

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#)

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Giving That Sets an Example

[2 Corinthians 9:1-15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints;

² for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.

³ But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared;

⁴ otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence.

⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness.

⁶ Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

⁷ Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

⁹ as it is written, “**HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.**”

¹⁰ Now 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 everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

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

¹³ Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all,

¹⁴ while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.

¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

How to Keep the Egg Off of Your Face

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Have you ever been in a situation where you got egg on your face? In other words, you stated that something was true, or something would happen, and it turned out not to be true or take place. Perhaps, you made a commitment that a task would be done and it wasn't. People were counting on you and you let them down. When you get egg on your face, you feel embarrassed and somewhat foolish.

Listen to this testimony by Pastor Ron Phelps: "I felt that way when I invited a pastor friend and his wife to go with me and Linda to a Texas Ranger Baseball game at Arlington Stadium about 20 years ago. We drove 40 minutes to get to this brand new, beautiful stadium. When we got there, however, things were quiet. There were no crowds and the gates were locked because the Rangers were playing out of town. I somehow, read the wrong dates and showed up to watch a baseball game with no players. Boy, I felt stupid! I not only had egg on my face, I had bacon and hash browns too. Thank God, John and Tina were good friends and we had a good laugh. I still felt embarrassed."

In this section of [2 Corinthians](#), we find Paul was trying to avoid the embarrassment of having egg on his face. **The Corinthians** have promised to give a love offering to the **Jerusalem Christians** and he takes steps to make sure they follow through on their pledge. He has boasted of their enthusiasm to the **Macedonian believers**, who gave sacrificially to this need. Now it is near the time to receive this gift. Before he arrives in Corinth, Paul very graciously and tenderly makes sure that the collection of this offering is organized, accomplished, and done without pressure and constraint on these believers. He also reveals very important principles about the right way and the wrong way to give to the Lord and others.

A. The Givers Who Please God,

2 Corinthians 9:1-7

[\(2 Corinthians 9:1-7\)](#) **Introduction:** giving pleases God, for giving is of the very nature of God. God is the very One who has given the *supreme gift*—the Lord Jesus Christ. The most loved passage of Scripture clearly proclaims the glorious truth.

John 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He **gave** [verb- giving His

supreme gift] His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

To repeat the truth, giving pleases God. However, not every giver pleases God. This is clearly seen in this passage. **Who, then, are the givers who please God? This becomes the questions that all of the Christians, believers, disciples and saints must answer.**

1. **They have a readiness, an eagerness to give (v.1-2).**
2. **They are not caught unprepared to give (v.3-5).**
3. **They give much and reap much: reap what they sow (v.6).**
4. **They give deliberately, not grudgingly, not from compulsion (v.7).**

1. (2 Corinthians 9:1-2) Stewardship— Giving: givers who please God have a readiness, an eagerness to give.

2 Corinthians 9:1-2 (NASB)

¹“For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints;

²for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.”

This is seen in four clear statements made by Paul.

1. **He expected the Corinthians to give.** Why? Because some dear “saints” of God needed help. The term “saints” (*hagious*) means “those who are set apart and devoted to God.” It is a term referring to genuine believers. The point is striking. Some fellow believers were in desperate need. The churches in Judea were poor and desperately needed help; therefore, the **Corinthians** were expected to help them. In fact, the expectation was so strong there was little need to even say anything about it.

Thought 1. Christian believers should be so devoted to God that people expect and know that they will give to meet the needs of the world. In fact, as long as a need exists, believers should be giving *all they are and have* to meet that need.

Luke 12:33 (NASB)

³³“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.”

Acts 20:35 (NASB)

³⁵“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

2. Paul knew the forwardness, the readiness of their minds to give. How often can this be said of believers? Of a church? Are we honestly forward, reaching out, searching for needs to meet? Can others actually *know* that our minds are ready, set, and focused to give?

