

## Givers Who Please God

TEXT: 2 Cor. 9:1-7

THESIS: We need to examine what kind of givers we are.

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Giving pleases God, for giving is of the very nature of God.
  - a. And, God is the One who has given the supreme gift—the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. In fact, the most loved passage of Scripture clearly proclaims this glorious truth.
    - i. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
2. So, the truth is that giving pleases God.
  - a. However, not every giver pleases God.
  - b. This is clearly seen in the passage here of 2 Cor. 9:1-7.
  - c. Who, then, are the givers that please God?
3. This morning, we are going to notice those who have,
  - a. They have a readiness, an eagerness to give (v.1-2).
  - b. They are not caught unprepared to give (v.3-5).
  - c. They give much and reap much: reap what they sow (v.6).
  - d. They give deliberately, not grudgingly, not from compulsion (v.7).

### DISCUSSION:

- I. GIVERS WHO PLEASE GOD HAVE A READINESS TO GIVE (2 Cor. 9:1-2)
  - A. This is seen in four clear statements made by Paul.
  - B. First, he expected the Corinthians to give.
    1. Why?
      - a. Well for starters, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might;” because we cannot do it once we are in the grave (Eccl. 9:10).
      - b. Second, he expected them to give because some dear "saints" of God needed help.
    2. These, who give to please God, are genuine believers, those who are set apart, devoted to God.
      - a. The fact was, the churches in Judea were poor and desperately needed help.
      - b. Therefore, the Corinthians were expected to help them.
        - (1) In fact, the expectation was so strong that there was little need to even say anything about it.
    3. Likewise, Christian should be so devoted to God that people expect and know that they will give to meet the needs of the world.
      - a. And, as long as a need exists, believers should be giving all they are and have to meet that need.

- b. In Acts 20:35 it states, "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
- C. Second, Paul knew the zeal and the readiness of their minds to give.
  - 1. How often can this be said of Christians today that we have a zeal to give?
    - a. Or, of the church as a whole?
    - b. Do we not remember that Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).
  - 2. So, are we honestly, with zeal, reaching out, searching for needs to meet?
    - a. When someone approaches us with the opportunity to further the Gospel in the world, are we supporting them or tabling the issue?
    - b. Can others actually know that our minds are ready, set, and focused to give?
- D. Third, Paul boasted on the Corinthians by their readiness to give.
  - 1. It had happened a year earlier.
    - a. The spirit of the Corinthians had been so committed to the ministry, to meeting the needs of their fellow believers, that they had immediately underwritten the mission project to help the churches of Judea.
    - b. But soon afterward, some problems had arisen, and the church backed off its commitment.
  - 2. Now before the problem, Paul had boasted in the zeal of the Corinthians and how quickly they had committed themselves to the mission project.
    - a. The commitment to missionaries is always needed and is necessary since we are commanded to spread the Gospel to the world (Mk. 16:15).
    - b. Every church needs such commitment, but it needs to make decisions and then follow through on its commitment.
    - c. The Church needs to live day by day for Christ, laying aside differences and getting rid of animosity and divisiveness and sin in its midst, and get to the task at hand: ministering to the needs of those who are in dire straits.
- E. Fourth, the zeal and commitment of the Corinthians stirred "many" to help in the mission project.
  - 1. This is the attitude needed by the church today.
  - 2. We have got to have a zeal for missions, a zeal for helping others, it must be so strong that it stirs "many" to make the commitment needed.
  - 3. This is the will of God (John 4:34-35).

## II. GIVERS WHO PLEASE GOD ARE NOT CAUGHT UNPREPARED TO GIVE.

- A. Consider 2 Cor. 9:3-5, "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: 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. 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.”

1. As Paul traveled from place to place, he was always training young disciples and these disciples often traveled with him.
  2. In addition, Paul was sometimes escorted to the next city by men from the place where he had just completed his work.
    - a. And, this was soon to be the case.
    - b. Some men from Macedonia were going to escort him to Corinth.
      - (1) And so, it was vital that Corinth were not caught, not ready in their giving.
- B. You know, being unprepared to give causes shame.
1. Paul says that he was sending Titus and the two other men to reactivate the mission project among the Corinthians.
  2. He was doing this lest he be ashamed and embarrassed when he and the other Macedonians arrived.
    - a. Remember, he had boasted in the Corinthians a year earlier, using their commitment to missions as a testimony to stir the Macedonians to take on a similar project.
    - b. If he and their representatives arrived and the Corinthians had slipped back and failed to follow through, the situation would be a reflection upon Christ, Paul, and the Corinthian church.
  3. So, Paul taught us that a Christian who is unprepared to give brings shame to the very name of Christian.
    - a. Think about it.
    - b. The very purpose for Christ coming to earth was to give—to give sacrificially and to give all.
      - (1) He gave His very life to meet the needs of desperate humanity.
      - (2) And, it is a shame, it is an embarrassment to the name of Christ for a professing Christian not to give; for Christ existed to give.
      - (3) The very name of Christ and of Christian means to give and to give sacrificially—to give all.
  4. Therefore, being prepared shows love, not covetousness.
    - a. When Paul said that he was sending the men ahead of him, Paul was wanting to make sure that the collection was ready when he arrived.
    - b. But, notice why Paul felt this was necessary: it was so that the Corinthians would demonstrate love and generosity, not

covetousness (2 Cor. 9:5).

