

17. Learning How God Rewards Us

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to minister to the needs of others. Paul and Timothy had encouraged the churches in Corinth and Achaia by sharing with them the example of the way that the churches in Macedonia had given to help meet the basic needs of the needy Christians in Jerusalem. In our topic today, we will see that Paul and Timothy continued to share about the topic of giving to the Lord. As a part of what they said, they explained how God rewards us for our giving. This is an important lesson that we want to help our children understand.

In 2 Corinthians 9:1-5, we read, “Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready; lest if *some* Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which *you had* previously promised, that it may be ready as *a matter of* generosity and not as a grudging obligation.” Here, we see that Paul wanted to give the Christians in Corinth and the surrounding area an opportunity to prepare their gift for the needy in Jerusalem in case they had not yet finished preparing that gift.

Paul had recognized the fact a year earlier that the Corinthians were eager to give to help the needy Christians in Jerusalem. In fact, they had been so excited that they had caused many other Christians to become excited and have a great desire to help the Christians in Jerusalem also. However, Paul realized that false teachers had accused him of trying to get the money for himself. As a result, Paul realized the need to remind the Corinthians of their earlier desire so that they would not be unprepared in case some of the other Christians from Macedonia came with Paul when he came to Corinth. Paul said that if such a thing happened that both he and the Christians of Corinth would be ashamed.

That was the reason why Paul had decided to send the brother mentioned in the previous chapter along with Titus when Titus returned to Corinth since they knew and had great trust in that brother. Since that brother was one of the men that was going to help take the gift of the churches in Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem, Paul thought his words of encouragement would be a great blessing to the Christians in Corinth. Paul liked to remind Christians of the words that Christ spoke about giving. Acts 20:35 says, “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.’” Paul knew that the Christians would experience a great blessing if they gave a generous gift to help the needy. At the same time, he wanted them to give because of the generosity in their hearts instead of feeling like they had to give to the Lord from an attitude of obligation.

As a part of his encouragement to give to the Lord for the needy in Jerusalem, Paul reminded the Christians of the way that God rewards us for giving. 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 says, “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. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: 'He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.'* In these verses, we are reminded that we reap as we sow. If we choose to sow very little, we will reap very little. The word that is translated “bountifully” comes from the word which means *to give a blessing*. If we sow generously, we can look forward to reaping a great blessing.

We also see that Paul told the Corinthians that giving was to be based on the attitude in their hearts. The word that is translated “purposes” means *to plan in advance in our heart*. Giving is not to be grudgingly. This means that it is not to be done with sorrow or grief. Giving is not to be of necessity. This means that it is not to be done because of the pressure of other people to give. Instead, God loves a cheerful giver. The word that is translated “cheerful” means that *we give with an attitude of joy*. We want to show our children by our example that it is a privilege to give to the Lord because of what He has done for us.

Paul also wrote that God was able to make all grace abound toward the Corinthians. This means that God was able to reward them for their giving by continuing to give to them so that they would have enough to continue giving to the Lord. Paul quoted Psalm 112:9 to remind them of the way that the Lord gives. That verse says, “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted with honor.” God supplies the needs of the poor who trust in Him. Then, in Luke 6:38, we see how Christ said that He gives when we give to Him with a joyful heart. That verse says, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” Here, we see that we cannot out-give the Lord. He will always supply our needs when we give with a joyful heart.

Paul went on to say in 2 Corinthians 9:10-11, “Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.” Here, we see that we need to make God our source. He is the One who provides the seed for those who plant crops. He is the One who provides bread for food. This is actually a quotation from Isaiah 55:10 where we read, “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, But water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater...” In the same way, God will supply what we need.

God will also multiply our gifts that we give back to Him. Paul told the Corinthians that God will increase the fruits of our righteousness. In Galatians 6:7-10, we read, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the

household of faith.” When we sow to the Spirit, we reap everlasting life. That is why we want to show our children by our example that we are looking for opportunities to do good to others, especially other Christians.

We also see that God enriches us in everything. This means that the Lord gives us spiritual blessings as well as supplying our physical needs. 2 Corinthians 9:12-15 says, “For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men*, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!” Our service for the Lord is a part of our worship of Him. Paul said that this worship was a way that other Christians could supply the needs of the saints in Jerusalem.

This would cause those saints to give thanksgiving to the Lord for supplying their needs. At the same time, the Corinthians could also be filled with thanksgiving because of the blessings that the Lord would bring in their lives. This is also true for our lives today. As a result, we can be filled with thanksgiving to God for the way that He is working in our lives. Ephesians 5:20 says, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We also can thank the Lord for the blessing of sharing with others.

Paul said that this collection for the saints in Jerusalem was also a proof of their spiritual life in Christ. In addition, their giving would also cause the needy saints in Jerusalem to give glory to God for the way that the Lord had worked in the lives of the Corinthians. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” The fact that the Corinthians had a desire to do good works by helping the needy saints in Jerusalem was an evidence of the fact that the Lord had worked in their lives.

We also see that the ministry was mutual. As the Corinthians shared their finances to help the needs of the Christians in Jerusalem, the Christians in Jerusalem would be giving prayers of thanks for the Christians in Corinth. Paul said that the Christians in Jerusalem would have a strong desire to get to know the Christians in Corinth because of their gifts. This reminds us of the fact that in heaven we will all be eager to meet Christians from other areas of the world because they have ministered to us as we have ministered to them. This concern for one another is the answer to the prayer of Christ in John 17:21 where we read, “That they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” As we help our children understand how God rewards our service to Him and to one another, our children will grow to understand our unity in Christ. Truly we can thank God for His indescribable gift. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand how God rewards us.