**The Grace Way of Giving, No. 8 – BD36-02**

We will continue with 2 Corinthians 9. We have learned several principles thus far relative to guidelines for a believer today in his giving to the Lord’s work. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 deal with Paul’s instructions to the Corinthian church relative to their gifts to a special fund, the Jerusalem relief fund, which was being taken for the Jewish saints in Jerusalem who at this time were undergoing a period of great privation and of starvation.

**2 Corinthians 9:1-7**

Now we’re going to begin the analysis of several more principles of grace giving which are to be found here in 2 Corinthians 9. In the first five verses we have giving as a blessing. In the first two verses he reviews the readiness of the Corinthians to give. He says, “For as touching the ministering to the saints.” The word “for” in the Greek is “gar.” This connects back to verse 2 Corinthians 8:24. Paul is asking that the delegation which he has sent to complete their offering should be well received by them. “For,” he says, “as touching (or concerning) the ministering to the saints.” In English we have the words “for” and “touching” but in the Greek there are a couple of words between these. One very important Greek word is “men.” In the Greek language, “men” often goes along with another Greek particle, “de.”

These two go together as signals. They’re just signal words. Often you don’t even translate them, but the idea they convey is “on the one hand, and on the other hand.” It’s a contrast and it’s a comparison. In these Scriptures you have verse 1 with the “men” translated here as “for,” but you don’t get the other “de” in contrast until you get down to verse three which is introduced by the word “yet.” “For” contrasted to “yet.”

Here’s what this means: This indicates a contrast of one clause with another. The first one is in verse 1 and the second one in verse 3. What he is saying is, “Indeed, on the one hand, but on the other hand.” What he is contrasting is this: While on the one hand he says “it is superfluous for me to write to you.” While on the one hand this is true that it is unnecessary for me to promote your giving to the Jerusalem relief fund for we have found that the Corinthians were quite willing. He says, “On the other hand, I am sending you a delegation,” and this is what he says in verse 3, “to ensure that when I arrive with the Macedonian Christians, we’re going to find this offering ready. It is not necessary indeed, on the one hand for me to be encouraging you to give to this offering.” Then in verse 3 he says, “But on the other hand, yet it is necessary, I feel, that I should send a delegation to ensure its gathering.”

What he is talking about here is the ministering, which is the Greek word “diakonia,” to which the word “deacon” is related, and this means some kind of a religious service. What he is referring to by this context is of course this offering to the Jerusalem saints. “For as touching the ministering to the saints,” these are the people in Jerusalem. “It is superfluous” means it is unnecessary for me to challenge you in this respect. But Paul as their pastor-teacher sees the need to move their willingness to actual performance. That’s what he said up here in 2 Corinthians 8:11. He says to them after recognizing to give, “Now therefore perform the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to will so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.”

This is often the case with believers, and spiritual leaders are confronted with working with people who are quite willing to do what they should do, but who, for one reason or another, never get around to fulfilling what God has laid upon their hearts. That’s what Paul is concerned with relative to this matter of their Christian giving to this fund. Here’s a congregation who knows doctrine. They’re positive toward it. But any congregation who is receptive to the Word still needs to regularly review that Word. This is what Peter tells us he did for positive believers. In 2 Peter 3:1-2, Peter says, “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.” In 2 Timothy 2:14, Timothy is also told to review the Word with God’s people: “Of these things, put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.”

So don’t abuse your teachers in the Word by complaining when they review things, even if you think you have learned it. There is a great great benefit in reviewing the Word of God and it is constantly necessary because it is the reviewing of the Word of God that moves our willingness into action.

