

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

Giving

In 2014, “the pastor of a Houston, Texas, church reportedly refused to host the funeral of a 93-year-old woman who had been a member of his congregation for 50 years because she was not current with her tithing to the church.¹”

The daughter said, "For the last two years, my mother has been in either a nursing home or she's been in a hospital. ... And the last few months, she was in a coma!²"

Another source quoted the pastor as saying something like “No tithe, no funeral.”

As a Christian, ask yourself, “Is this a demonstration of grace or of legalism?” Is tithing even for the Church Age?

Last week there was a question about giving. So this week, I would like to touch on the concept of Christian giving.

To begin with, “tithes” in the Old Testament were taxes. Israel was a “theocracy.” God was supposed to be their king. The tithes were taxes to support the priesthood and the poor. That didn’t work out so well for the Israelites in the book of Judges. So God allowed them to have a human king who would be precursors to Jesus Christ the God-man king. Here is some helpful information on giving from the website gotquestions.org.

“When trying to distinguish between tithes and offerings, it is important to first understand the concept of tithing. Christians today often think that what they give to their local church is a tithe, when in reality it is an offering. Christian tithing is a misnomer because Christians are under no

¹ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/houston-pastor-reportedly-refused-to-host-funeral-for-93-y-o-member-because-she-didnt-tithe-enough.html>

² ibid

Giving **2 Corinthians 8-9**

obligation to fulfill the command to tithe as given to the Israelites as part of the Mosaic Law. The tithe was a requirement of the Law in which all Israelites were to give 10 percent of everything they earned and grew to the tabernacle/temple (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14:24; 2 Chronicles 31:5). The New Testament nowhere commands, or even recommends, that Christians submit to a legalistic tithe system. Paul states that believers should set aside a portion of their income as an offering, but this is not a tithe (1 Corinthians 16:1–2).”

“God expected the Israelites to honor Him by giving the first fruits of what He gave to them. Leviticus 27:30 states, “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’S: it is holy unto the LORD.” Giving the 10 percent tithe was commanded of the Israelites and was therefore an obligation. When Christ died on the cross, He fulfilled the requirements of the Law and made the mandatory 10 percent tithe obsolete. To continue to insist that it is still in effect is to nullify, at least in part, the sacrifice of Christ and return to the idea of justification by works and law-keeping. The first fruits offering found its fulfillment in Jesus. “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20).”

“An offering is that which is freely given by Christians to the work of the Lord, the local church, and/or ministries and missions. But offerings are far more than simply the check we write on Sunday. We are to offer much more to God than our monetary resources. Romans 12:1 exhorts us to offer our bodies “as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” as part of our worship. Romans 6:13 gives the reason for offering ourselves: because we are “those who have been brought from death to life,” and, as such, we are to “offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.” God is not nearly as interested in our monetary offerings as He is in our submission and obedience. The truth is that He doesn’t

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

need our resources to accomplish His plans and purposes. After all, He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10) and needs nothing from us. What He desires, however, and what He values, is the heart that overflows with gratitude and thanksgiving to the God who saved us and who gives us all things, knowing our needs before we even ask (Matthew 6:8). Such a heart gives generously, willingly, and cheerfully in response to the love and grace that abound in Christ (2 Corinthians 9:6–8).³”

2 Corinthians 9:6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:8 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;

2 Corinthians 9:9 as it is written, “He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness endures forever.”

Warren Doud has an informative commentary on 2 Corinthians 8-9 at https://www.gracenotes.info/doctrine/doctrine_documents/doctrine204.pdf which we should read in conjunction with reading 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9. These are important chapters when studying Christian

³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/tithes-and-offerings.html>

Giving 2 Corinthians 8-9

giving. Open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 8. Or you can follow along below.

