

English Transcript

Biblical Giving Principles

Lesson 4 (Part 2): A Model to Follow (2 Corinthians 8 and 9)

Welcome back to Biblical Giving Principles as we continue with Lesson 4 (Part 2). We will continue on page 20 in your handout.

In this lesson we will explore more biblical principles for giving God's way as we look at 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. We will read and discuss this passage, verse by verse.

2 Corinthians 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

The apostle Paul is using a simple agricultural principle and applying it to Christian giving. The harvest is directly proportional to the amount of seed that is sown. The word "generously" comes from the word "eulogy" or "blessing." When a generous believer gives by faith and trusts in God, with a desire to produce the greatest possible blessing for God's glory, that person will receive an abundant harvest of blessing from God. This does not mean that we give to get something in return. It is just the reality of the principle of sowing and reaping.

Even as Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Much like with the sowing of seeds, the harvest does not come immediately. The growing season takes time; there is a natural process. Seeds are sown in one season, and the harvest comes in a different season. The farmer is trusting God to provide the harvest in His timing. As we give, the same principles apply.

The blessings that come may not be financial. The blessing in most cases comes through testimonies of salvation and transformation in the lives of believers and even churches in a region. Remember the first foundational principle of maintaining an eternal perspective. We do not store up treasures on earth for our own comfort and benefit but instead lay up treasures in heaven for a spiritual harvest of righteousness. If God chooses to bless financially, those resources can be used to give more toward the kingdom.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

This verse contained several giving principles.

- "Each of you" means that everyone is to give – the rich and the poor, the old and the young, men and women. The grace of giving is meant for everyone.

- Giving is an intentional choice that we make.
- Giving is to be premeditated or predetermined. The phrase “decided in your heart” is used only here in the New Testament. It implies a predetermined plan of action that is done from the heart voluntarily.
- Giving is not done reluctantly. The word “reluctantly” means “with grief,” “sorrow,” or “sadness.” Giving is not to be done out of sense of duty or obligation, but rather from a heart of joy.
- Giving is not to be forced or under compulsion. Believers are not to give based on the demands of others or according to any arbitrary standard or set amount.
- Giving is to be done with boundless joy. The word for “cheerful” means “hilarious” which suggests that God loves a heart that is enthusiastically thrilled with the pleasure of giving. This sounds a lot like the Macedonian churches.

What makes giving fun? Giving in response to God’s grace, giving to others out of love and joy, giving to a ministry vision you believe in, these are things that make giving joyful and a true act of worship.

2 Corinthians 9:8-11

⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

- The idea of “blessing abundantly” in this passage implies that God has an infinite supply of grace, and that He gives it out generously, without holding back. Here, “bless” does not refer to spiritual blessings, but to money and material needs. When the believer generously and wisely gives of his material resources, God graciously replenishes them. This concept guarded against self-sufficiency and placed all trust in God for all contentment. But the real blessing was that God gives back to generous, cheerful givers, not so that they may satisfy their selfish desires, but so they continue to meet the needs of others.
- The ultimate purpose of God’s provision to His people is to produce thanksgiving to God. The word for “thanksgiving” comes from the word “eucharistia,” or our word for Eucharist. This comes back again to the grace of God through the person and work of the Lord Jesus.
- Everything seems return to God’s glory!

2 Corinthians 9:12-15

¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

In this closing section, we see that the service or gift coming from the church in Corinth was going to bless the believers in Jerusalem. The believers in Jerusalem would be encouraged to know that the faith and love of the Corinthian believers was genuine.

Biblical giving blesses the giver, the receiver and God!

- The giver is blessed by the joy in giving and the promise of reward from the hand of God.
- The receiver of the gift is blessed because they receive a solution to their problem and relief from affliction.
- God is blessed as all involved overflow "with many thanksgivings to God."

Paul concludes with *"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"*

The believer's act of giving is compared with what God did in giving Jesus Christ, "his indescribable gift." God buried his Son and reaped a vast harvest of those who put their faith in the resurrected Christ. That makes it possible for believers to joyfully, sacrificially, and generously sow and reap. As we also give in this manner, we reflect Christ's likeness.

Ephesians 5:12

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Reflect on how the perfect picture of grace is seen in Jesus Christ on the cross.

Can you look at the cross and not be changed, not compelled to give yourself to Jesus, not be compelled to give to others in the way that Jesus gave Himself to you?

On page 22, I have summarized the biblical giving principles that have been presented in Lesson 4. Most of these principles come from 1 Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 8-9.

Giving is ...

- A natural part of the believer's life (Matthew 6:1-4) *"When you give."*
- To be secret (Matthew 6:1-4) *"The left hand does not know what the right hand is doing."*

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² "So, when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

- A good barometer of our spiritual condition (Luke 16:11-12)

¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

- To be personal (1 Cor 16:2) *"each one of you"*
- To be planned (1 Cor 16:2) *"First day of the week – Sunday"*
- To be proportionate (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:3) *"in keeping with your income"*
- To be consistent (1 Cor 16:2)

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

- For everyone, rich and poor (2 Cor 8:2) *"These churches gave out of trials and extreme poverty."*

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

- To be sacrificial (2 Cor 8:3, 10-11) *“Beyond their ability”*
- To be voluntary (2 Cor 8:3) *“entirely on their own”*

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

- A privilege (2 Cor 8:4) *“pleaded for the privilege of sharing in this service”*

They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.

- Modeled by Jesus Christ (2 Cor 8:9)

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

- Based on the law of sowing and reaping (2 Cor 9:6)
- Working with God (2 Cor 9:6)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

- Not to be forced or reluctantly (2 Cor 9:7)
- God’s opportunity to provide (2 Cor 9:7)
- To be done cheerfully (2 Cor 9:7)
- To be carried out by everyone (2 Cor 9:7)

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

- God’s promise of abundant grace and provision for continued giving and good works (2 Cor 9:8-11)

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.” ¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

- A source of thanksgiving to God (2 Cor 9:12)

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

- A way to bring glory to God (2 Cor 9:12-15)

¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Which principles need more discussion?

How will knowing and acting upon these principles impact your life and the church?

This brings Lesson 4, Part 1 and 2 to a close. We have constructed our biblical giving structure with the foundational layers.

1. Maintain an eternal perspective.
2. God owns it all! We are managers NOT owners.
3. The Old Testament tithe is a tutor for New Testament grace-based giving that will overflow with generosity and dependence on God.

In Lesson 4 we identified at least 15 biblical principles from 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 that serve as strong pillars to hold up the roof of our giving structure.

The result of our giving is that God is glorified and there will be an overflowing of thankfulness toward God.

We will close the course with one final Lesson that will highlight a few basic principles related to establishing a budget and a plan for giving.