So verse 1 says, “For indeed concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to be writing to you.” Verse 2 says, “For I know the readiness of your mind.” “For” connects with the first verse which introduces now why it is superfluous for him to challenge the Corinthians about their giving. He says, “I know,” and this is the Greek word “oida.” This is a word that means something that you know as absolute knowledge. This is a fullness of knowledge that Paul has about the readiness of the Corinthian Christians. We have another Greek word, “ginosko,” and this means not a fullness of knowledge, but that which you are entering into. For that reason, this is the word that applies to what you’re learning from your experience. But this “oida” is what you gain when you come to a fullness of knowledge. This is the kind of knowledge that God has. It’s a fullness. It’s a fully developed understanding. So we might translate this as, “I know positively, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the readiness of your mind.”

Now he’s not giving these people praise for something they don’t deserve just to get them giving liberally. Sometimes the professional preacher tries this stunt, and sometimes we are told that this is the way to deal with people, that we should compliment them and make them think that they are something more, and praise them so that they will be doing something for the Lord. Well, immediately, if you know anything about grace, you know that’s a very unfair thing to do to a person because you have ruined his motivation under grace and you have robbed him of all blessing and reward if he does act.

So Paul is saying, “I know positively, and that’s why I can commend your readiness of mind.” The word “readiness” simply means “willingness.” The word “mind” here is not in the Greek but it is not entirely out of order because any readiness or decision is a mental attitude, and that’s where our decisions have to come from. That’s where our readiness would have to be found—in the mind.

Paul says, “Therefore (this being the case), I boast of you.” The word actually means “to glory.” Paul is saying, “I am glorying in you (on behalf of you) because of you.” It means a certain joyous exaltation. Paul is habitually praising with delight the Corinthians to the Macedonians. In what respect? Well he keeps telling the Macedonians about the attitude of the Corinthians toward giving—their willingness to give unto the needs of the saints in Jerusalem. He is choosing to do this on their behalf. He is glorying to their credit, to these Macedonians who were in the province of Achaia above Corinth.

And here’s the thing that he was glorying in: “I boast of you to them of Macedonia that Achaia was ready a year ago.” The word “ready” means “to stand prepared.” Since the year before, they had made the decision to give and they were now standing prepared to give to this fund. They had this readiness. Why? Well, it’s in the passive voice which shows that something prepared them for that readiness. That of course was their understanding of what God wanted them to do through doctrine. They learned from doctrine what they were to do. The word “readiness” simply means to be equipped with something within their own souls. The zeal of the Corinthians was a stimulation to the Macedonian Christians. That’s what he says: “For your zeal hath provoked very many.” The word “provoked” here is “erethizo,” and it means “to stimulate.” They were stimulating the other believers.

Now, it is important to note by what they were stimulated. Paul wasn’t getting up and saying among the Macedonian churches, “My friends, I want to tell you that now the offering in Corinth stands at $5,000.” And it seems that the offering that they gave to the Jerusalem fund was a very large offering when it was finally collected. But we have no indication that what Paul was praising and commending and glorying in and taking such satisfaction in was how much the Corinthians were giving. And they were people who were pretty well off financially. The Macedonians are not stimulated by the amount because actually the Corinthians had lagged in the amount they were giving.

What the Macedonians were moved by was the willingness of the Corinthians to give because in grace giving the amount is not the prime thing. It is your willingness to give. Now the Macedonians could imitate through doctrine this mental attitude of being willing to give, and this is the thing that they imitated. The result is we’re told at the end of verse 2 that it resulted in stimulating the very many—a large majority were moved to give.

“For I know positively,” Paul says, “of your willingness, concerning which I boast on your behalf to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared since last year and your zeal has provoked the majority of them.”

So here’s the principle in these two verses: The strong financial support of the Lord’s work by a group of Christians motivated by sound doctrine is an encouragement for other believers to follow. That was the case with the Macedonians.

So in verses 3 to 5 we have the concern about the Corinthians. Paul now explains the purpose of his sending this delegation. He says in verse 3, “Yet,” and here we come to that opposite answer. We had “men” to begin with, signaling a coming contrast, “On the one hand, this is not necessary for me to stimulate you,” but now he comes to the “de,” on the other hand, here in verse 3, “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.”

