

## **II CORINTHIANS 8**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Corinthians chapter 8 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we move into II Corinthians chapters 8 & 9, we are moving into a section that deals with Christian giving!

Make no mistake about it, that is a very touchy subject, Christian giving.

Someone once said that the last thing to get saved in a Christian's life is their pocketbook!

Now, the reason we are uncomfortable with it is because of the abuse we see with some of the so-called Christian ministries.

They almost beg for money, like God is broke. And, if you think about it, if our God is broke, then He is not much of a God!

And I am sure you have heard them beg before. ***“If you don’t give to our ministry, we will have to go off the air. It costs lots of money to produce these shows and we need your help. If you don’t, then we will not be here!”***

Well, if it is that bad maybe God is closing the door and you should not be on the air.

I am not saying you can’t ask for money. What I am saying is we should not be begging for money or making people feel guilty so that they will give.

I hope I have never done that over the years.

If there is a need, I will let you know and that will be the end of it.

When we purchased this building, all I did was let you know what we were praying about, since our landlord closed the door on the building we were in, and then we waited to see what God was going to do.

The same with the radio tower. We got approval from the city to build the tower, I let the congregation know what we were doing and waited to see what God was going to do.

I don't think I shared about anything else over the last twenty-four years and all I can say is that God has always supplied our needs. He opened doors for us, and He has sustained us all these years and He will continue to do so.

If He doesn't, then I guess we close the doors. But I don't see Him doing that. But, no matter what, we want to be in the will of God and not outside of it!

And make no mistake about it, God is not broke, and He does not need our money. We have the opportunity to give back to Him what He has given to us, what He has blessed us with!

And what an honor, what a privilege that is. And what a blessing as we see what God can do as we give back to Him!

Now, keep in mind that one of the reasons for Paul's third missionary journey was to take up a collection from the Gentile churches to help those Jewish Christians living in and around Jerusalem.

It was not easy for them. When they came to Christ many lost their jobs, and their homes. They were also persecuted for their faith in Christ! Rome placed a heavy tax burden upon them and thus, many jobs were lost as a result of this as well. Lots of unemployment. And there was also a famine that hit the region.

So Paul was trying to help them out and in doing so, these Jewish believers would see the love that these Gentile believers had for them and hopefully see them come together as one in Christ!

So that is what we will be looking at here in these chapters, the example of the Macedonians to give, the example of Christ in giving, why we should give, how we should give, being open to giving, some principles and promises in giving!

And I am glad none of you have run away, it is an important section and there is Scripture to support the correct way we are to give!

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Corinthians chapter 8, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

## **II CORINTHIANS 8**

### **VERSES 1-5**

The Southern part of Greece was known as Achaia and that is where Corinth was located.

The Northern part of Greece was known as Macedonia and that is where the cities of Philippi – (Acts 16:12-40), Thessalonica – (Acts 17:1-9), and Berea – (Acts 17:10-15) were located.

Here Paul is using the churches in Macedonia as an example to the Corinthians on how they gave, even in their poverty, their great affliction, they gave “**according to their ability**” and even “**beyond their ability.**”

And when Paul speaks of their “**deep poverty**” he is conveying the idea that they had not simply gone through “**affliction**”; they had experienced a “**great trial of affliction**” and were in “**deep poverty**.” The word describes a beggar who has absolutely nothing and has no hope of getting anything.

And yet, even in spite of all the difficulties they were going through, Paul says “**they were freely willing**” to give, but to who?

The church in Jerusalem for these Jewish believers were hurting, there was a famine in the land, they were persecuted, and many lost their jobs because they came to Christ, they were even disowned by their families, as I have said!

Paul spoke of this in I Corinthians 16:1-4 as he said, “**Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.**”

Of our giving Hughes tells us, “The example of the Macedonians is practical proof that true generosity is not the prerogative of those who enjoy an adequacy of means. The most genuine liberality is frequently displayed by those who have least to give. Christian giving is estimated in terms not of quantity but of sacrifice.”

The key for the Macedonians and for us is that we first give ourselves to the Lord because as we do that, then our giving, be it money, our time, our gifts, our talents, will naturally flow from our lives.

