

Second Corinthians 9

November 28, 2004 · AM · <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2004/2-corinthians-9/>

Introduction:

1. This is the second chapter of two dedicated to the collection at Corinth for the poor saints in Jerusalem (I Cor 16:1-3).
2. It is very peculiar to see such emphasis on giving for poor saints rather than for missions in Haiti or a building program.
3. The emphasis in both testaments upon giving as evidence of eternal life is giving for the poor (Ps 41:1-3; I Tim 6:17-19).
4. As you begin the consideration of this chapter, remember the last nine verses of chapter eight commending the brethren.

Outline of Chapter 9

1-5 Paul exhorted Corinth to now perform.

6-7 The rules for giving that please God.

8-11 God's rewards for liberal givers.

12-14 Man's rewards for liberal givers.

15 The motive, reason, and source of giving.

9:1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

- A. Having written to them about giving to the saints (8:1-24), he admitted his knowledge of their zeal.
- B. Having written to them about giving to the saints (8:1-24), he admitted he need not say more of it.
- C. He had just concluded the previous chapter by declaring his confidence in them (7:16; 8:22,24).
- D. But a great pastor and/or father are never content with any level of obedience (I Thess 4:9-10).
- E. Paul used "superfluous" for excess or the unnecessary nature of any further express exhortations.
- F. And there is a great difference between willing and doing, and he pressed for the doing (8:10-11).
- G. There is so much abuse of the word "ministering," but here it means paying money to help the poor saints; just as there is so much abuse about "honor," which also often means giving (I Tim 5:3,17).

9:2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

- A. Paul knew the Corinthians had been very willing the last year, but they needed now to perform.
- B. He had mentioned their forwardness earlier, but he repeated it to comfort and encourage (8:10-11).
- C. Forwardness is and ardent, eager, fervent, ready, prompt, and zealous approach to anything.

- D. The forwardness of their mind, however, did not put any food in mouths (Jas 2:15-16; I John 3:18).
- E. Having used the Macedonians to provoke them (8:1-5), now Paul used the Corinthian reputation!
- F. The zeal of the Corinthians – those lascivious and luxurious people – was provoking other churches.
- G. Zeal is one way in which saints can provoke others to love and good works in a church (Heb 10:24).
- H. Boasting of others is not wrong, when it is used judicially to provoke righteousness (Phil 3:15-17).
- I. Note Paul's wisdom to provoke an interstate rivalry between the churches of Macedonia and Achaia.

9:3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

- A. In spite of all the accolades, boasting, and confidence, I have sent the brethren to collect the funds!
- B. Paul's wise care of this church – needing exhorting like all others – pushed for performance (8:11).
- C. Though this church had very willing minds, Paul knew the temptations that might hinder their actual performance, so he spent two whole chapters on the matter of finishing the good work in them (8:6).
- D. What brethren? Titus and the two brethren carefully commended and defended earlier (8:16-24).
- E. Paul had already explained the boasting earlier (8:24), which he now used to press for performance.
- F. Paul had stated earlier the importance of being ready to finish the (8:6).

9:4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

- A. Is shame a proper motive to righteousness? Yes, as proven by the apostle's argument right here! And as proven by Solomon's appeal to it in exhorting his children against fornication (5:7-14).
- B. Paul's inspired play with shame is great wisdom, as the Corinthians would take it most personally!
- C. "Let haply" here means by chance, in the same sense we love the word "hap" in Ruth (Ruth 2:3).
- D. While Paul would be ashamed of his boasting, the Corinthians would also be ashamed!
- E. Consider the shame, if the poor Macedonians (8:2) had out given the rich Corinthians (8:14)!
- F. The Corinthians would be unprepared, if they did not gather the private collections (I Cor 16:1-3).

9:5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

- A. Paul concluded that sending the three brethren was to save the Corinthians from disgrace and shame.
- B. The three brethren would visit Corinth before Paul in order to make up their bounty, which was to gather the private collections together, which Paul had notified them about earlier (I Cor 16:1-3).
 - 1. You are reading more than Paul's practical wisdom from experience: this is the wisdom of God.
 - 2. The blessed God, Who knows the hearts of all men, knows the superiority of systematic giving.
 - 3. It was necessary for Paul to send brethren to gather up the private collections before he arrived.
- C. The collection would be a matter of bounty, if they were only required to gather designated funds.
 - 1. Anyone who has ever given both sporadically and systematically knows the painful difference.