Now here’s the problem: Paul says he is sending, on the basis of an apostolic decision that he has made, he has considered it necessary to send them this delegation of Titus and his two unnamed companions—these are the brethren. They are going to go to the Corinthians with a commission from Paul, namely that they deal with the Corinthians in such a way that the willingness to give now be performed.

The reason for this is that Paul is concerned that he has been going around boasting about how willing the Corinthians are. Now the time comes for this offering to be collected and transported by a group of men selected by the churches, and they’re going to take it to Jerusalem. So Paul, with some Macedonian companions in the party, arrives in Corinth, and the first thing they find when they check with the treasurer is that the offering has not been taken. A little bit has come in, but most people are still getting around to it. Paul says, “Now, if I come, I’m going to be embarrassed by this. Our boasting should be in vain.” He is not afraid that they’re going to refuse to give. He’s just afraid that they’re not going to have gotten with it. “And so it should be in vain” means to lose its justification. “My boasting of you should lose its justification.” It would be falsified. He says, “In this behalf,” which in the Greek means “in this fragment,” or “in this part.” That is, he says, “In the particular factor of your getting the offering together. That’s what I’m going to be embarrassed about.” He’s not implying to them that he’s going to be embarrassed to find that they weren’t so willing after all. He’s confident that they’re willing, but like all of us, our willingness does not always result in performance. It is something we know needs to be done. It’s something we plan to do. It’s something our heart is really in, but we just don’t get around to it.

So Paul explains to them that this particular thing is what he is concerned about. And what is it? That they may be ready. He said that when I get there, the offering will be there and there won’t be anything more to do than simply to pick it up. It will be prepared.

So verse 3 says, “But I’m sending you the brethren lest our glorying on our behalf of you should lose its justification, and this in particular, that even as I repeatedly said you may be prepared.” The word “said” here is in the imperfect tense which means he has been saying it again and again.

In verse 4 he explains a little more the problem of embarrassment. “Lest somehow,” means lest if any way, “they of Macedonia come with me.” This is a third class condition, “If they come.” Maybe some Macedonians are going to be in the party and maybe not.” But if they do come this is what he is concerned about—their finding when they get to Corinth, and they discover you to be unprepared, not having executed your intention.

So he says, “Lest somehow if they of Macedonia come with me and find you unprepared—the offering not completed.” If the Macedonians come and find the offering still incomplete, Paul is going to be embarrassed. Paul isn’t trying to shame the Corinthians into giving here. That’s not his point. What he is concerned about is that the Macedonians be discouraged. You could say, “Now here’s somebody who does a good job for the Lord.” This is the problem with commending and praising people. About the time that you find a sense of appreciation for what somebody does, and about the time you’re very grateful to the Lord for what this person does, and about the time you use this person as an example to the encouragement of other believers, this person blows it. This person drifts off from faithfulness and drifts off the scene, and the result is that a number of people who began to take encouragement from that individual are discouraged. So every one of us bears a certain responsibility toward other people relative to our influence upon them. You never know, and you might be well surprised how many people look to you and they themselves are encouraged in faithfulness to the Lord by what they observe in you and your faithfulness. And if all of a sudden you drop out, … you will discourage many people who have been looking to you. So be careful when you think that it’s time for you to retire or its time for you to change your pace into something less useful lest you be Satan’s instrument for discouragement.

Now Paul is not trying to shame these people. He’s concerned about the discouragement. “Thus in this same confident boasting,” and it’s not “boasting” in the Greek: It’s “confidence.” “Lest somehow if they of Macedonia come with me and find you unprepared, we (we do not say you) should be ashamed in this same confidence.” “Confidence” here is “hupostasis,” which is Paul’s certainty of the Corinthians in their performance. He didn’t want to see his confidence misplaced.