If we don't give ourselves to the Lord, then it may flow for a time, but it will stop because it is coming from our hearts and not the heart of God and as soon as things don't go the way we want, it ends!

What an example these Macedonian believers were to not only the church in Corinth, but many others who heard of their love and for those who received this love! And, as we read this, it is an example to us!

### VERSES 6-8

Here we see that Paul's associate, Titus, was the bearer of a letter that we probably are missing, and this was to encourage the Corinthian Christians to actually give him the collection, then he would give it to Paul. He was supposed to make certain that they actually followed through on what they had intended to do earlier.

In other words, since they abound in all things, they should also abound in their giving, they should complete what they started in regard to this gift to the church in Jerusalem.

It is as James tells us, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”** James 2:14-18.

True faith is lived out in the life of a believer and it is manifested in many different ways. But the key to those things we do is the fruit of the Spirit, which is ***LOVE!***

VERSE 9

As you read this, we see from the context as well as how Paul has used the word “**grace**” in this passage, we know that Paul means, “**You know the giving of our Lord Jesus.**”

Paul is showing us the ultimate example of giving by looking at the life of Jesus.

Jesus was rich, He lived in Heaven, everything was His, He is the second person of the Holy Trinity, and yet, He emptied Himself of some of His Godly attributes, He became poor for us so that we can be rich in Him!

Now don’t think this richness is speaking of money, it speaks of the richness of our salvation, that we are a child of God, and all that is His is ours in Christ!

Paul put it this way in Ephesians 1:3-6, “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.**”

Thus, as we see what Jesus did, let Him be our example in our giving!

VERSES 10-12

Paul is reminding the Corinthian Christians that what they previously said that they would do, their desire and readiness to give, spoken of in I Corinthians 16:1-2, about one year to this letter, now, they *actually had to do it!*

You see, talk is cheap and now this collection that they started for the saints in Jerusalem a year ago, they needed to fulfill, they needed to put their words into action!

Barclay tells us, “The tragedy of life so often is, not that we have no high impulses, but we fail to turn them into actions.”

How true that is!

And here, Paul is saying that they need to give with a willing mind and not a hard heart!

We will discuss this more as we continue on in our study of II Corinthians, but when the issue of giving is brought up many ask, “*How much am I to give?*”

Paul’s principles throughout this letter and other letters remind us that there is no one answer to that question for every believer. This is a heart issue as we will see.

#### VERSES 13-15

Please understand that Paul is not saying, “*Sell everything you have and live in poverty*” as some would like to have you believe.

Let me make a few points here because this is so important, especially in the days we are living in.

First of all, the Corinthian Christians were not giving so that the Jerusalem Christians would get rich and lazy at their expense.

Paul was taking the collection so the Jerusalem Christians could merely survive.

The goal was not to **burden** the Corinthian Christians, nor was it to make it **easy** for the Jerusalem Christians.

You see, the church in Jerusalem was hurting and the church in Corinth was prospering and thus, they could easily help their brethren in Jerusalem without hurting themselves!

And here is the second point and listen carefully to what I am going to say. Paul is not calling for socialism or communism but caring for each other, so people are not starving or on the opposite end, people are not hoarding their wealth!

We are not called to all live at the same economic level, that no one is to be rich, that is not what the Bible teaches!

And when you really examine socialism and communism you will see that they are evil. The sharing here is at the command of the government and at the end of a gun. If you doubt that then look at Venezuela and how they took the guns out of the hands of their citizens several years ago and now the government is killing their unarmed citizens! That is not what Paul is speaking of.

You see, the difference between Christianity and Communism is that Communism redistributes wealth based on law and force; whereas Christianity is all about giving from the abundance of some to the needs of others based on love, which is voluntary and never mandatory. It is a heart issue as I have said, and we will see as we read through II Corinthians chapters 8 & 9.

Now in II Corinthians 8:15 Paul is quoting out of Exodus 16:18 and that portion of Scripture deals with the bread from heaven, Manna.

The point is simple, as Calvin points out, “All that we have is manna . . . And just as manna, which was hoarded to excess out of greed or lack of faith, immediately putrefied, so we should have no doubt that riches which are heaped up at the expense of our brethren are accursed and will soon perish and their owner will be ruined with them.”

That is the point. We don't save to horde our money, our resources, but we use them to help our brothers and sisters and to build up the Kingdom of God!