Context of 2nd Corinthians⁴:

Paul's Missionary Journeys

1st Missionary Journey

April 48 to September 49

Acts 13:2-14:28

Book written: Galatians

2nd Missionary Journey

Time: April 50 to September 52

Scripture: Acts 15:36-18:22

Books written: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

3rd Missionary Journey

Spring 53 to May 57

Acts 18:23-21:16

Books written: Romans and 1st & 2nd Corinthians

Rome: Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon

Release from 1st imprisonment: Books written: Titus & 1 Timothy

2nd imprisonment: 2 Timothy

Paul's Journey to Rome probably died ca 67

⁴ <http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/1stCorinthians/notes/201104031stCorinthians.pdf>

Giving **2 Corinthians 8-9**

R. B. Thieme gave a special on giving. From my notes, here is his outline of the 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15 passage on giving (Lesson 1):

- I. Example from Macedonians 8:1-6
- II. Exhortation to the Corinthians 8:7-15
- III. Personal Commendation 8:16-24
- IV. Delegation from Paul 9:1-5
- V. Biblical benefits of giving 9:6-15

From Thomas Constable's commentary on 2 Corinthians:

“The New Testament reveals that Paul was actively collecting money for "the poor among the saints in Jerusalem" (Rom. 15:26) for about five years (A.D. 52-57). He solicited funds from the Christians in Galatia (Acts 18:23; 1 Cor. 16:1), Macedonia (Acts 19:22; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:2, 4), Achaia (Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8—9), and Asia Minor (Acts 20:35). Delegates from most of these regions accompanied Paul when he took the gift to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4).”

“The recipients were Hebrew Christians who were poor for several reasons. Conversion to Christianity, and particularly baptism, resulted in social and economic ostracism in Jerusalem society where Judaism dominated all of life. The communal sharing of goods that the early Christians in Jerusalem practiced did not solve their economic problems (cf. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32, 34-35). All Palestinian residents suffered from lack of food due to a famine that descended during the reign of Emperor Claudius (A.D. 46, Acts 11:27-30). As the mother church of Christianity, the Jerusalem church probably had a larger number of teachers, missionaries, and visitors to support than its daughter churches did. Finally, Jews, including Jewish Christians, who lived in Palestine had to pay double taxes, to Rome and to the Jewish authorities.”

Giving 2 Corinthians 8-9

From GraceNotes.info

“Christian giving is a part of stewardship and faithfulness is the first requirement. (1 Cor. 4:2) God really owns everything and gives to believers (James 1:17). A Christian is accountable for everything that the Lord provides (Rom. 14:12).”

“Christian giving expresses the principle of grace. It is one means by which the Christian demonstrates graciousness. Having been a recipient of God’s grace in salvation and in the Christian life, the Christian ministers grace to others. He is a conduit of grace. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35b) The principle of giving derives from the fact that grace depends upon the character of the giver. A Christian gives because of who and what he is, not because the needy person deserves it. Often the needy person is quite undeserving; but deserving is not the issue in giving. The issue in giving is the believer’s stability of character. The recipient is the object of grace, not the object lesson of grace.”

“The giver is the object lesson of grace. The more frequently a believer gives, the more he is oriented to grace, and the more grace is observed in him. It is vitally important, therefore, that the mental attitude for giving be correct, especially that the giving is not motivated by the desire for approbation. This will destroy the object lesson and devalue God’s grace in the eyes of observers. In giving, nothing must cloud the issue for either the giver, the recipient, or observers.”

1. Example from Macedonians 8:1-6

2 Corinthians 8:1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

God has given. It is God that gives grace. Grace, when received with faith dependence upon the Holy Spirit, will be multiplied and be spread to others.

Macedonian churches. Paul gives the Macedonians as an example. The Corinthians had many riches in gifts. Yet, the book of 1 Corinthians details some of the non-grace attitudes of the Christians in that church.