In verse 5 we have Paul’s plan: “Therefore, I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you and make up beforehand your bounty.” “Therefore” indicates a conclusion. Paul has a command decision. Now he’s going to spell it out. He decides what action is necessary to avoid the embarrassment he envisions and the discouragement that could stem from that. “I thought…” here connotes a decision by a leader. It is aorist, as something that he thought over and made a decision over in the past of their possible unpreparedness. It is active—it is a command decision, and it is indicative—it is a fact. He believed that an advanced delegation was necessary. For what reason? To exhort. The Greek word is “parakaleo.” This means “to urge” or “to encourage.” He is going to send this delegation to encourage the Corinthian brethren. He’s going to send Titus and the companions in order that they would go before, that they would precede Paul’s party to Macedonia, and that they would make up beforehand (to put fully in order—to complete, in reference to the collection which they had gone in advance to bring together. So when Paul arrives, the thing is done. Now this word “make up beforehand) is in the subjunctive move which means maybe they will or maybe they won’t. It depends upon their response. It is his hope that they will.

Now here’s an important word: What is it that they are going to bring, that they might be ready with? He calls it their “bounty.” The word “bounty” in Greek … is “eulogia.” “Bounty” is not a good word for that. What we have here is the word “blessing.” The bounty is the blessing. Paul says, “I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren (Titus and his companions) that they would go before unto you and make up before your blessing.” Now what does he mean by that? He means that what they give is to be in the form of a blessing, for it is possible to give to the Lord’s work in such a way that it is not a blessing. This is to be the case of the offering that they give. It is to be given in a manner compatible with these principles of grace that we’ve been studying. Giving with the right mental attitude converts the money itself as well as the act into a blessing. It is possible for a Christian to give in such a way that it is not a blessing. The thing that he wants to be a blessing is that of which he had noticed before. A better translation here is “that which you previously promised,” done the year before.

There is a series of words here that stress how Paul is asking them to get prepared ahead of time. He says to “go before unto you.” This means to make up before what was previously promised. All of the Greek words here are indicating “to go before me and get into order before I came the blessing which was promised before, that the same (this offering) might be ready (that is, might be completed and prepared). And again, how is this offering to be taken? How is this offering to be prepared? What is the nature of it to be? You have once more the word “bounty.” This is to be a bounty which is our word once more “eulogia.” That is, it is to come in the way of a blessing. The words “as a matter” in italics are not in the Greek. This is as a blessing. You are to go before to prepare this offering as a blessing.

And here’s how it is not to be: It is not to be something else. It is not to be “pleonexia.” The word “covetousness” is a pretty good translation. The idea here is a desire for advantage. “Pleonexia” means an aggression. It connotes a willingness to sacrifice your neighbor for your own interest. A person who has a “pleonexia” has a mean spirit. A “pleonexia” believer is willing to let somebody else do without in order that they may be indulged. This is a very strong word. It is keeping for your own self what should be bestowed upon others in need. It is letting somebody else pay for something that you could pay for far better. That’s the idea. Paul is saying, “Give in such a way that it is a blessing, not a ‘pleonexia.’” The idea is: Don’t collect an offering that you have given grudgingly—something that has been wrung out by pressure. Grace giving has to come as a generous gift, not as a grudging contribution. Paul sees himself showing up in Corinth with the Macedonians and finding that the offering that he boasted they were so willing to give had not been completed.

Now what’s going to happen? Paul is going to be embarrassed when they inform him that the offering is not ready. So what’s he going to do? He’s going to be disappointed. The Corinthians are going to see this and they’re going to be at that moment under pressure to give the money. While Paul is not there, they’re not under pressure to give the money. Until he actually arrives to collect it, they’re not under pressure to give. This is the grace principle that he wants to preserve. He says, “I don’t want to come to Corinth, and then when I’m there, all of you are scurrying around gathering your money and filling out what you should have been doing before because you have not been giving. Then you will be giving on the basis of ‘pleonexia,’ of pressure.” Somebody will say, “Well, I didn’t have a chance to get ready for this. I’m having to give this now and I’m not set for this. This is an awkward time for you to show up, Paul, for me to have to come across with this money.

