

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

2Co 9:6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ 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.

Certainly, these 3 verses have to be the heart of the principles of New Testament giving. At a personal level I have learned much about sowing and reaping in my garden. If I take good care of my garden, then I always reap more than I actually sow. The following are some verses relative to this idea of sowing and reaping. [Proverbs 3:9-10](#) says,

Pr 3:9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; ¹⁰ So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

[Proverbs 11:24-25](#),

Pr 11:24 There is *one* who scatters, yet increases more; And there is *one* who withholds more than is right, But it *leads* to poverty. ²⁵ The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.

[Proverbs 19:17](#),

Pr 19:17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.

[Proverbs 22:9](#),

Pr 22:9 He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.

[Proverbs 28:27](#),

Pr 28:27 He who gives to the poor will not lack, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

[Malachi 3:10](#),

Mal 3:10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you *such* blessing that *there will not be room enough to receive it.*

[Luke 6:38](#),

Lk 6:38 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."

[Galatians 6:7](#),

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

One of the great spiritual principles of the Christian life is that God blesses believers in proportion to how much they are willing to bless others. The principle here is very simple: if someone sows sparingly, they will reap sparingly, and if they sow abundantly, they will reap abundantly. Whenever a believer or

a church is willing to give to help meet the needs of other people, it is like sowing seeds, and eventually it will yield a spiritual harvest for those who have been willing to help. In simple terms, giving is sowing. What a believer genuinely and sincerely gives is never lost. One of the spiritual laws of sowing and reaping is that we never reap what we have sown immediately. The reaping, or what we can call God's blessing, is something that always comes later. Very often we have to give in faith and trust God to use our gifts as He chooses. As a general principle, a person's return is determined by the investment that they make. This is a principle that is taught repeatedly throughout the Scriptures.

Someone is going to ask a very legitimate question – *“Is it a proper motive to give in order to get something in return?”* The answer to that is “yes”. Why say that? Well, it is because both Jesus and Paul urged us to lay up treasures in heaven and to make wise investments. However, I would qualify that by saying that gaining treasures should not be our primary motive for giving to those in need. The primary motive is because it is a reflection of our love for other believers who are in great need. Notice what Paul said in [2 Corinthians 8:24](#),

2Co 8:24 Therefore show to them, and before the churches the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

Paul never intimated that the Corinthians should give to the believers in Jerusalem who were suffering so that they could get something in return. To the contrary, he says that it would be the **“proof of your love...”** [1 Corinthians 13:3](#) says,

1Co 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

It is just an opinion on my part, but giving without love as the motive is worse than not giving at all. On the other side of the coin, we are innately stewards of God's resources that He brings into our life, and therefore we are to use His resources wisely and for the proper reasons. Money is a spiritual tool that when used wisely will yield God's blessings in a person's life. The resources that God has given to us are not provided so that we can just indulge ourselves in whatever we want. That is the height of selfishness and would most likely be a reflection of where our heart truly is.

So, how does a believer properly lay-up treasures in heaven ([Matthew 6:19-21](#))? How do we give? Well, [2 Corinthians 9:7](#) provides some instruction in this area.

2Co 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Please notice that in this verse and those following that there is no mention of the tithe. Tithing is NOT a New Testament principle. In the Old Testament it was actually a tax to help support the priests, but it is never taught in the New Testament. It is taught in many Baptist churches, but there is no Scriptural basis for it.

Now, before we look at this verse, I want to add a crucial note to our understanding of this verse – God does not accept the gift of someone who does not want to give. This is a critical statement that should force each of us to carefully examine every gift that we offer to God. If for whatever reason an individual does not want to give for any number of reasons, then they should not give simply because God does not

want someone to give grudgingly or without an inner joy in doing so. This verse provides four specific principles for giving.

PRINCIPLE 1: The giver must “**give as he purposes in his heart**”.

The word “**purposes**” only occurs here in the New Testament and it indicates a kind of premeditated and predetermined course of action that is done from the heart voluntarily. Each of us have legitimate financial obligations that we must meet, so there has to be some kind of meaningful consideration before making a decision to give sacrificially. What this means is that a person should most likely do four specific steps to arrive at God’s will for giving.

