

## 2 CORINTHIANS 9

# Hilarious Giving

Student Guides

### Daily Bible Reading

Day 1	2 Cor. 9: 1-5
Day 2	2 Cor. 9: 6-11
Day 3	2 Cor. 9: 12-15
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*Luke records a parable Jesus told about a certain rich man whose crops were so abundant, he found it necessary to tear down his present barns and build new ones to store his harvest (Luke 12: 16-21). As the man contemplated blessings bestowed upon him, he chose not to pass along blessings to others. Instead he focused on self-preservation. Jesus responded by dubbing him a fool. Not only did the man live selfishly, even the selfish life he lived would soon come to a tragic end. A life without giving is a life without meaning. The Lord Jesus Himself remains the most visible proof as we learned last week (8:9). Jesus' life was a life of giving. And, since life is in large part measured by giving, it seems the more generous we become, the more meaningful our life.*

## 1. The First Ingredient for Hilarious Giving is Readiness (vv. 1-5)

Paul informs us about the kind of giver God loves (v. 7c). The term “cheerful” implies a happy state of mind. God loves the giver whose gifts are motivated from a “cheerful” heart.

The first ingredient required for a cheerful heart is *readiness* (vv. 2-5). While Paul judged it “superfluous” to write to the Corinthians concerning giving (v. 1a), he nonetheless would not presumptuously assume they had already prepared the love gift to be taken to Jerusalem. There are two reasons why Paul would press for the fulfillment of their promise:

*First, Paul desired to avoid embarrassment.* After all, the Corinthians’ zeal had “provoked very many.” They had become, as it were, a shining example to other churches, promoting generosity for the collection everywhere. Even the appearance of hypocrisy was out of the question.

*Second, Paul desired to show enlargement.* He specifically says the collection was to be, “as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness” (v. 5). He urged the Corinthians to give generously, indicative of a worthy offering and not an offering motivated by mere duty. Giving is an expression of the state of our heart.

## 2. The Second Ingredient for Hilarious Giving is Bountifulness (vv. 6, 8-11)

Paul uses a familiar metaphor to communicate the second required ingredient for cheerful giving (v. 6). The harvest clearly communicates the truth of bountiful giving. The proportion of reaping is determined by the proportion of sowing.

Paul clearly explains that the believer suffers no lack when his or her heart is willing to generously give. Why?

*First, because the seed itself is provided (vv. 8-10).* God gives an inexhaustible provision to His children. Independent of circumstances, God provides the seed.

*Second, because the seed is planted.* He multiplies “your seed sown.” All true giving is sowing.

*Third, because God prospers the seed.* The seed will “multiply”; the seed will “increase.” Rather than impoverish us when we sow seed, God promises to enrich us. Giving generously procures for us special blessings from God.

### **3. The Third Ingredient for Hilarious Giving is Cheerfulness (v. 7)**

Cheerfulness in giving is more about the quality of giving rather than the quantity of the gift. That is why, for example, the widow about which Jesus spoke gave cheerfully even though the amount, a mere two mites, was so small (Luke 12: 2-4). Jesus concluded her amount, in essence, surpassed all the Pharisees together!

Paul insists our gifts must lack both “complaint” and “compulsion.” In doing so, we immediately reveal our heart’s condition. Begrudging what we give forfeits both bread and blessing. Neither are we free to give out of necessity. Imposed giving is forced giving. God loves the cheerful giver.

### **4. The Fourth Ingredient for Hilarious Giving is Thankfulness (vv. 12-15)**

True giving remains at the core of Christian worship. And, thankfulness strikes the heart of true giving. Indeed nothing is more beautiful than a thankful Christian. Paul makes two basic assertions about thankfulness.

*First, those who receive will be thankful (vv. 12-13).* The Jerusalem believers would “glorify God” because of the Corinthians’ “liberal distribution” to them. And, because Jerusalem is grateful, God bestows grace! When we give in Jesus’ name, every prayer of thanksgiving reminds heaven of our gifts.

*Second, those who give will be thankful (v. 15).* As we give, our hearts inevitably thank God for making it possible for us to give. We are thankful for the privilege of giving and for the blessings giving brings to our lives. We give because He gave. He is our highest motivation for giving and our only reason for receiving. In order to be a hilarious giver, we must remain thankful deep within our heart.