So what verse 5 says is, “Therefore, I decided it was necessary to urge the brethren to go ahead to you and prepare in advance your blessing which you had previously promised that the same might be prepared as a blessing and not as a gift grudgingly given.” So here’s a grace principle in these first five verses; simply this: Giving cannot be associated with pressure such as embarrassment or the invasion of privacy if it is to be a blessing to the giver and to the recipient. All of your giving has to be with this thought in mind—that everything you give to God has to be “eulogia.” If you’re giving in any way, if you doubt in any way that your giving is a blessing (that is, that it’s a blessing to you and it’s a blessing to those who receive it and it’s a blessing to which you give that money); if the conditions upon which you’re giving that money violate any principle of grace, it can’t be blessing. It has to be on grace principles or your giving cannot be a blessing.

God forbids you to ever give your money on “pleonexia.” Any time there is in your mind a grudging attitude, don’t give. Any time there is upon you, you feel, an emotional pressure, don’t give, because that’s “pleonexia” giving. It falls away from the category of grace giving, and there’s no blessing and there’s no reward for you in your giving.

Now we come to verses 6 and 7: “But this I say: He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” Here are two ways of giving, and in verse 6 you have the law of giving. If we were to ask you, “What do you think this verse means?” probably a lot of you would say, “Well, if I give a lot of money, I’m going to get a lot of blessing, and if I give a little bit of money, I’m going to get a little bit of blessing.” That seems to be a normal conclusion on the fact that he’s talking about sowing seed. If you know anything about farming, you know that if you sow a lot of seed on a lot of acreage, you’re going to have a lot of yield. But if you (only) sow a little bit of seed on a small amount of acreage, you will have comparatively smaller returns. But that is not basically what this verse means.

“But this…,” this connects to verse 5. This is stating a law. It connotes the idea now in reference to this which I’ve been saying. He ties it in to what is coming. Or you might say, “The point is…” as he introduces verse 6. “The point is: he who soweth…” This word “soweth” is “speiro.” It is a simple word for planting seed. It is present, active—something that the sower goes out to his field and he continually actively plants his field. If he sows this field “sparingly,” and the word is “pheidomenos.” This has a little stronger meaning that “sparingly.” “Sparingly is kind of a nice word. “Pheidomenos” means in a miserly manner. The word refers to your attitude in giving, not to the amount. “Sparingly” gives you the wrong idea. What it says here is, “He who gives in a miserly manner.” It’s referring to the attitude. The rich men who gave at the temple gave sums of money much larger than the poor widow, but they gave in a “pheidomenos” manner. They gave in a grudging manner. They had great wealth left. They resented. They were very careful to give just exactly the tithe, just exactly the right amount. Whereas the woman came along and she, under a grace principle, gave all that she had because she had a different mental attitude.

Grudging “pheidomenos” giving connotes giving with strings attached: “I’m going to give in such a way that it ends up being legalistic giving. I’m going to give so God will give me more money. I’m going to give so He won’t take away what I have. I’m going to give to secure influence and praise from people. I’m going to give to secure some kind of favor from God. I want a boyfriend. I want a girlfriend. From now on I’m going to tithe.” Please don’t be carried away by the story by the character who gets up and says, “I was broke, so I decided to tithe, and (now) I’m so rich I don’t’ know what to do with myself.” God smiles at that, and if God has blessed you in His grace, it isn’t because you decided to tithe. Giving with strings attached is legalistic giving. Giving out of pressure is legalistic giving.

All of that is “pheidomenos,” and what it says here then is: “You shall reap.” The word “reap” here is “therizo.” This is in the future. It means, “In the future, you’re going to harvest.” Now what kind of harvest are you going to have? You’re going to have a miserly harvest just as you had a miserly sowing. If you sow in a legalistic manner, you will reap in a legalistic manner. Now what are the returns on legalistic giving? The returns on legalistic giving are never a blessing, even if all the bills get paid. Any time people give in a legalistic manner, there is no blessing.

