

# A Cheerful Giver

2 Corinthians 9:6-8



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Responsively** 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; **not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:**

**ILLUSTRATE** One of the teachers at school was also in charge of the local "Poor Children's Fund". She asked all of her students to donate what they could to help these children, and for the parents of her children to help in this worthy cause. One little boy donated 3 cents to the Fund. When his daddy heard that he had donated so little, he began to chastise him. "Son, I know for a fact that your piggy bank is filled with money. Why would you give just 3 cents to the Poor Children's Fund?" The little boy said, "Daddy, the money I have in my piggy bank is to buy Charlotte something". Daddy asked, "Who's Charlotte?". "She's my girl friend", the little boy replied. The father said, "Son, that doesn't make sense! These poor children need to money we collect for them. Many don't have food or clothing, and winter is coming. Why would you hold your money back just to buy your girlfriend a trinket, when this is such a worthy cause?" The little boy replied, "Daddy, I know winter is coming. I'm saving money to buy Charlotte a coat, because the one she has is ragged and has holes in it".

**"And a little child shall lead us." (Isaiah 11:6)**

The message the Lord has put on my heart today is not primarily about money - though I will touch on the subject of money. The message is on **Giving**. The main phrase we will be focusing on is:

**"God loveth a cheerful giver"**

Let's take just a minute and look at each word in this little phrase.

**"God"** - the God of the Scripture, the Creator of all things. It is this **"God"** Who gives us all things. In fact, God gives us things that we rarely even recognize - but cannot live without. **The average heart will beat 36,000,000 every year, or around 2.52 billion times during a 70 year lifespan - and many of us live beyond that. The average respiration rate for a person at rest is 16 breaths a minute, 960 breaths in an hour, 23040 breaths per day. This comes to 588,672,000 breaths during a 70 year lifetime.** The God Who made you and loves you designed your heart and your lungs to do what they do *automatically* and whether you recognize or thank Him for it or not. Most people don't even realize the blessings that their Creator has lavished on them.

**"God loveth"**. The word translated **"loveth"** is the *Present Active Indicative* verb of the Greek AGAPAO (αγαπω ag-ap-ah'-o). This is the same word that we find in the beloved passage:

**John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in**

**him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

What's the difference between **"loved"** in **John 3:16** and **"loveth"** in **2 Corinthians 9:7**? *The tense of the verb is different.* In **John 3:16** it says **"God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son"**. This is *Past Tense*, showing that God poured out His love on the world when He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to the Cross. In **2 Corinthians 9:7** it says **"God loveth a cheerful giver"**. This is *Present Tense*, showing that God *keeps on pouring out His love on those who cheerfully give.*

When people who have received Grace are Gracious themselves, God sees this - and *keeps on pouring out His love on them.*

**"God loveth a cheerful giver"**. The word translated **"cheerful"** is the Greek adjective HILAROS (ἡλαρος hil-ar-os'), the word from which we get our English word **"Hilarious"**. HILAROS means **"to be cheerful, joyous, even hilarious, filled with mirth"**. God keeps on pouring His love out on the *hilarious giver*, the person who gives - not because they have to - but because they want to. The God Who made us gives - not because He has to - but because He wants to. He gives liberally. He gives joyously. And He wants us to give in like manner. It is unnatural - against all creation - to take and take and take and never give back.

The God Who gives all things richly to us is the same God Who designed our hearts. He designed us to be *communal*, that is, to live *together*.

Have you ever noticed that when God saves, He never saves *just one*. That's because God is love, and love demands that there be both a *giver* as well as a *receiver*.

When Adam sinned and brought spiritual death on us all, the Bible says that:

**Genesis 3:21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

God clothed them. He saves more than one. When the world was to be destroyed by Flood God did not just save Noah, but

**1 Peter 3:20** ... eight souls were saved by water.

God never saves just one! He always saves us in pairs, in groups. When God decided to save Israel from Egypt, He saved the whole nation.

**1 Corinthians 10:1-5** ... all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

How many of that First Generation of Israel were saved? **All of them**. How many of that First Generation of Israel

went into the Promised Land? **Only Joshua and Caleb**. Why? **Because the First Generation took and took, but never gave themselves to God. God loveth a cheerful giver. God is a cheerful Giver. Greed drove the First Generation of Israel to their deaths in the wilderness - and yet God still saved Joshua and Caleb**. God never saves just one!

