMP)*

Paul prays for the church in encouragement to give and also stating the truth of God’s response to giving. He says: this God who provides seed for the sower (i.e. the seed was not the sower’s in the first instance, it is God who provided for the sower) and provides bread for food (i.e. God is our provider for all our needs and wants):

- Will multiply your seed
- Will increase your harvest (of righteousness because of your righteous release of your seed)

Paul’s prayer goes on to say:

- You will be enriched in every way (**Purpose:** So, you can be generous)
- Your generosity will produce thanksgiving to God.

### Reason for this Act of Generosity

*“For the ministry of this service (offering) is not only supplying the needs of the saints (God’s people) but is also overflowing through many expressions of thanksgiving to God. Because of this act of ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to the gospel of Christ which you confess, as well as for your generous participation [in this gift] for them and for all [the other believers in need], and they also long for you while they pray on your behalf, because of the surpassing measure of God’s grace [His undeserved favour, mercy, and blessing which is revealed] in you.” (vv12-14 AMP)*

Paul is saying that first, on the most practical level, the giving of the Corinthian Christians will supply the needs of the saints. This is a good thing in and of itself, but their giving did far more than that. Secondly, their gifts also caused thanksgiving to God. They were giving more than money for food; they were giving people a reason to thank God. Thirdly, the giving of the Corinthian Christians was evidence of God’s work in them.

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 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.

### **His Indescribable Gift**

*“Now thanks be to God for His indescribable gift [which is precious beyond words]!” (v15 AMP)*

**What is His indescribable gift?** Some think it is the gift of salvation; others think it is the gift of Jesus Christ. Why not both? Salvation is given to us in Jesus Christ.

Paul wants to leave the discussion of giving by reminding us again that God is the greatest giver. He gives the gift beyond description: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16)

This means that Jesus is a gift and salvation is a gift. We do not earn it. We receive Jesus and we receive salvation exactly as we would receive a gift. If we earn it, it is not a gift.

This also means that Jesus is an indescribable gift, and salvation is an indescribable gift. The glory of the gift of Jesus and the greatness of the gift of salvation cannot be adequately described.

Paul is not saying that we *should not* 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.

Paul's conclusion is that if Jesus and salvation are such indescribable gifts (awesome in every way), then we should emulate such and be a giver.