- (1) **Evaluate the need.** If the individual does not believe that the need that is in question is legitimate for them to give, then they would be violating their own conscience in not being a good steward if they actually felt coerced or pressured to give. In this church no one will ever be pressured to give any kind of offering. In the nearly 21 years that I have been pastoring this church I do not know of one single time where we have ever taken up a special offering. The church has simply given what it felt like was an appropriate offering to give and we took the monies out of the general fund so that everyone was actually able to participate in the gift.
- (2) **Think about what should be given sacrificially.** Not every gift should be considered a sacrificial gift. For instance, I do not personally consider our normal offerings to the church to be sacrificial at all. They are just a normal part of our budget. Very often we may be challenged to help with a need sacrificially, but the amount that we give should not be something that is going to lead us into financial stress – far from it. If we are going to make a sacrificial gift, then we make sure that we will be comfortable with the amount. The last thing that we want to do is to actually give sacrificially and then later begin to complain about all of the hardships that it may be creating in our life. A sacrifice is a sacrifice. It means by its very nature that it is something that takes us out of our normal comfort zone – and it should if we are going to be good stewards of God’s resources.
- (3) **Make a deliberate decision about what should be sacrificed.** Be thoughtful, careful, unhurried, and purposeful in making a decision. If we will intentionally consider what we are giving sacrificially, then we can be deliberate about that decision. God does not want us to be constantly looking over our shoulder wondering if we did the right thing.
- (4) **Give exactly what God leads to give.** Once again, the amount is not the issue. The issue is doing what we believe God has called on us to do. In the past I have given you a kind of general headcount on what I believe are all of the actual conversions that are taking place through your gifts, as well as the impact to people you will never know and in places that you have never been. It is important to know that your sacrifices are not just being squandered away because the leadership of this church is being frivolous with your offerings.

PRINCIPLE 2: The giver must not give grudgingly.

The word “**grudgingly**” in the NKJV is translated “**not reluctantly**” in the NIV, ESV and RSV, as “**not reluctantly or sorrowfully**” in the AMP, and “**not with regret**” in the ISV. It is the Greek word “*lype*” and actually means “sadness”. It generally is translated as “**sorrow**” or “**grief**” in most of its other uses.

It is the idea that the giving is grievous to the individual. If that is the case, then certainly it is not a gift that is pleasing to God and not one that should be given. Dr. Vine says that it signifies pain of either body or mind, such that the giving is something that causes sorrow for the individual. If that is the case, then simply do not give. God does not want or accept any kind of grudge giving or reluctant giving. Think of it this way. Would you want to take a gift from someone who griped and complained about giving it to you, and how they really could not afford it? I doubt it. I certainly would not.

In the Jewish temple there were two chests for the giving of alms. The first chest was for that which was necessary or actually required by the Law. The second chest was for what was called the “freewill offering”. Much more is said in the Scriptures of the second chest and the second offering. The entire benefit and blessing of giving is completely lost when the individual does it with a grumbling heart. When a person grudgingly gives, it actually creates a very negative impact on them. Voluntary, sacrificial giving develops a tender heart that has both gratitude and joy in what it is doing. When someone gives grudgingly, it produces a kind of spiritual bitterness and resentment, and ultimately creates a hard heart in them.

If you are inclined to make a sacrificial gift reluctantly and with some kind of inward sorrow in what you are doing, or with regret, my strong encouragement to you would be not to give. It would be very inappropriate to always be mulling over your gift and whether or not you actually did the right thing, always regretting that you had to give up some money. If that happens, then in reality that person’s gift is unacceptable to God. In some cases, it may be because the believer’s heart is just not right with God. They may be failing to see the desperate needs that God wants them to be involved in helping with, and in reality they may have failed to recognize the sacrifice that Jesus Christ has made for them personally.

PRINCIPLE 3: The giver must not give out of “**compulsion**”, or “**necessity**”.

The word “**necessity**” (NKJV) is translated in many of the other translations as “**compulsion**” (NIV, AMP, ESV, NASB, ISV, RSV, NRSV). It is the Greek word “*ananke*” and implies to be constrained to do something. It is something that when it happens causes distress in the individual. It carries the idea of pressure being applied by external circumstances, or even a feeling of inward pressure – like everyone else is doing it, so I feel constrained that I have to as well. It is the “herd” mentality where an individual feels a kind of peer pressure. I watched a video once on this phenomena in which a person was placed in a group of people who were all pre-instructed to answer an obvious question with the wrong answer. So, when it came time for the individual to answer, he gave the same answer that everyone else did, even though he knew it was wrong. He felt the pressure of the group. Dr. Zodhiates says that the word implies a kind of compelling force as opposed to a genuine willingness to give. It is never right to feel forced to give, or to give because of what you may fear others may think about you. We should never give just to please someone. We should never give to be recognized or honored.

Much of the techniques that the televangelists normally use are a kind of high pressure sales pitch, and for that one reason alone they will never get one penny from me. Giving is not to be based on the pressure of emotional appeals or public embarrassment. It is a tragedy that the number one complaint of lost people is that they think that all the church wants from them is money.

PRINCIPLE 4: The giver must give cheerfully.

The word “**cheerful**” means “**joyful**”. It is the Greek word “*hilaros*” from where we get our English word “hilarious”, but the Greek word does not actually mean hilarious. Rather, it implies to do something with a cheerful state of mind. This is its only use in the New Testament and it has the idea that someone can give with a smile and with a readiness to do so. It is the idea that the individual is actually delighted to give and especially to make a sacrificial gift to someone.