2 Corinthians 8:2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

Giving starts in the thinking of the soul. Grace orientation provides for correct giving. The Macedonians out of their poverty but rich mental attitude gave. As Thomas Constable explained, the Jews persecuted the Jews who believed in Jesus as savior. Even today, sons and daughters of Jews who become Christian believers, sometimes called Messianic Jews, are disinherited and even given “funerals” to indicate they are dead to their parents. The Corinthians were heavily influenced by human viewpoint corrupted by the paganism of the city of Corinth. Kenneth Wuest published a very literal translation of the New Testament. His literal verbose translation of this verse gives a very emphatic description:

2 Corinthians 8:2 (Wuest) That in the midst of a severe testing which was in the form of afflictions, the test being for the purpose of approving them in their reaction to trials, the superabundance of their joy and their poverty which went down to the depths, superabounded with the result of the

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

plentitude of their liberality; because in the measure of their ability...⁵

As various commentators/pastors have said, “Giving is a mental attitude rather than the amount given.” Remember the example Jesus gave of the woman who gave two small coins in the offering in the Temple:

Mark 12:42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.

Mark 12:43 Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;

Mark 12:44 for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.”

2 Corinthians 8:3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

Entirely on their own. Their giving was voluntary. You begin to understand why Paul is using the Macedonians as an example of correct giving.

2 Corinthians 8:4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.

⁵ Wuest, Kenneth, The New Testament: An Expanded Translation, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1961. page 428

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

Privilege. This is a word for “grace.”

2 Corinthians 8:5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

They were in fellowship, in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. So far we have an emphasis that this giving is for believers only but not only that but also that such a believer must be walking by faith.

This mental attitude expressed here reminds me of the warning given about taking communion in fellowship. Or even prayer. Perhaps a person, before giving, should have “giving preparation” similar to “prayer preparation.” Be in fellowship with the correct motivation and attitude such that it becomes a joy to participate in the plan of God to support the ministry. It is not just for support of the pastor. It can also be in support of missionaries or other Christian work.

2 Corinthians 8:6 So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.

Titus. Paul has engaged the help of others to collect the offering.

2. Exhortation to the Corinthians 8:7-15

2 Corinthians 8:7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

As previously mentioned, the Corinthians were rich in spiritual gifts, in Bible teaching by Paul. Yet, as Herman taught, the Corinthians appeared to be deficient when it came to application to Paul's teaching. Their mental attitudes were lacking. By the time of the writing of 2 Corinthians they may have started to apply some of the corrections Paul had suggested in his 1st Corinthians letter.

2 Corinthians 8:8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

I am not commanding you. From the gracenotes.info website: "Christian giving is love giving, not Law giving."

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice how many times the word "grace" shows up in this chapter. The concepts of "grace" and "giving" are inseparable and intertwined. If you don't understand "grace" you will not understand giving. Paul is delving into the spiritual realm which cannot be divorced from the physical realm.

2 Corinthians 8:10 And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.

2 Corinthians 8:11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

matched by your completion of it, according to your means.

“Though he did not command his readers, Paul advised them strongly to complete their collection. They had, after all, both desired to begin a collection and had begun their collection before the Macedonian churches had taken either of those steps.⁶”

2 Corinthians 8:12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

You give from what you have, not from what you don't have. Over and over again, along with the concept of grace is the emphasis on what one thinks. As one pastor put it, “You are what you think.” (Proverbs 23:7)

2 Corinthians 8:13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.

2 Corinthians 8:14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality,

This hints at what Paul previously expressed in 1st Corinthians chapter 12—that the Church is a body, the body of Christ. Each part of the body supports the rest of the body using the abilities that it has to contribute.

2 Corinthians 8:15 as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much,

⁶ Constable, Thomas, Notes on 2 Corinthians, page 73

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

and the one who gathered little did not have too little.”

This quote by Paul is from Exodus 16:18 concerning manna. In thought, this is similar to and perhaps connects to Paul's comment in Philippians:

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

3. Personal Commendation 8:16-24

2 Corinthians 8:16 Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you.

2 Corinthians 8:17 For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.

The Macedonians are commended as a group for having a very positive mental attitude. So here, Titus on a personal level is commended for his positive mental attitude, one of grace. This should be an example for each of us.

