

## BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

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

#### B. The Motives for Giving Generously and Sacrificially, [2 Corinthians 9:8-15](#)

##### The Path to Prosperity ([2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#))

###### [2 Corinthians 9:6-15 \(NASB\)](#)

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

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

<sup>8</sup> 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;

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

<sup>10</sup> 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;

<sup>11</sup> you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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,

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

<sup>15</sup> Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

To motivate the Corinthians to give, Paul gave a **fivefold description** of the harvest that would result: 1) **love from God**, 2) **generosity from God**, 3) **glory to God**, 4) **friends from God**, and 5) **likeness to God**.

#### 3) Glory to God

##### [2 Corinthians 9:11-13 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> “You will be enriched in everything for all liberality, **which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.**

<sup>12</sup> **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.**

**<sup>13</sup>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.**

The noblest goal of any human endeavor is that God be glorified (cf. [1 Corinthians 10:31](#)).

**1 Corinthians 10:31 (NASB)**

<sup>31</sup>“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

The Corinthians’ generous liberality was already, **through** Paul, Titus, and the others involved in collecting the offering, **producing thanksgiving to God** from the people benefited. When the Jerusalem saints received the Corinthians’ gift, they too would praise and exalt God for motivating the Corinthians to this generosity.

The human race is like a thankless child, and God is deeply grieved and offended by those who do “**not honor Him as God or give thanks**” ([Romans 1:21](#)).

**Romans 1:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup>“For even though they knew God, they did **not honor Him as God or give thanks**, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

On the other hand, giving thanks brings glory to Him ([2 Corinthians 4:15](#)).

**2 Corinthians 4:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup>“For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the **giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.**”

**2 Corinthians 9:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“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.”

In [verse 12](#) Paul described the Corinthians’ **ministry** of giving with the word *leitourgia* (service), which refers to priestly service (cf. [Luke 1:23](#)).

**Luke 1:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup>“When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home.”

The collection was not primarily a social program but a spiritual service to God.

**2 Corinthians 9:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“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.**”

So generous did Paul expect the Corinthians' offering to be that he anticipated it would be capable of **fully supplying the needs of the saints**. The word translated **fully supplying** consists of the verb *plēroō* with two prepositions added to it for emphasis. The apostle again stressed the large size of the Corinthians' gift, which he had earlier referred to as a "generous gift" (**2 Corinthians 8:20**).

**2 Corinthians 8:20 (NASB)**

<sup>20</sup> "Taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift."

That suggests that the Corinthians were relatively well-off financially. Corinth was an important commercial city, and persecution evidently had not affected the church there as it had the impoverished Macedonian churches. The Corinthians' generosity would meet needs, but more importantly, it would **also** result in **many thanksgivings to God** when the poor believers in Jerusalem praised God for the Corinthians' gift.

**2 Corinthians 9:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> "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."

That gift would also give evidence of the genuineness of the Corinthians' salvation. **Because of the proof given by the ministry** (the Corinthians' gift), people would **glorify God for** that church's **obedience to** their **confession of the gospel of Christ**. Jewish believers in the early church were often suspicious of Gentile converts. Many in the Jerusalem church were appalled at the news that Peter had preached the gospel to Gentiles (**Acts 11:1-3**), and it was only with difficulty that they were persuaded to accept them as brothers in Christ (**Acts 11:4-18**).

**Acts 11:1-3 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> "Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

<sup>2</sup> And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him,

<sup>3</sup> saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them."

**Acts 11:4-18 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> "But Peter began *speaking* and *proceeded* to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying,

<sup>5</sup> I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me,

<sup>6</sup> and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air.

<sup>7</sup> I also heard a voice saying to me, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."

<sup>8</sup> But I said, "By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth."

<sup>9</sup> But a voice from heaven answered a second time, "What God has

cleansed, no longer consider unholy.”

<sup>10</sup> This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky.

<sup>11</sup> And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were *staying*, having been sent to me from Caesarea.

<sup>12</sup> The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man’s house.

<sup>13</sup> And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, “Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here;

<sup>14</sup> And he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.”

<sup>15</sup> And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us at the beginning.

<sup>16</sup> And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>17</sup> “Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as *He gave* to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”

<sup>18</sup> When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads to life.*”

It must have been especially difficult for them to believe that the Corinthians’ faith was genuine. The city’s reputation for immorality was widespread in the Roman world, and the chaotic condition of the Corinthian church would have done little to allay Jewish believers’ suspicions.

But the Corinthians’ sacrificial giving tangibly demonstrated love for their fellow believers, that mark of genuineness ([1 John 2:10](#); [1 John 3:17-18](#); [1 John 4:20-21](#)).