And for those who do hoard their money, some lose it, some die with a boatload of money and yet, they can't take it with them. But, for the Christian, to bless people and send those treasures on ahead is a tremendous blessing!

#### VERSES 16-24

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that Titus loves them as much as Paul himself did, that Titus is trustworthy just as Paul is.

This love and concern are what drove Titus to serve without having to be prodded or pushed.

We should not have to be prodded or pushed to serve; we should do it out of love. And yes, I guess there are times we do need to be prodded or pushed to serve, but then it should be easy, and we should serve in the body of Christ.

Now, in verses 18 through 22 Paul describes two other Christian brethren who would accompany Titus on his mission.

The first one is described in verses 18 through 21, and the second in verse 22.

Both are unnamed, so it's pointless for us to try and guess who they are.

Why aren't we told of who they are, isn't that important?

Remember, we are all servants of Christ, and what should be known is our love for the Lord, our love for people and our love in ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Having a good reputation is so important because as people read our lives, they are getting a picture of our God!

Then, in II Corinthians 8:23-24 we see that Paul is telling the Corinthians that when Titus and the brethren arrive, treat them well and give to them an offering that will reflect your love for the brethren in Jerusalem, this gift from the Gentile churches.

This would be proof to the surrounding churches of their Christian love.

That is the key, putting into practice that which you are, a child of God and as His child, minister His love to others, a love that is manifested in action!

Now we will be moving into II Corinthians chapter 9, and Paul will continue to speak on giving. And I do have to admit, like I said before, this is a touchy subject for me because I have seen the abuse.

Before I was saved my cousin and I went to a Catholic church and the priest informed us that if they didn't get more money, they would have to turn off the air-conditioning and this was in the summer in Arizona!

Talk about a turn off! Never went back!

Then Julie took me to her brother's church and the sermon that day was on giving. Again, I wasn't saved and I'm sure what he said was right on, my brother-in-law would not have remained at that church if he wasn't, but as soon as he started speaking on giving and money, I turned him off, tuned him out! Never went back!

Thus, you will never hear me pressure you for money or ask for money.

At times I will share with you what we are doing and if you want to give for that cause, great, if not, great, but that is about as far as it goes.

I truly believe that where God guides, God will provide, I have seen that over the years very powerfully.

Now in saying that, we cannot ignore the Scriptures that deal with giving and thus, we will look at this issue some more tonight and try to clear up any misconceptions about it.

## **II CORINTHIANS 9**

### **VERSES 1-2**

Here we see Paul once again speaking of the collection that was being received for the saints in Jerusalem, the Jewish believers.

Macedonia was to the north and in this region were the cities of Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica. Paul boasted of their willingness to give back in chapter 8.

Achaia was to the south and Corinth was located in this region.

It seems like the Corinthians started out well in putting together this gift for the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, but they have now stalled, they didn't finish this project they started even though Paul was boasting about their efforts at one time.

And maybe what we do see here is Paul being sarcastic about their giving. He may be saying, ***“I don’t even need to write this, reminding you about the collection, because you are already ready and willing to give, right?”***

Of course, if the Corinthian Christians were really as ready and willing as Paul seems to indicate, he really wouldn't need to write this at all.

### **VERSES 3-5**

Here we see Paul trying to spur the Corinthians on in their giving of this gift. To do this Paul sent some brethren down so they could, in a sense, get their act together. Paul didn't want the Macedonians to come and see them unprepared after Paul boasted of their giving. In fact, Paul wanted this collection completed before he got there.

We are told in I Corinthians 16:1-4, **“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.”**

I think we see here that Paul is continuing to be a little sarcastic as he says, *“You all are so ready and willing to give that I’m sure you would bring the collection to me. But in any regard, I’ll send the brethren to come pick it up. After all, I don’t want all my boasting about you to have been in vain.”*

And another very important point here is that Paul wanted them to freely give, not because they felt they had to and truly that should be our motivation as well.

It is as Redpath tells us regarding how God gives. He says, “When God gives grace, He does not reluctantly open a little finger and maintain a clenched fist full of gifts. I would tell you today that God’s hands are nail-pierced hands and they are wide open. This fountain of grace is always pouring itself out with no limitations on heavens side at all.”