On the Day of Pentecost Christ formed His Church, putting it together through the operation of the Holy Spirit of God. God never saves just one! Peter preached:

**Acts 2:38-39** ... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

and *three thousand* were saved on that glorious day by our glorious God Who is Himself a "**Hilarious Giver**". And what was the evidence that this Church was the Church of Christ? The Bible says:

**Acts 2:44-46** .. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

that the Church and it's citizens were not marked with

greed, but with giving. Love flowed among the members, and the Church grew mightily - **for God keeps on loving the cheerful giver.**

## **1. The Law Of Sowing And Reaping Applies To All Of Us**

Before Paul ever talks about giving, he talks about the Biblical Law of Sowing and Reaping. He says:

**FOCAL 2 Corinthians 9:6** But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

What you sow, you shall reap. King Solomon wrote:

**Proverbs 11:24** <sup>(NASB)</sup> There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want.

That just another way of saying, "**What you sow, you shall reap**". If you sow sparingly you shall reap sparingly. This is a very practical Law of God. Think about it.

If a farmer wants to receive a large harvest of corn, then he *must put a kernel of corn in the ground for every plant he wants, and high quality seed* if he wants a large return.

**ILLUSTRATE** I heard of a wealthy farmer who always bought three times the seed he needed to sow his fields.

The salesman asked him why he did that. The farmer replied, "**I give seed to my neighbors on each side of my farm. When the bees begin to pollinate my crops, I don't want them to bring pollen from lower grade seed on to my land. By giving my neighbors the best seed, I bring myself the best riches**".

Selfish people ruin their lives, and decrease the quality of the lives of those around them.

**ILLUSTRATE** There are a lot of benefits of getting older. One of the greatest things that I have learned is that life is only a blessing when you give it away. **I was listening to a young boy driving past me on the highway, his stereo turned up so loud** I could hear him three blocks away. Though the child may not realize it, his selfishness will turn again on him. Everyday conversation is approximately *55 decibels* while the threshold of pain is about 120 decibels. A jet airplane is 150 decibels, and a rocket engine is 180 decibels. Hearing experts have recommended that people should not be exposed to noises louder than *85 decibels* for extended periods of time, though many young people attend rock concerts and listen to the car stereo at just under *120 decibels*. Young people do not realize that hearing loss is *progressive*. As they abuse their ears and age, they lose the ability to comprehend high frequency sounds first, and may experience constant ringing in the ears - tinnitus - a gift from their musically selfish period. Loud music close to 120 decibels also *lowers your reaction time*. Test subjects listening to loud music endanger their own and others lives. At 60 mph, those listening to loud music traveled *an additional 66 feet*

before applying their brakes. Their selfishness may actually lead to their own deaths!

What you sow, you shall reap! It takes time for the harvest to bear fruit, but in time it will bear fruit - and selfish fruit is very bitter.

The joy of life only comes to those who *share their lives*. If you want to LIVE then you must GIVE.

Noted Psychiatrist **Carl Jung** once said "**About one third of my patients are suffering from no clinically definable neurosis, but from the *senselessness and emptiness of their lives.***" The life that is lived in selfishness - living for me and for today - is an empty life. **Dale Carnegie** said "**{Too many} are trying to thumb a ride through life - and the parade passes them by. So they rush to a psychiatrist with their petty, senseless, useless lives. Having missed the boat, they stand on the wharf, blaming everyone except themselves and demanding that the world cater to their self centered desires.**"

**ILLUSTRATE** There was a man I once knew called "**Biff**" (Of course, that's not his real name). Biff was you would call a "**chronic curmudgeon**". He knew his Bible backwards and forwards. The man could put a Pharisee to shame with what he knew of the Scripture. The only problem was, **what Biff knew he hoarded, and what he gave away you wouldn't want**. I asked Biff repeatedly to teach a Sunday School class. After all, with his knowledge of Scripture that would have been a

breeze. Biff refused, and always had an excuse as to why he couldn't help. You see, he *was available* to preach for me if I ever thought I needed him, but he was never interested in teaching something as mundane as a Sunday School class.

Rather than give of himself, Biff gave other things. He gave his Pastor headaches and heartaches.

Thirty seconds before I was to preach one Sunday Biff walked up to my podium and asked "**Why is the back door of the Church locked?**" I replied, "**Biff, I don't know why it's locked. Why don't YOU unlock it?**" He said, "**Well, I thought the PASTOR would know**", and walked away. On another Sunday a young child came forward at the hymn of invitation, professing Christ to be his Savior. That night Biff came to me and made a point of telling me that he thought that the child was "**too young to make such a decision**", and demanded that I not receive him into the Church - or else! On yet another occasion a young man who surrendered to the ministry under my Pastorate came to me and asked to be trained. We began to meet once a week, and I finally scheduled the young man to preach a "test sermon" one Sunday morning. At the end of the service Biff went to the young man and handed him a piece of paper. On that paper there were a number of hash marks, and underneath that Biff had written, "**You said *you know* 163 times**".