[1 John 2:10 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> “The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”

[1 John 3:17-18 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> “But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

<sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but indeed and truth.”

[1 John 4:20-21 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

<sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

It proved they were “doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” ([James 1:22](#); cf. [Ephesians 2:10](#)).

[James 1:22 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

[Ephesians 2:10 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

[2 Corinthians 9:13 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> “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.”

The Corinthians’ **obedience** proved the genuineness of their **confession of the gospel of Christ**. Their good works did not save them but gave evidence that they possessed a living faith, not a dead faith that is unable to save ([James 2:14-26](#)).

[James 2:14-26 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?”

<sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

<sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?

<sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

<sup>18</sup> But someone may *well* say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

<sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

<sup>20</sup> But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

<sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

<sup>22</sup> You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

<sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God.

<sup>24</sup> You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

<sup>25</sup> In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

<sup>26</sup> For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

**2 Corinthians 9:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup>“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**.”

**All** who heard of **the liberality of** the Corinthians’ **contribution** would give “thanks... to the glory of God” (**2 Corinthians 4:15**).

**2 Corinthians 4:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup>“For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the **giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God**.”

#### 4) Friends from God

**2 Corinthians 9:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup>“While they also, by **prayer on** your **behalf**, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.”

Some may think that poor believers have nothing to offer rich ones, but that is not the case. The prayers of the poor are the reward of the rich, and the believers in Jerusalem would repay the Corinthians’ generosity by offering **prayer on** their **behalf**. And not only the Jerusalem saints, but also other believers would hear of the Corinthians’ genuine faith and pray for them. Real unity in the church is founded on sound doctrine and mutual prayer.

The Corinthians’ gift would enlarge the circle of friends who were committed to praying for them; as Jesus said in the parable of the unjust manager (**Luke 16:1-13**), they would make “friends for [themselves] by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when it fail[ed], they [would] receive [them] into the eternal dwellings” (**v. 9**).

**Luke 16:1-13 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“Now He was also saying to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and this *manager* was reported to him as squandering his possessions.

<sup>2</sup> And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’

<sup>3</sup> The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.

<sup>4</sup> I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.’

<sup>5</sup> And he summoned each one of his master’s debtors, and he *began* saying to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

<sup>6</sup> And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’

<sup>7</sup> Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’

<sup>8</sup> And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.

<sup>9</sup> And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

<sup>10</sup> He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore if you have not been faithful in the *use of* unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true *riches* to you?

<sup>12</sup> And if you have not been faithful in *the use of* that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?

<sup>13</sup> No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

#### **2 Corinthians 9:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> “While they also, by prayer on your behalf, **yearn** for you because of **the surpassing grace of God in you.**”

Not only would their fellow believers pray for the Corinthians, they would also **yearn** for a deeper, more intimate fellowship with them. That desire would be stimulated when they saw **the surpassing grace of God in** the Corinthians. Other believers would long both to pray for and to have fellowship with those in whom God’s grace was working so mightily.

## **5) Likeness to God**

#### **2 Corinthians 9:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> “Thanks be to God for His **indescribable gift!**”

This simple concluding benediction is one of the richest statements in Scripture. God’s **indescribable gift** is, of course, His Son—the most magnanimous, glorious, wonderful gift ever given, the gift that inspires all other gifts.

#### **Isaiah 9:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

#### **John 3:16-17 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

**Romans 8:32 (NASB)**

<sup>32</sup> “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

**Galatians 4:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”

**1 John 4:9-10 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

<sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

**John 12:24 (NASB)**

<sup>24</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

God, as it were, planted Him as a seed and reaped a harvest of redeemed people. Believers are called to “**be imitators of God, as beloved children**” (**Ephesians 5:1**), and they are never more like Him than when they give.

Subsequent history reveals how the Corinthians responded to Paul’s plea in **chapters 8** and **9** regarding the offering. Sometime after writing **2 Corinthians**, Paul visited Corinth as he had planned (**2 Corinthians 12:14**; **2 Corinthians 13:1-2**).

**2 Corinthians 12:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> “Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for *their* parents, but parents for *their* children.”

**2 Corinthians 13:1-2 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.

<sup>2</sup> I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest *as well*, that if I come again I will not spare *anyone*.”

He remained there about three months (**Acts 20:1-3**), during which time he penned Romans. In that letter, Paul revealed that the Corinthians had responded positively concerning the collection:

**Acts 20:1-3 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.

<sup>2</sup> When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.

<sup>3</sup> 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.”**

**Romans 15:25-27 (NASB)**

**<sup>25</sup> “But now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.**

**<sup>26</sup> For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.**

**<sup>27</sup> Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.”**

Not only had they contributed, but **“they were pleased to do so”**; they were joyful, happy, cheerful givers. They were on the path to true prosperity.