This is what explains the fact that some churches have huge congregations and huge facilities and huge offerings. Yet if you could take a survey, you would find by and large the attitude of the congregation which is one that is not under a sense of blessing. They are under a sense of going through routines, under a sense of a few emotional kicks, and under a great sense of duty, because that’s the kind of legalistic giving that had been imposed upon them. But blessing, in terms of the joy such as the Macedonians reflected, blessing from giving out of their poverty but with tremendous joy: that you won’t find. A congregation that gives legalistically does not find blessing in return, no matter how great the amount is that you may give.

Now he contrasts this with legalistic giving. He says, “He who soweth legalistically (grudgingly) shall reap legalistically (grudgingly), but on the other hand, he who serves bountifully…” And here we again see the word “eulogia.” “… He who sows, he who gives his money in such a way that it is compatible with the grace principles and therefore is set and qualified to come out a blessing, he who gives as a blessing…” This has a little different expression because it has a preposition before it here. Before the word blessing it has this word “epi,” which means “upon.” “He who gives upon the concept of blessings (in the manner of blessings), giving in the manner to produce blessing (which is the opposite of legalistic giving): the result is blessings in return.” It’s a whole different ball game. “He shall reap also blessings upon blessings.” The harvest is in the future again, but it is now a harvest of blessing.

Corinthian giving in verse 5, we’re told, was to be on grace principles so that their giving could be a blessing. “Collect your money,” Paul said, “on the basis that it will be a blessing.”

Now in verse 6, he refers to the one who sows on the principles of grace for the blessings in grace. Grace giving connotes a generous attitude, free of strings, because you recognize that God is supplying the whole thing. You might be tempted to think that it is money, it is personalities, and it is programs that make a church go. That is the greatest mistake you could ever make. It is not money. It is not personality, and it is not programs that make a church operate and produce divine good. It is the grace of God from start to finish. When we operate in a way that is compatible with grace, then your money, your personalities in the congregation, and your programs will result in blessings, but never any other way.

The amount of the seed sown is not the issue in verse 6. How it is sown is the point—that it be in grace generosity or in a legalistic grudging manner—that it either be “eulogia” or it be “pheidomenos.” It’s one or the other.

So the way to promote your own welfare, if that’s what you’re interested in doing, is through generous use of your money for the purpose of producing blessing. You have these same concepts in Proverbs 11:24, Galatians 6:7, and Luke 6:38.

So what Paul says is, “Now this I say: He who sows in a legalistic miserly manner, even if it is a large gift, shall also harvest in a legalistic miserly manner—no blessings; and he who sows on the grace principle of blessings produced shall also harvest on the grace principle of blessing.” The principle is: what is given in legalism reaps legalism, and what is given in grace reaps grace blessings.

Now verse 7 says, “Every man…” The Greek word is “hekastos,” and it means each one of you individual believers. Whatever your financial condition may be, I’m talking to you. “… according as…” refers to whatever standards, whatever guidelines you have for giving. Every Christian according as, and here is the guideline you should have: “… he purposeth in his heart…” This is “proairieo.” It has the word “pro” at the beginning of it, meaning “before,” and then “airieo” means “to choose,” so the idea is “to choose beforehand.” You’re going to give on the basis of a previous motivation. It is in the perfect tense which means that the motivation was established in the past and now you live with it. Well, what establishes your motivation for giving? We’ve already learned that your motivation is in your mentality. It is doctrine that has affected your thinking, and that’s what motivates your present activity. The motivation is from the past on the basis of what you have responded to in the Word concerning giving, and it’s in the middle voice which means that the decision is your personal choice.