God wants us to give like that, not because we have to but because we want to and the reality is, we get to give to God!

One more point here and that is encouragement or spurring people on in the work of God.

Think about it. In sports, in education, at our jobs, and many other things, we see the encouragement to go farther, to do better, except in the church. That should not be!

I do think it is important to spur people on, to encourage them in the work of God.

Paul tells us in Hebrews 10:24-25, **“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”**

I was initially spurred on by my pastor to teach a Bible study.

I was spurred on by a friend to be involved, to oversee the infant and toddler ministry and-so-on.

May we be encouraged to spur people on in the work of God, in their giving of themselves!

#### **VERSES 6-7**

Here we see Paul using a farming metaphor. And the idea is this. In farming you’ll only reap in proportion to how much you sow. You can’t sow five or six seeds and expect to harvest an entire field.

Think about that. If a farmer wants to hold onto his seed and he sows just a few seeds, then his harvest is going to be small, as I have said. Hoarding seeds is not going to benefit him, but it will hurt him in the long run. He will not bring in a big harvest!

But if he freely gives his seed, freely sows it, he may have nothing left in his hand for a time but when the harvest comes his barns will overflow with grain.

In Proverbs 11:24-25 we are told of this principle, **“There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself.”**

Also, in Proverbs 3:9-10 we are told, **“Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.”**

It makes sense when you think about it – God is a debtor to no man!

The principle found in nature holds true in the spiritual sphere as well!

Now we do see the abuse in many churches in regard to giving, as I have said.

Some may say, ***“Brother’s, sister’s, reach deep down into the pockets of the person in front of you and give till you can’t get no more!”***

No, Paul says, **“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart.”**

We are not to be manipulated into giving, ***“Brothers, sisters, reach deep down into your pockets and give till you can’t give no more!”*** but as God places upon your heart, you give.

Now the question is, ***“How much do we give? Is it a tithe or 10% of our income?”***

I don’t believe that our giving is a matter of mathematics, but it is a matter of the heart.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, **“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

Where is your treasure, hopefully in the Lord and that is where your heart will also be!

And really, if you wanted to follow the Law in regard to what you tithe, it is much more than 10%. It is around 23% of your income that you are to give. I don’t think many would give cheerfully in regard to that. And if you were forced to give, then, again, you would not give cheerfully.

And here’s the thing, legalism won’t produce cheerful giving but the very opposite. Only voluntary giving is what pleases God

How much should we give? That is between you and the Lord. The principle remains the same. If you give sparingly then that is what you will reap!

And think about it. Do you really think God wants us to give “**grudgingly**” or reluctantly? Of course not. God does not want us to give complaining as we do.

We are not to give “**of necessity**” or “**compulsion.**” Again, not being manipulated to give.

Imagine if I told Steve to go to all your homes to find out how much you were going to give next year to the church!

Now you may not want to look like a cheapskate so you put down more than you can afford. Or if you say too little, he may shake you down to give more, Steve is a big guy! Kind of a tithing mobster mentality!

Thus, each week as you write the check for the offering, you grumble, and mumble and complain because you were forced into giving. Don’t worry we don’t do that here!

You see, Paul tells us “**God loves a cheerful giver.**”

The Greek word that Paul uses for “**cheerful**” is HILAROS, and it is used only here in the New Testament and it is where we get our English word “hilarious”.

How much do you give? As much as you want! You see, God wants your giving to be with joy; cheerful, hilarious as you rejoice in what God is going to do as you give to Him!

It is as Morgan tells us, “It must be hilarious giving, giving out of the heart, because you love to give, not because you are bound to give.”

And let me say this. We need to remember that our giving goes far beyond money. It speaks of our time, our talents, and our gifts.

I look at this church and all the ministries that go on here and for the most part, no recognition for doing the work, they are just serving the Lord and blessing the people. They do it out of love for the Lord and their love for the people here!

Now, if you are serving in ministry complaining, feeling like you are forced to do it, then stop! You are not honoring God and you are not blessing the people with that attitude!

Jowett tells us, “Cheerful giving is born of love, and therefore it is a lover loving a lover and rejoicing in the communion. Giving is the language of loving; indeed, it has no other speech. ‘God so *loved* that He *gave*!’ Love finds its very life in giving itself away. Its only pride in possession is the joy of surrender. If love has all things, it yet possesses nothing.”