2. Paul's inspired advice to collect and segregate funds every Lord's Day is wise (I Cor 16:1-3).
 3. Funds set aside cheerfully every week amount to a large gift without any temptation to withhold.
- D. The collection would be a matter of covetousness, if there was a grudging and pulling for the funds.
1. Can a man who is a giver be covetous? Surely! Because he does not give liberally or cheerfully.
 2. If they had not given cheerfully every week, it would be hard to pull a large offering from them.
 3. By comparing the word bounty in the next verse, Paul is referring to the nature of liberal giving.
- E. Paul did exhort the brethren, though Titus had a mind of his own to serve Corinth (8:6,16-17).

9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

- A. Having encouraged and exhorted Corinth to finish their intended giving (9:1-5), Paul then gave two general rules that apply to all giving, which would secure God's approval and blessing for Corinth.
- B. Paul in this verse laid down the axiom for giving liberally that is taught throughout the Scriptures.
1. The man who gives liberally will be blessed liberally: God will be stingy toward the stingy giver.
 2. If you honor God, He will honor you; if you despise Him, He will despise you (I Samuel 2:30).
 3. The metaphor compares giving to a farmer sowing seed, where sowing requires self-denial of eating all your seed in order to sow your fields, and the more you sow the more you will reap!
 - a. Seed kept and consumed has no return at all; it is eaten today and in the draught tomorrow.
 - b. But seed sown in the field will yield huge returns i.e. wheat 400x, corn 800x, rice 1000x, etc.
 4. Solomon taught the secret wisdom that liberal scattering of money by giving will bring economic prosperity but stingy conservatism in holding money back will bring poverty (Prov 11:24-26).
 5. Solomon taught the secret and marvelous reward of God in giving and sowing (Eccl 11:1-6).
 6. Giving to the poor is lending to the Lord, and He can and will repay generously (Prov 19:17).
 7. God dared Israel to give and see how He could bless them (Mal 3:8-12; Hag 1:4-11; 2:15-19).
 8. A churlish and vile soul is compared to a bountiful and liberal soul (Is 32:5-8). Which are you?
 9. The Lord Jesus Christ promised overwhelming blessing for giving to others (Luke 6:30-38).
 10. Of course, this mystery of wisdom is unknown to man by nature, for it is a secret of revelation.
- C. It is important to tie this axiom to the wisdom of giving systematically, for it is much easier to give bountifully through systematic giving than to give bountifully all at once (II Cor 9:5; I Cor 16:1-3).

9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

- A. Having encouraged and exhorted Corinth to finish their intended giving (9:1-5), Paul then gave two general rules that apply to all giving, which would secure God's approval and blessing for Corinth.
- B. Paul in this verse laid down the axiom for giving cheerfully that is taught throughout the Scriptures.
1. Giving must begin with a willing heart and purpose to help others and glorify God (II Cor 8:12).
 2. Every man should cheerfully choose to be liberal in giving and choose to give before pressure.

3. Giving is an act of serving God and His people, and therefore should be done with great joy.
4. The first check you write each week should be your favorite check, for it is to the Lord Himself.
5. Grudgingly, which Paul condemned, is giving miserly, niggardly, reluctantly, without joy, etc.
6. Necessity, which Paul condemned, is giving due to pressure, force, obligation, or bare duty.
7. Reacting to preaching and instruction can be without grudging or necessity, if the heart is right.
8. Because you are not cheerful is not a good excuse not to give: you should get cheerful and give!
9. Cheerful giving is the liberal scattering of 9:6 done with excitement and pleasure toward God.

9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

- A. If you give liberally and cheerfully, which God loves, He will bless you abundantly for your deed.
 1. God is able! He has no shortage in His power or wealth that could hinder Him from blessing you.
 2. You cannot out give the Lord of heaven in either things natural or in things spiritual. Glory!
- B. There are two blessings here for godly giving – a supply of carnal things and grace for godliness.
 1. The “all sufficiency in all things” is the adequate supply of all the things necessary for life: it is not a luxurious or excessive supply of extravagance or pleasure.
 2. The “abound to every good work” is the supply of God’s grace for willing and doing godliness.

9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

- A. Paul quoted from the word of God to back up the previous promise He made of God’s blessing (9:8).
- B. The quotation is from Psalm 112:9, where the character and reward of righteous men are listed.
- C. A righteous man disperses abroad, and he gives to the poor; and God remembers the righteous acts.
 1. Dispersing is the liberal scattering in many directions that is taught elsewhere (Pr 11:24-26).
 2. Giving to the poor is a great sign of righteousness (Job 31:16-22; Ps 41:1-3; Is 58:6-7; Jas 1:27).
 3. The Lord will recall their righteousness the final day (Matt 10:40-42; 25:31-46; I Tim 6:17-19).
 4. God is not unfaithful to remember the work and labor of love of His righteous saints (Heb 6:10).