In time people stopped visiting Biff and his wife. You see, **there is no spiritual gift called "critic"**. Biff drove everyone and every thing away from himself by his critical, unloving nature. He eventually passed on into

glory, gone to be with the Lord, but Biff taught me a valuable lesson. You see,

**It's what you *sow* that multiplies, not what you keep in the barn. It's not what you *know* that blesses you, it's what you *sow* that blesses you. If you sow much for the Lord, you will be blessed much. If you sow little, you will be blessed little.**

As the Apostle Paul prepared to leave the Church at Ephesus he told the Pastors there:

**Acts 20:35 .... laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.**

**It is more blessed to give than to receive.** It blesses others, and it blesses you. When I am walking down the hallway of the hospital I try to make eye contact with everyone who will look my way, *smile*, and say "Good Afternoon" or "God Bless you". When I walk into a store and notice the clerk is wearing a name tag I smile, and say "Isn't it a beautiful day, \_\_\_\_\_", using their name. You would be amazed how many people smile back, and we have a short, but pleasant conversation. If you see someone walking their dog smile and remark "**Isn't that a beautiful creature?**" or "**What a pretty dog**". When you do that the owner will stop, pet the dog, and smile at you. You make yourself, the owner, and the dog happy - all by uttering a sweet and graceful word.

Someone once said "**Doing good to others is not a duty. It is a joy, for it increases your own health and**

**happiness**". The Great Statesman **Benjamin Franklin** said "**When you are good to others, you are best to yourself**".

If you are children of God's Grace, then sow Grace. Be nice. Do good to others, whether your enemies or your friends. The Lord Jesus said:

**Matthew 5:44-45 .... I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**

Jesus was not giving this command to love and do good - to give graciousness - for *their* sake. He was giving this command for *our* sake. When I do good to those who do not deserve good, then that good blesses *me* regardless as to what happens to the other.

God is love. God is in me. When I give love, God blesses me. When I give of myself in obedience to Him, God increases my faith. Give, dear Christian, for your own sake, if not for the Lord's!

**2. Let Your Giving - Be It Time, Talent or Tithe -  
- Be Free And Filled With Joy**

**FOCAL Read Responsively 2 Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a**

cheerful giver.

God does not want to force anything from your hands. The Bible says "**Every man according as he hath purposed in his heart**". God has given to you, and wants you to give freely to Him - from your hearts.

**Word Study** God does not want you to give **grudgingly**. This is actually two words in the Greek. The Preposition EK (εκ ek), which means "**out of the source of**". The second word is the noun LUPE (λυπη loo'-pay), which means "**affliction, sorrow, pain, or heaviness**". The Bible says "**give as you have purposed in your heart - not out of the source of heaviness, sorrow, pain or affliction**". To make sure that we understand this the text goes on to say "**not out of the source of heaviness, nor of necessity**". The word translated "**necessity**" is ANAGKE (αναγκη an-ang-kay'), which means "**a custom or a law of duty**"

God doesn't want you to give *out of guilt*. Nor does He want you to give *because you feel forced by conscience or by Law*. God wants your giving to come from your hearts. He wants your giving to be an *overflow of grace from your hearts*.

God told His Old Testament people:

**Exodus 25:2** **Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.**

**Exodus 35:5** **Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,**

God did not want people giving to Him out of an unwilling heart. Only those who believed in Him were to give to Him. The Lord never wants to coerce giving from anyone.

God wants us to freely give to Him - not because He needs our giving - but because *we need our giving*.

**a** **We need to give, or else evil will prevail**. A German woman told the following story. She said that a group of Jews - boys, girls, men and women, were made to march into a wooded area outside of her town. There the Jewish prisoners were ordered to dig a large hole. When they finished digging the Nazis machine guns mowed down the group like wheat, and their corpses were pushed into the makeshift grave.