**The Heart**

So you give, whatever your condition is, on the basis of what you have purposed, what you have determined, where? In his heart. I trust that you have learned by now that the word “heart” (“kardia”) is the mentality of your soul. Your heart is your mind. Your heart is where you think. Your heart is where you function. Your heart is what guides you in what you do, and that is your mind, not your emotions. We use the heart in an emotional context, but the Scriptures speak of the heart as your thinking. It is with your heart that decisions are made, even such naturally as lead you to the righteousness of salvation. This is your mind functioning in a directive way, giving you guidance, and doctrine gives you the capacity and the guidelines for that. … You are to make a decision ahead of time, and this decision is not to be grudgingly. The Greek word here is made up of two words: “eklupes.” The word “ek” means “out of,” and “lupes” means “distress of mind. You are not to give out of a distressed mind—out of a pressure upon you. You are not to give when your mind doesn’t want to give. You are not to walk up to the box and say, “I hate to do this. I hate to give this money. I hate to give so much. I hate to give again. I gave two years ago, and here I am again facing this offering box. Every time I come to church, at Christmas and Easter, this box stares me in the face. I hate to give again.”

Now what God is saying is that if that is your problem, you’re not giving under grace giving because grace giving never annoys the giver. But if you’re annoyed by it, out of a pressure of mind, out of a “lupes,” forget it. Keep it. Or he says, “out of necessity.” This is another “ek” which means “out of,” and this is “anagke,” which means “out of compulsion of any kind, inner or outer, brought about by some situation.” Out of a compulsion of any kind. If you have a pressure upon you, inner or outer, brought upon you, it says, “Don’t give.” If you are going up to that box to give because you feel forced or pressured to do so, emotionally or otherwise, God says, “Keep your money.” Now let’s get the principle straight: Every believer, whatever your financial status, according to (or on the basis of) a purpose previously established in your mentality on the basis of doctrine, give, not grudgingly (that is, not out of a painful distress of mind), not of necessity (under some pressure of emotion or otherwise), for God (and this introduces the reason for this) loveth (“agapao,” the mental attitude love which does not connote an emotional quality), God loves (God is kindly disposed toward) this kind of a giver.

This is the kind of giving that God favors. It is present tense. It is God’s constant attitude. It is the only kind He wants. It is active. It is his personal choice. It is indicative. It is a principle stated. It connotes that God values above all else and He is unwilling to abandon it. What is that? God loves. What is God kindly disposed toward? A cheerful giver. A “hilaros” giver. That means a gladly, a gracious giver, a happy giver. Now this does not mean, as I know you have heard some preachers say, this is a “hilarious” giver. “Hilaros” looks somewhat like “hilarious.” This isn’t what it means at all. God is not telling you that He wants you to give like a drunken sailor, just hilariously. That isn’t what it means at all. As you have seen, He has very carefully outlined, “I want you to give from a purpose in your mentality that has been prepared by doctrine so that you understand grace principles, and you have capacity which only doctrine can give you, so that you love God, and therefore you are ready to express that love to God in your giving in a way that He can bless. He wants you to give as a happy giver—one who is passing … it along as a happy giver. How? If he is a grace-principle-oriented giver, and that’s the only way.

Can you see how few happy givers there are among God’s people? Can you see how few people can fulfill this requirement of God? God says, “I love the people who can come and give to me in a happy way, without any pressures of compulsion upon their minds, without any resentment in their mentality to give, without any emotional demands upon them from the outside, but simply the emotions that God the Holy Spirit stirs up within us to compel us to give.

Paul says in verse 7, “Each one according as he hath determined, by means of his heart (his mentality), so give, not reluctantly under pressure, not from compulsion, for God keeps on loving a gracious giver. Here’s the principle which is taught: The decision for grace giving is made in the mind in a way free of resentment or a sense of compulsion which is the only giving God approves and accepts. I hope you will not waste your giving. I hope you will learn how to be a happy giver in the fullest sense of the grace tradition.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971