One more point here and hopefully this clarifies what we do here.

You may be wondering about our budget, how we plan things out.

I will just be honest with you; we don’t have a budget. We don’t say that we need this much money for this and that much money for that in the coming year, and plan accordingly.

That may drive some if not all of you crazy! ***“What do you mean you don’t have a budget? Every business has a budget!”***

We are not a business. We are not an organization. We are a living organism and we truly believe that where God is guiding us, He will provide for us and He has!

#### VERSES 8-9

Now as some read this, they have a hard time seeing how it fits in with our giving. I think what Paul is saying here is that we have a promise that, if a person really wants to be generous, God will see that he is given the opportunity.

And this word “**Grace**” is here used as a synonym for resources. God is able to supply us with resources so that we will not only have a sufficiency ourselves, but so that we will be able to share what we have with others and thus have an abundance for every good work.



Make no mistake about it. As we give God will reward us, but that should not be the motivation for our giving.

Sometimes God will reward us materially and sometimes spiritually but whatever the case, it is what we will need!

Interestingly enough, the word “**sufficiency**” in verse 8, AUTARKEIA (ow-tar’-ki-ah) in the Greek, can be translated “**contentment.**”

It is the same Greek word used in I Timothy 6:6 where Paul said, “**Now godliness with contentment is great gain.**”

Are you content where you are at now or are you complaining that you don’t have this, and you don’t have that?

Are you always trying to buy bigger and better, never satisfied?

If you are then you don’t know the joy of contentment, what it is all about.

Paul, in I Timothy 6:6-10 tells us, “**Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**”

And Paul said in Philippians 4:11-12, “**Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.**”

Paul was a man who knows what it was like to have everything and then to have nothing and in both cases, he was content!

You see, when you are content you are not working towards things, but you are serving the Lord and what a great place to be!

Now here in II Corinthians 9:9 Paul quotes Psalm 112:9. In doing so, please understand that Paul is not saying that our giving makes us righteous, but it does show we are righteous, that God has touched our hearts and our lives! And these righteous acts will endure forever!

This means that if we disperse kindness as a sower scatters his seed, we will be laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. The results of our kindness, like I have said, will endure forever.

#### VERSES 10-11

Here we see that Paul is quoting from Isa. 55:10 and is using it as a prayer for those who generously give to the suffering saints in Jerusalem that God would not only multiply it among the saints that receive it, but would also multiply it back to those who unselfishly gave it.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4:19, “**And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**”

God supplies us with what we need, and we don't hoard it, but we freely give it out and God will bring forth the fruit from your labors.

Now there are those Christians who freak out with this verse because they see it only speaking of succeeding. For instance, we are told from one article, “On July 27, 2009, the cover of “Sports Illustrated” featured an arresting image of Florida Gators quarterback Tim Tebow. The headline - “Tim Tebow: Man of Many Missions” - riffed on the way he’d created a fan frenzy with his unique blend of faith and football. The championship quarterback seemed poised to jump off the glossy cover with pursed lips that oozed determination and a simple Bible verse scribbled within the black grease underneath his eyes: “Phil. 4:13.” Tebow’s highly churched Southern fan base didn’t need to look up the passage. No, most of them knew it by heart: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (<http://bit.ly/2VcpV8b>)

The problem with some is that they see in this the prosperity gospel, that everything will be great, we will succeed in all things, nothing will go wrong.

But if you look at that verse, that is not what Paul is saying. When things go well, praise the Lord. When things fall apart, when there is a crushing defeat, you might say, praise the Lord. We can press on no matter what the world tries to throw at us because we are in Christ and He will supply all our needs and see us through!

Remember, Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter to the Philippians and he understood that no matter what, God will supply exactly what he needs for the situation that he is in!

As Dr. Eric Bargerhuff writes in *The Most Misused Verses in the Bible*, “[Philippians 4:13 is] not really about who has the strength to play to the best of their abilities in a sporting contest. . . . This verse is about having strength to be content when we are facing those moments in life when physical resources are minimal.”

