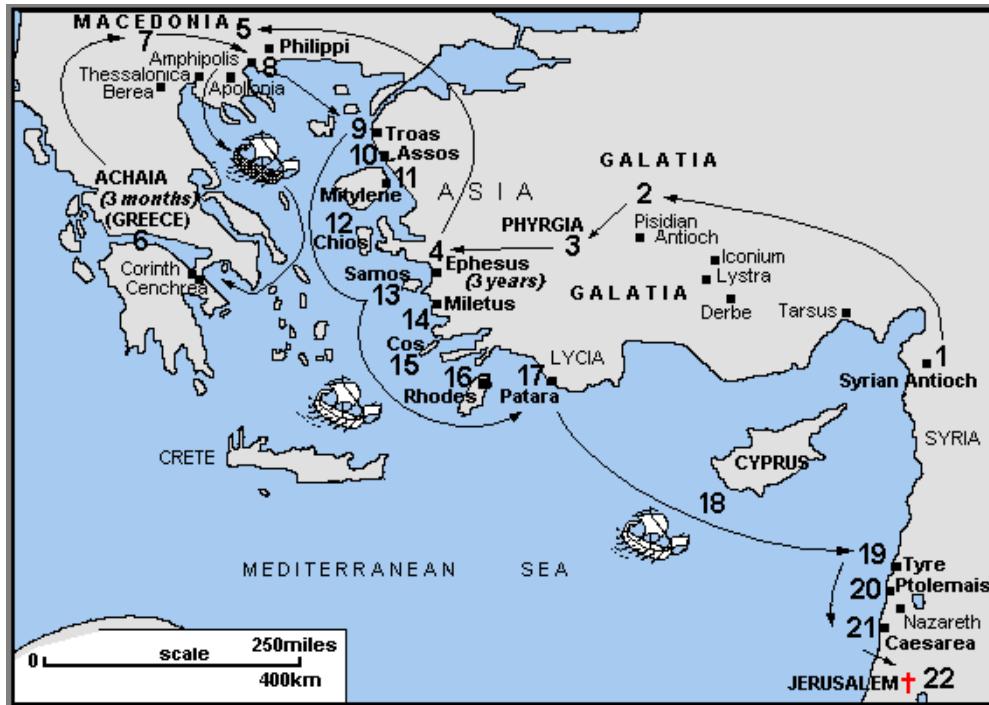


2 Corinthians 8 & 9

The Grace of Giving



1. Personal Finances

a. Willing Decision

8.8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine.

Acts 5.4 – Peter to Ananias “While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?”

9.7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8.4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints

Mark Twain was so sickened by a long appeal for a church offering that he not only did he not give what he planned to give, but he took a bill out of the plate!

b. Plan to Give

8.3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, “of their own accord”

c. Obey Despite Circumstances

8.2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

Affliction + Joy + Poverty = Generosity

God sees the “heart gift” and not the “hand gift.” If the heart wanted to give more, but was unable to do so, God sees it and records it accordingly. But if the hand gives more than the heart wants to give, God records what is in the heart, no matter how big the offering in the hand might be. Warren Wiersbe

2 Corinthians 6.10 “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything”

d. Differences between Promise and Performance

8.10-12 And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

e. Giving connects to Getting

9.6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Acts 20.35 Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

God sees, not the portion, but the proportion. If we could give more, and did not, God notes it. If we wanted to give more, and could not, God also notes that. When we give willingly, according to what we have, we are practicing grace giving. Warren Wiersbe

f. Principle Seen in Everyday Life

9.6 sows sparingly / reap sparingly sows bountifully / reap bountifully

Farmer: More Seed Sown > Greater Harvest

Investor: More Money Deposited > More Money Withdrawn

g. God-honoring giving comes from Heart

9.7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Proverbs 22.9 Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.

2. Group Participation

1 Corinthians 16.1-4 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Romans 15.25-28 “I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings...”

a. Challenged to Finish

9.6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace.

8.10 And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it.

Hebrews 10.24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

There is a fine line between fleshly imitation and spiritual emulation, and we must be careful in this regard. But a zealous Christian can be a means of stirring up and church and motivating people to pray, work, witness, and give.

Warren Wiersbe

b. Shamed to be Fair

8.14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.

God does the equalizing: Exodus 16.18-20 when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.” But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

A young boy heard his wealthy Christian father praying for the needs of needy missionaries and said, “Dad, if I had your checkbook, I could answer your prayers!”

The lesson is clear: gather what you need, share what you can, and don’t try to hoard God’s blessings. God will see to it that you will not be in need if you trust Him and obey His Word.

Warren Wiersbe

c. Accountability

8.20,21 We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man

“Naturally we want to avoid the slightest breath of criticism in the distribution of their gifts, and to be absolutely aboveboard not only in the sight of God but in the eyes of men.” 2 Corinthians 8.21 / Phillips Translation

d. Supplication > Friendship

9.14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

3. God-Centered

a. Give Self to God First

8.5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

b. Christ's Loving Example

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 by his poverty might become rich.

9.15 Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Romans 8.16,17 we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

c. Preaching of the Gospel

8.18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel.

d. Act of Grace

8.7 as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

8.19 And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will.

– Paul used 9 words for ‘offering’

Grace not only frees us from our sins, but it frees us from ourselves. The grace of God will open your heart *and your hand*. Your giving is not the result of cold calculation, but of warm-hearted jubilation! Warren Wiersbe

e. Glory of Christ

8.23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.

f. Abundant Grace

9.8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Romans 8.32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

g. Thanksgiving to God

9.12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

h. Prayer for You

9.14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

Who is thanking God for you?

Who is praying for you?

If our churches would get back to grace giving, there would be fewer high-pressure offering appeals, fewer gimmicks to raise funds, and fewer complaints from the people of God. Instead, there would be plenty of money available for the ministries that truly magnify the grace of God. And I think the unsaved people in the world would sit up and take notice! You and I are saved because God believed in grace giving. How much do we believe in grace giving?

Warren Wiersbe