One small boy was not hit with machine gun fire. When the machine guns began firing he fell into the grave alongside of his bullet riddled parents and pretended to be dead. The boy was able to breath in the shallow grave, and he lay quietly in death's embrace until darkness fell. Sickened and exhausted the ten year old dug his way out and ran into town to find help. When he stopped at the first house the woman who answered the door recognized him as one of those marked for death. She screamed, telling him to go away, and slammed her door shut. Wandering from house to house it seemed as if no

one would help him. Dr. David Jeremiah said:

"Something inside seemed to guide him to say something that was very strange for a Jewish boy to say. When the next family responded to his timid knocking in the still of the night, they heard him cry, 'Don't you recognize me? I am the Jesus you say you love!' After a poignant pause that must have seemed like an eternity to the little boy, the woman who stood in the doorway swept him into her arms and kissed him. From that day on the members of that family cared for that boy as though he was one of their own."

America is drowning in greed, with this generation being the "entitlement generation".

Take, take, take, and eventually there will be nothing, nothing, nothing. Evil takes. Good *gives*. Selfishness takes. Grace *gives*. Satan takes. God *gives*. The worldly take. The pilgrim *gives*.

If we are going to defeat evil, we must learn to give as Jesus gave.

**b We need to give, or else the Gospel will not progress and the Church will not grow.** The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians:

**CONTEXT** 2 Corinthians 9:1-2<sup>NIV used here for clarity</sup> There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. 2 For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians,

telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.

that there was no need for him to talk to them about their giving. The Corinthians were great at giving, so much so that Paul boasted about their giving to the Macedonians, and this in turn stirred them to action.

**Giving is contagious, and greed is contagious. Which would you rather spread?** If you want to grow the Church and promote the Gospel, quit saying "What's in it for me?" and start asking "What can I do?" Once you start giving, others will be stirred to action by your example. Give willingly of your Time, Tithe, and Talent.

**ILLUSTRATION** Baptist preacher Dr. George W. Truett, was helping a struggling congregation raise money for their church building. They still needed \$6500. Truett found the response weak. With only \$3000 pledged he said in exasperation, "**Do you expect me to give the other \$3500 needed to reach your goal? I'm just a guest here today.**" Suddenly, a woman near the back stood. Looking at her husband seated on the platform recording pledges, she said in a shaking voice, "**Charlie, I wonder if you would be willing for us to give our little home? We were offered exactly \$3500 cash for it yesterday. If the Savior gave His life for us, shouldn't we make this sacrifice for Him?**" The husband said, "**Yes, Jennie, I was thinking the same thing.**" Turning to Dr. Truett, he said, "**Brother Truett,**

**if it's needed, we'll raise our pledge by \$3500."**

Silence reigned for a few moments. Then some of the folks began to sob. Those who fifteen minutes earlier had refused to do more now either added their names to the list or increased their donations. In a short time, their goal had been achieved, and Charlie and Jennie didn't have to forfeit their home. Their willingness to sacrifice had stimulated others to similar generosity.

**C We must understand that we *cannot* out give God.**

**ILLUSTRATE** A believer was once asked why he gave so much to the Lord's work. He said, **"Oh, as I shovel it out, He shovels it in, and the Lord has a bigger shovel."**

Dear Christian, you cannot out give God. The Bible says:

**CONTEXT 2 Corinthians 9:8-9** **And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.**

that **God is able to make ALL GRACE** abound to you. You cannot out give God.

God gave you the greatest gift at the point of your salvation - eternal life. Eternal life cannot be worn away or destroyed by time. It is yours if you have called upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

**If God provided your needs at salvation, and God wants you to give cheerfully, will He not provide your needs as you give?**

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

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"**God loveth**". *Present Active Indicative* verb of the Greek AGAPAO (αγαπαω ag-ap-ah'-o) \_\_\_\_\_

"**God loveth a cheerful giver**". The word translated "**cheerful**" is the Greek adjective HILAROS (ἠλαρος hil-ar-os'), \_\_\_\_\_

### **1. The Law Of Sowing And Reaping Applies To All Of Us**

2 Corinthians 9:6; Proverbs 11:24; Acts 20:35; Matthew 5:44-45 \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. Let Your Giving - Be It Time, Talent or Tithe - Be Free And Filled With Joy**

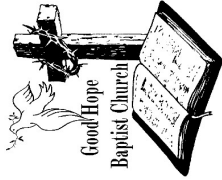
2 Corinthians 9:7; Exodus 25:2; Exodus 35:5; 2 Corinthians 9:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:8-9 \_\_\_\_\_

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**a** We need to give, or else \_\_\_\_\_

**b** We need to give, or else \_\_\_\_\_

**c** We must understand that we \_\_\_\_\_



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