2 Corinthians 8:18 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel.

2 Corinthians 8:19 What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help.

2 Corinthians 8:20 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift.

2 Corinthians 8:21 For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.

Paul is setting an example in the handling of money for the ministry.

2 Corinthians 8:22 In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you.

2 Corinthians 8:23 As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.

Representatives. Literally, this is the Greek word for “apostle.” Remember, a word may have several meanings dependent upon the context. An apostle, in general, is someone who is sent by someone and is fully empowered to engage in transactions for the person who sent them. The key for an “apostle” is who did the sending. The technical term “apostle” is applied to those 12 (here counting Paul as the 12th member) who were appointed/sent by Jesus Christ personally to set up the foundation of the Church. But here in this verse, the representative or

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

“apostles” were sent by individual churches and empowered by them to represent them. So the translation is a good one, even if not literal.

2 Corinthians 8:24 Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

4. Delegation from Paul 9:1-5

2 Corinthians 9:1 For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints;

2 Corinthians 9:2 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.

2 Corinthians 9:3 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;

2 Corinthians 9:4 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.

2 Corinthians 9:5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

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.

5. Biblical benefits of giving 9:6-15

2 Corinthians 9:6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

It is logical that in giving we support the Lord's work, that it will have an outcome that is positive, constructive. We get to participate in His plan. And just like prayer, we receive blessing from our prayers and our giving in supporting others in the body of Christ.

Here is Thomas Constable on this verse:

“Is a proper motive for giving to get something in return? Both Jesus and Paul urged us to lay up treasure in heaven, to make investments counting on the fact that they will yield eternal rewards (Luke 12:31-34; Matt. 6:19- 21; 1 Tim. 6:18-19; cf. Prov. 19:17; Matt. 10:42; Luke 6:38). It is perfectly legitimate to remind people of the inevitable consequences of their actions to motivate them to do what is right, as Paul did here.⁷”

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Not grudgingly or under compulsion. Herman often quoted from this verse during the offering at church.

⁷ Constable, Thomas, Notes on 2 Corinthians, page 79

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

2 Corinthians 9:8 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;

Thomas Constable provides a warning concerning the so called “prosperity gospel.”

“Preachers of "prosperity theology" have used these verses to support their contention that God will inevitably give you more material goods if you give what you presently have to Him. They often urge their hearers to give to God through their ministries. However Paul was comparing what God does on the physical plane with what He does spiritually. The farmer who plants a crop gets back more seed than he sowed. Similarly, Paul argued, those who sow spiritually by giving sacrificially to others will receive more spiritual seed, namely, divine enablement to help more people (vv. 8-9). Moreover God will not just supply more spiritual seed, but He will multiply it.⁸”

2 Corinthians 9:9 as it is written, “He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness endures forever.”

Grace. Another mention of grace. Being filled by the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to succeed.

2 Corinthians 9:10 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;

⁸ Constable, Thomas, Notes on 2 Corinthians, pages 80-81

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

2 Corinthians 9:11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

When prayers are answered, people give thanks to God. When offerings fulfill a need in love people give thanks to God. I mention prayer in relation to giving since both are functions of the Christian life. There are similarities between the two which I don't have space to cover here.

2 Corinthians 9:12 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.

This reminds me of something John Hintz taught when visiting Spring Valley Bible Church. The pastor teaches, giving “gold” while the congregation in return supplies “beans.” The beans are the needs of the pastor and can be physical as well as spiritual needs (as in prayer). The gold is the spiritual teaching the pastor provides.

2 Corinthians 9:13 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,

2 Corinthians 9:14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.

2 Corinthians 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

So the end of the physical giving is not just supplying the needs for the ministry, but it advances God's spiritual plan and results in a demonstration of His grace in operation through believers and in many thanks to God.

If you wish to give from your own motivation, not grudgingly nor of compulsion you can give via PayPal at:

<http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Contributions.htm>

or mail your check to:

Spring Valley Bible Church
P.O. Box 702431, Dallas, TX 75370