

A Study of Giving from 2 Corinthians 8-9 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1. “Benevolence”

- Benevolence has to do with acts of service, both monetary and non-monetary (see Acts 4:32-37 and 6:1-6).
- But the word itself rarely, if at all, appears in modern translations.
- Thus, it is probably better to talk about a theology of giving, what the church does with the money given, and how to give.

2. Theology of Giving (2 Cor 8-9)

- 8:1-6. The Macedonians gave out of their *extreme poverty* so that what they gave was a “wealth of generosity.”
 - The giving was an act of their own *free will* as a result of **giving themselves first** to the Lord. The chronology is very important.
 - They even gave beyond their means.
- 8:7. Giving is seen as an *act of grace*—God’s work within us.
- 8:8. Giving is *not a command* but a way for us to *evaluate* our love for others—don’t give out of obligation, but think through it.
- 8:12. Giving should be done *according to your means*. That is acceptable, Paul says. No one should place a hardship upon himself or herself by giving regularly beyond their means.
- 8:13-15. Giving should be *equitable*. The *principle* is that you help others when they need it and they will help you when you need it.
- 9:6, 10. Spiritual principles about giving.
- 9:6. You reap what you sow. Jesus said something similar to this in Mark 4:24 —“The measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you.” God rewards you based on your commitment to him.
- 9:10. God will help you give. Paul says if you are good with the money you have God will give you more money to do good with!
- 9:7. The attitude of giving.
 - When you give, *make up your own mind* what is appropriate.
 - Don’t give reluctantly because God loves your cheerfulness.
- 9:11-15. Spiritual growth happens through giving.
 - Giving refocuses us on what is really ours and what we are really about as Christians.
 - Notice the interchange between the giver and the receiver—you give and the receiver prays for you in thanks.
 - Through all this, God is glorified and many thanksgiving are offered to him.
- 8:9. The theology of giving is *wrapped up in Jesus and his gospel*.
 - Jesus completely gave us his riches and became poor to make us wealthy.
 - What Jesus did for us completely refocuses us around what is really important.

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3. How to Give (1 Cor 16:1-2)

- This is a principle, not a command. Since Paul commanded this for a one-time collection, we can only draw a principle from it.
- It is most helpful for the church to continue this principle on a weekly basis, to take care of ongoing needs. That's why we take up a collection each week.
- Paul teaches us to set some money relative to our income.
- Paul's point is to take care of your needs first and then consider what you can give beyond your needs.
- The principle is this: You decide how much to give, within your means, and then give cheerfully.

4. What does the church do with the money that is given?

- We use the money to meet the needs of people in the church and of people who call the church with needs, to support missions and ministry, to pay a minister, and to maintain a building.
- Biblical teaching on how the church uses money.
- The church gave money to meet the needs of their own. (Acts 4:32-37; 2:42-47)
 - Individuals gave money to the church.
 - The money was distributed by the leaders (apostles).
- The church uses money to support ministry and missions.
 - Acts 11:27-30. In this passage, the churches took up money to help the believers who were dealing with a famine.
 - Phil 4:15-16. The church uses money to support missionaries, just like the Philippians supported Paul.
- The church uses money to support ministers and elders whose job it is to proclaim the gospel.
 - 1 Cor 9:1-14. Paul insists that those who sow spiritual good should expect to reap material benefits (a living). He even says the Lord commanded this (v. 14).
 - Luke 10:7. In describing how the seventy missionaries are to be supported, Jesus says, "Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for workers deserve their wages."
 - 1 Tim 5:17. Paul uses Luke 10:7 to teach that elders and teachers should be supported financially.
- The church also uses money to maintain our building. While there is no clear teaching about this in the Bible, the building does give us a place to meet to proclaim the gospel at.