- (1) If the mission project was still being delayed when he and the Macedonians arrived, the church would seem to be covetous and worldly.
- (2) They would be failing in their very purpose for being on earth: to minister to those in need.

C. Today, honest believers and churches have to confess or admit to covetousness.

1. Timothy was told to, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
  - a. Few really give all they are and have to meet the desperate situation of the human race, a human race of men and women, boys and girls dying without Christ.
  - b. And, so many are dying prematurely from hunger, cold, disease, loneliness, emptiness, worthlessness, sin, and evil.
  - c. All the while, many Christians give hardly anything to help them.
2. Do you see how terrible covetousness is!
  - a. I mean, Paul commanded us that, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).
    - (1) But, how can we do this if we are being stingy?
    - (2) How can we do all the good we know that we can do when it is hard for the church to let go of its pennies?
    - (3) Living extravagantly, spending beyond our needs, banking, hoarding, building up estates, constructing larger and larger homes, buying more and more is all done in spite of the deprivation and destruction of human life and to the doom of human souls.
  - b. Thus, covetousness has no place in the Christian's heart nor in the church, much less upon earth.
    - (1) It's results are just too devastating.
    - (2) Believers must be prepared to give, demonstrating the very sacrificial love of Christ Himself who gave all to meet the needs of the desperate.
      - (a) To meet the needs of you and I.
  - c. Jesus said to ". . . beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

### III. GIVERS WHO PLEASE GOD GIVE MUCH AND REAP MUCH

- A. Look at 2 Cor. 9:6, “But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”
- B. When it comes to reaping, they reap exactly what they sow.
  - 1. When a man plants the seed, the same is returned to him; in fact, much more is returned to him—a full harvest.
  - 2. This is one of the great principles of Scripture, but it must be carefully noted: it is not the man who pretends to sacrificially give who shall be greatly blessed by God.
    - a. It shall be the man who actually does sacrifice all he is and has.
    - b. This man or that woman will never go lacking; God will abundantly provide for him.
- C. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

#### IV. THE GIVER WHO PLEASES GOD GIVES DELIBERATELY, NOT GRUDGINGLY AND NOT FROM COMPULSION (2 COR. 9:7)

- A. It is absolutely crucial to note one thing here and that is God does not accept the gift of a person who does not want to give.
- B. God expects three things of the person who gives:
  - 1. First, the giver must give as he purposes in his heart.
    - a. This does not mean that people are not to be encouraged to give nor that they cannot be stirred to give.
    - b. It means that a person is:
      - (1) To think about the need.
      - (2) To think about what he should give sacrificially.
      - (3) To make a deliberate decision about what he should sacrifice in order to give what he should.
  - 2. Second, the giver must not give grudgingly: not out of sorrow, not with reluctance or regret.
    - a. If the giver is going to be mulling over his gift and regretting that he had given it, his gift is unacceptable to God.
    - b. The person needs to straighten his heart out with God, for:
      - (1) He is failing to see the desperate needs of the world.
      - (2) He is failing to see what Jesus Christ has done for him.
  - 3. Third, the giver must not give out of necessity.
    - a. A person's gift is not acceptable to God when he:
      - (1) Is forced to give.
      - (2) Gives because he fears what others will think.
      - (3) Gives just to please others.
      - (4) Gives to keep others from pestering him.
      - (5) Gives out of a desire for personal honor and recognition.
  - 4. Fourth, the giver must give cheerfully if he wishes God to accept his gift.
    - a. This word cheerfully means joyful.

- b. The giver is pleased and delighted to give to meet the needs of God's people and to the needs of the whole world.
      - (1) Remember that God loves the cheerful giver, for the cheerful giver is just like His Son, Jesus Christ.
      - (2) Jesus Christ willingly and cheerfully gave all He was and had to meet the needs of the world.
- C. So, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him . . .” (1 Cor. 16:2).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. There are so many things that we could be doing for the Lord if we had more sacrificial giving.
2. We need to remember that giving pleases God, for giving is of the very nature of God.
  - a. And while not every giver pleases God, we had all better start giving from the heart.
  - b. We had better be pleasing God by:
    - i. Having an eagerness to give.
    - ii. Giving deliberately so that we do not have to stand before God on the day of judgment and answer questions of why we were covetousness.
3. You know, when we look at the numbers to my left, this budget is bare bones.
  - a. It is the minimum needed in order to just keep the doors open.
  - b. Brethren, there are so many more things and opportunities that are coming before us that we could be doing in our work for the Lord if only all of us gave sacrificially.
4. Let's make sure we can do more than the minimum here by exceeding the budget.
  - a. Remember, God is the One who has given the supreme gift—the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. How much have we given for the Lord?