Make no mistake about it, I don't want to limit what God can do. And never forget that our God will do far beyond what we can even imagine as Paul said in Ephesians 3:20-21, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”** I like that!

In his translation of the New Testament, J. B. Phillips carries the sense of this prayer here in II Corinthians. He wrote: *“He who gives the seed to the sower and turns that seed into bread to eat, will give you the seed of generosity to sow and, for harvest, the satisfying bread of good deeds done. The more you are enriched by God the more scope there will be for generous giving, and your gifts, administered through us, will mean that many will thank God.”*

#### VERSES 12-14

First of all, their giving helped the saints.

Secondly, their giving brought praise to God.

Thirdly, their giving showed that God was working in their lives.

And the fourth point is their giving would cause the saints in Jerusalem to pray for them.

You see, our giving is multifaceted!

As you look at the Scriptures you will see that helping the poor is something that is very important to God. We see that in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

First of all, let's look at a few Old Testament Scriptures.

In Deuteronomy chapter 15 we are told, **“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. . . . You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.’”** Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 10-11.

Make no mistake about it, there are those in need and can use a helping hand. And yes, there are those who are in greed, they don’t want to work, they just want to live off of everyone else. The Bible is clear on that, if you don’t work you don’t eat.

And please understand I am speaking of those who can work and refuse to work.

For those who can’t work, who can’t get a job for whatever reason, there is a need and we should help them out.

In Proverbs 19:17 we are told, **“He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, And He will pay back what he has given.”**

And in Proverbs 14:31 we are told, **“He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.”**

Now a few from the New Testament.

In Galatians 6:10 we are told, **“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”**

In Acts 20:35 we are told, **“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”**

In Matthew 5:42 Jesus said, **“Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”**

And John tells us in I John 3:17, **“But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”**

And Paul tells us in Galatians 2:11, **“They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.”**

And James sums it up for us as he tells us in James 2:14-18, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

Now, hopefully I have not made you feel guilty, that is not my intention. And I guess I should make it clear once again how we are to give. And I won't give you my opinion or what I think, but listen again to what Paul said, this is important.

He wrote, **“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”** II Corinthians 9:6-7.

That is the key in all that we do, in all that we give. We do so with a cheerful heart. We don't feel pressured. We don't feel compelled to give. If we do, we will then give grudgingly or because we have to.

God loves a cheerful giver, and may that be the way we serve the Lord and give to the Lord – ***CHEERFULLY!***

### VERSE 15

Why did Paul conclude his thoughts on giving by saying this?

And please understand that some do struggle with this because they don't see how it fits in with the giving.

But it does. You see, no matter how much we give, it pales in comparison with the gift that God has given to us.

Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”**

The gift of Jesus, the gift of our salvation that is found in Jesus is beyond words.

How can you fully explain it?

You can't, it is indescribable!

Jesus said in John 10:28, **“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”**

What more can you say but, ***“Praise the Lord!”***

I see Paul just ready to burst forth with excitement as he shares this with the Corinthian believers. What a wonderful gift He has given to us.

One writer put it like this as he wrote,

“**JESUS CHRIST**, *the gift of God’s love* to mankind, is an *unspeakable blessing*; no man can *conceive*, much less *declare*, how great this gift is; for these things the angels desire to look into. Therefore he may be well called the unspeakable gift, as he is the highest God ever gave or can give to man.” (Clarke)

Spurgeon wrote,

“Ah, how many times have I, for one, spoken upon this gift during the last forty years! I have spoken of little else. I heard one who said, ‘I suppose Spurgeon is preaching that old story over again.’ Yes, that is what he is doing; and if he lives another twenty years, and you come here, it will be ‘the old, old story’ still, for there is nothing like it.”

Spurgeon also said,

“If you preach Christ, you will never run short. If you have preached ten thousand sermons about Christ, you have not left the shore; you are not out in the deep sea yet. Dive, my brother! With splendour of thought, plunge into the great mystery of free grace and dying love; and when you have dived the farthest, you will perceive that you are as far off the bottom as when you first touched the surface.”

And I will close with this regarding these chapters on giving. We are told,

There is no such thing as a Christian Scrooge. Christians give. Generous giving is the province of a regenerate heart.

This is a call to be ready.

This is a call to be willing.

This is a call to be generous.

This is a call to merriment.