3. Paul boasted in the Corinthians, in their readiness to give. It had happened a year earlier. The spirit of the Corinthians had been so committed to ministry, to meeting the needs of their fellow believers, that they had immediately underwritten the mission project to help the churches of Judea. But soon afterward some problems had arisen, and the church backed off its commitment. Before the problem, Paul had boasted in the zeal of the Corinthians, how quickly they had committed themselves to the mission project.

Thought 1. The commitment to missions is always commendable and is a great testimony to be shared with others. Every church needs such commitment, but it needs to follow through on its commitment. It needs to live day by day for Christ, lay aside differences and get rid of divisiveness and sin in its midst, and get to the task at hand: ministering to the needs of those who are in desperate straits.

4. The zeal and commitment of the Corinthians stirred “many” to help in the mission project.

Thought 1. This is the spirit and testimony needed by the Lord’s churches: a zeal for missions so strong that it stirs “many” to make the same commitment.

Mark 16:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

John 4:34-35 (NASB)

³⁴ “Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.”

³⁵ “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.”

John 9:4 (NASB)

⁴ “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.”

John 20:21 (NASB)

²¹ “So Jesus said to them again, “Peace *be* with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

Acts 4:20 (NASB)

²⁰ “For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Acts 10:38 (NASB)

³⁸ “*You know of* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with *all* your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.”

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Giving That Sets an Example

2 Corinthians 9:1-4 (NASB)

¹“For it is **superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints;**

²for I know your **readiness**, of which I **boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia** has **been prepared since** last **year**, and your **zeal** has stirred up most of them.

³But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared;

⁴otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence.”

The chapter break here in the text is unfortunate, for these verses continue the thought expressed at the end of [chapter 8](#). So confident was Paul in the Corinthians that he felt it was **superfluous for** him **to write to** them **about** the **ministry** (offering) **to the saints** in Jerusalem. He knew of their **readiness**, of the eagerness and zeal of their original response. That prompted the apostle to **boast about** them **to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia** (the province in which Corinth was located) had **been prepared since** the previous **year**. In fact, as noted previously, it was the example of the Corinthians’ original **zeal** that **stirred up most of** the Macedonians to contribute so sacrificially to the project.

2 Corinthians 9:3-4 (NASB)

³But I have **sent the brethren, in order that** our **boasting about** you **may not be made empty in this case, so that**, as I was saying, you may be **prepared;**

⁴otherwise if **any Macedonians** come **with** me and **find** you **unprepared**, we—not to speak of you—will **be put to shame by** this **confidence.**”

But as noted above, the rebellion against Paul incited by the false teachers had apparently halted their giving. He therefore **sent the brethren** (Titus and the two unnamed brothers) **in order that** his **boasting about** them **may not be made empty in this case;** in other words, **so that** they would have the offering **prepared**. Paul was concerned that if **any Macedonians** came **with** him to Corinth (as in fact some did; cf. [Acts 20:2-4](#)), they might **find** them **unprepared**.

Acts 20:2-4 (NASB)

²“When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.

³ And *there* he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

⁴ And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, *the son* of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”

Should that happen, both Paul and the Corinthians would **be put to shame by** his false **confidence** that they had the offering ready. To forestall such embarrassment, the apostle called upon the Corinthians to finish what they had started. As their example had originally prompted the **Macedonians** to give, so the completion of their giving would also set an example. God desires giving that is not marginal, but exemplary.

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Giving That Is an Expression of Love

2 Corinthians 8:24 (NASB)

²⁴“Therefore **openly before the churches**, **show them the proof of** your **love** and of our reason for **boasting about** you.”

Paul had instructed the Corinthians about the importance and procedure of making their contribution. He had taken every reasonable precaution to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Now it was time for the Corinthians to give **openly before the churches** (lit., “before the face of the churches”) so that all would clearly see their generosity.

By so doing, they would **show them the proof of** their **love**; as Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (**John 13:34-35**). A loving church is a generous church, and the Corinthians’ generous love would validate Paul’s **boasting about** the work of Christ in them.