9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

- A. There are three blessings here upon the givers – sufficient food, return for giving, and extra grace.
- B. God blesses farmers with a yield to provide not only their daily bread but more seed for sowing.
- C. The most applicable fruit of righteousness in the context is further bountifulness to other saints.

9:11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

- A. This verse should be connected to verse eight, because verses 9-10 are a parenthetical insert.

- B. God is able and willing to enrich those who give generously and cheerfully, and He will do it.
- C. He will supply gracious blessings for a sufficiency in all things and a desire to good works (9:8).
- D. Bountifulness at Corinth would cause thanksgiving through the apostles' administration, but by the recipients' praise: for the "through us" of this text is explained by the "for" of the following verses.
- E. God is bountiful to bountiful givers, with both finances and grace, so they can be more bountiful.

9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

- A. Paul at this verse shifts from God's reward on givers to the response of the recipients for the gift.
- B. Corinth could accomplish two grand goals by a liberal collection and gift for the poor in Jerusalem.
 - 1. Saints would have their needs supplied and be able to eat, drink, be clothed, and find shelter.
 - 2. God would be thanked by many who were appreciative of the unusual funding for their needs.
 - 3. These two results from giving should highly motivate every saint to eager and liberal giving!
 - 4. Consider the two results from giving – the first two commandments – love of God and neighbor.
- C. The "administration of this service" means the administrative and logistical efforts to deliver the gift.
- D. This verse is a two-edged sword, for it implies and expects recipients of gifts will be very thankful.

9:13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;

- A. The "experiment of this ministration" is the actual experience of receiving the administered gift.
 - 1. "Ministration" in this context means serving or paying by way of financial assistance (9:1,10).
 - 2. "Experiment" is being used in a secondary sense as practical knowledge or actual experience.
- B. Godly saints, though poor in carnal things, are rich in spirit; and they glorify God for the givers.
 - 1. For those who love God and His glory, this is another reason to give generously and cheerfully.
 - 2. The greatest evidence of Christianity is love and serving others, who cannot repay (John 13:35).
- C. There are three reasons Paul told the Corinthians that the Jewish saints would praise God for them.
 - 1. The Corinthians were Christian converts by profession from luxurious lasciviousness in Corinth.
 - 2. The gift from Corinth was going to be substantial, so there would be praise for its liberal size.
 - 3. And the Corinthians were Gentiles, which made their gift to Jews and others to be very kind.

9:14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

- A. Not only do the godly recipients of charity offer up thanksgivings, they also pray for the givers!
- B. Givers should rejoice in this further blessing for giving; and the recipients should remember to pray!
- C. Poor saints, delivered from their needs and poverty, should greatly long for blessings on the givers.
- D. Do recipients long for the givers because of the grace of God in them, or for God's grace in them?

1. Most commentators understand “for the exceeding grace of God in you” as a reason for prayer.
2. But Paul has written that the recipients pray for the givers; and if not for grace, then for what?
3. If the longing of the recipients is because of the grace in the givers, then what do they long for?
4. The cleanest interpretation is the recipients prayer and longing for God’s grace to the givers.

9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

- A. Why this holy ejaculation here? It is Paul invoking the grace of God in Christ to promote giving!
- B. Just as he inserted such a single-verse motivation in chapter eight (8:9), he did the very same here.
- C. God’s gift of Jesus Christ by free grace is a gift that cannot be adequately described for its value.
 1. We were redeemed by Christ’s precious blood, which makes Him precious (I Pet 1:17-21; 2:1-7).
 2. Paul has already explained that Christ’s death for us deserves our lives in return (II Cor 5:14-17).
 3. The greatest example of love in the world is God’s love for His elect (Rom 5:8; I John 4:9-11).
 4. David spoke of God’s wonderful works that could not be reckoned up to Him (Psalm 40:5).
 5. How can saints with even elementary knowledge of salvation not give generously?

Conclusion:

1. How forward are you in zeal to serve the saints of God? Has your zeal provoked many to great righteousness?
2. If you have perpetual financial problems, there is likely a fault in your giving, its amount, or your attitude.
3. There are many blessing for giving liberally and cheerfully, provided by God and man. Lay hold of them!
4. The financial and spiritual rewards for giving should provoke God’s saints to be eager and generous givers.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, “**I Corinthians 16**,” for studying Paul’s initial ordinance for raising funds for the poor in 16:1-3.
2. The sermon outline, “**Bible Economics**,” which details God’s rules for financial success and the rules/rewards for giving.
3. The sermon outline, “**Haggai**,” where God dealt extensively with Israel for not putting a priority on their giving to God.