

2Cor. 9:1 ¶ For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

2Cor. 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.

This chapter starts with an expression of complete confidence that the church at Corinth can be depended upon to have a generous gift ready to be delivered to the church in Jerusalem. In fact, he is so confident that he had boasted to the Macedonians about their eagerness to generously support the Jerusalem church, and it had served to motivate them to do the same. Research indicates that Corinth was the major city in the region of Achaia.

2Cor. 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:

2Cor. 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.

After carefully wording his letter to assure the Corinthians of his confidence in them, Paul goes on to say that he is just encouraging them to follow through on their good intentions so that their testimony will continue to confirm their desire to serve God by providing for the needs of others in the body of Christ. He was well aware of the human tendency to start well and finish poorly. The purpose for sending Titus and his companions was to provide extra encouragement in helping them to turn their intentions into action. Paul was also using positive peer pressure (the fact that he would be accompanied with some from Macedonia) as a motivation for them to act with dispatch. The Macedonians had evidently already completed taking their collection. He was careful to note that if their testimony was other than he had boasted, it would shame not only him, but them.

2Cor. 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*.

Paul emphasizes that he had encouraged Titus and his companions to go to Corinth ahead of him to allow time to ensure that their offerings could be collected without the undue pressure of Paul's presence. Paul obviously wants them to give generously according to their ability, but he is keenly aware that God is only pleased when we give cheerfully from a willing heart (as stated in verse 7 below).

2Cor. 9:6 ¶ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

In that regard, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the law of sowing and reaping and that their giving affects them personally. A bountiful harvest is only

possible when much seed has been sown. This is an established principle not only from nature, but from scripture and was affirmed by the teaching of Jesus.

Proverbs 11:25 "The person who blesses others will prosper; he who satisfies others will be satisfied himself." (Complete Jewish Bible)

Proverbs 19:17 "He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done." (NIV)

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

I couldn't help but be reminded of an oft heard saying, "You can't outgive God."

2Cor. 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.

Paul has made strong appeals to the flesh so to speak by invoking their pride and appealing to their desire for blessing. I think he now seeks to temper that appeal by reminding them that God is only honored when one gives cheerfully from a willing heart. God established this principle very early with the people of Israel.

Exodus 25:2 "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering."

God doesn't need us to meet the needs of His children; He often gives us the privilege of having a part in His provision if we so desire. That is one way He allows us to accumulate treasures in heaven.

Matthew 6:19–21 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

One of my granddaughters recently gave testimony to such a heart. My daughter was visiting and telling us of an upcoming mission trip to Haiti in light of the recent earthquake. My granddaughter was very aware of the situation and the needs of the children there. As her aunt was about to go out the door, she came running in with a fistful of cash (from her weekly allowance) and insisted that her aunt take it to use for the children in Haiti. She was not thinking of getting anything in return; she just had a heart to give.

The Believer's Bible Commentary had a beautiful quote attributed to Jowett that I would like to share with you.

"Giving is the language of loving; indeed, it has no other speech. 'God so loved that He gave!' Love finds its very life in giving itself away. Its only pride in possession is the joy of surrender. If love has all things, it yet possesses nothing."

2Cor. 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:

God is *able*; He has the power and capability to act according to His purposes. *Grace* is a result of divine influence upon our heart and always results in graciousness towards others. In other words, if you will yield to Him, He will provide sufficiently for you needs and give you the wherewithal to abound in all kinds of good deeds.

Does this mean that you will be able to respond to every need that is presented to you? No. You will, however, be able to respond to every need that is in accordance with His will for you. I have learned this truth through experience. I believe that part of determining God's will in knowing when and how I am to serve others is through His provision of the wherewithal to serve. I also believe that He sometimes burdens our hearts with the desire to serve and wants us to step out in faith that He will provide as needed. This is an area in which I am growing slowly but surely.

If I miss out on opportunities to serve Him according to His will for me, it is never due to His inability or unwillingness to provide. The key to greater service is greater faith.

When I checked the Greek for *sufficiency*, I was surprised to see that it referenced being contented. I think this is especially applicable to our culture today. It's when we are content with God's provision for us, whatever that provision may be, that God's grace is given free reign to work through us in blessing others.

2Cor. 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

This appears to be a quote from the Psalms in reference to a man that fears the Lord.

Psalms 112:9 "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour."

Paul is basically telling the Corinthians that their gift to the poor in Jerusalem gives evidence of their reverence for the Lord. He is also reminding them that their generosity will not go unrewarded; it will accrue to their spiritual treasure being stored in heaven as referenced in Matthew 6 at verse 7 above.

2Cor. 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;)

2Cor. 9:11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

"he that ministereth" = God

Paul is saying that just as surely as God has given us seed to sow and provide for our food, He will just as surely reward us for works of righteousness done in His name. The more seed sown, the greater the harvest; the principle applies to spiritual seeds as well. You can't outgive God. The more you give, the more He will provide for you to give. When we honor God through our gifts, we are giving opportunities for others to praise God for providing for their need through us.

2Cor. 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;

2Cor. 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*;

2Cor. 9:14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

When those who have more give to supply the needs of those who need more in the body of Christ, it is a source of great thanksgiving to God. He emphasizes again that good deeds done in honor of the Lord give evidence of genuine faith. Not only will the recipients of your gifts be thankful to God, you will benefit from gaining their love and appreciation that find expression in their prayers for you as they thank God for your generosity.

2Cor. 9:15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

“unspeakable” = indescribable

I think in context this gift is the grace of God that is ours through His gift to us of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is unspeakable and indescribable because I don't believe there is one human who truly understands such love and grace. We might have a glimmer, but that's all.

As I was reading through these last verses one more time, it stood out that Paul is speaking to those who “have more” and asking them to provide for those who “need more.” The body of Christ is composed of people from all walks of life. The fact that some saints are in need is a result of the effects of living in a fallen world. Being in need is not evidence of being under God's judgment any more than possessing much is evidence of a right relationship with God. The book of Job teaches that truth very clearly. Only God knows His purposes for the circumstances of each of His saints, and I am convinced that each one is positioned to bring Him honor and glory if they will but trust Him. He has promised that He will provide for those that trust Him.

Psalms 4:8 “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.”

Psalms 18:2 “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

Proverbs 3:5–6 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Isaiah 26:3 “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

Philippians 4:19 “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

In light of the unspeakable gift of God I couldn't help but think of one other verse from Paul's letter to the Romans.

Romans 8:31–32 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”