

Stewardship: Living Generously with Time, Talents, and Treasure (2 Cor. 9:6-8)

MAIN IDEA: *Everything we have belongs to God, and spiritual maturity is seen in joyfully stewarding all of life for His purposes and the good of others.*

CONTEXT: *Jesus is the best example of generosity and stewardship. He gave His time, His strength, His compassion, His truth, and ultimately His life. As 2 Cor. 8:9 shows, though He was rich, for our sake He became poor. We do not give to earn God's favor. We give because Christ has already given Himself for us. In 2 Cor. 8-9, Paul urges believers in Corinth to make a financial contribution to needy Christians in Jerusalem. So yes, this includes money very clearly. But Paul's teaching goes beyond fundraising. He is showing the Corinthians what gospel-shaped generosity looks like. The issue is not whether they will give. The issue is how they will give and what kind of heart their giving reveals. Maturity is not only seen in what we know, say, or feel. It is also seen in how we use what God has placed in our hands. A growing Christian begins to understand that my time is not really mine. My abilities are not really mine. My money is not really mine. My life belongs to God. The whole Bible teaches this perspective. 1 Chron. 29:14 reminds us that everything comes from God, and we only give back what already belongs to Him. Proverbs 3:9 teaches us to honor the Lord with our possessions. 1 Cor. 16:2 shows planned, regular giving in the life of the church. Matthew 23:23 reminds us that giving must be joined with justice, mercy, and faithfulness. So this sermon is about money, yes — but not money only. It is about a whole life of stewardship.*

1. MATURE BELIEVERS UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF GENEROUS

STEWARDSHIP (v. 6)

- A. **Paul gives a simple principle: sowing and reaping** — The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows generously will also reap generously. A farmer who scatters very little seed should not expect a large harvest. A farmer who sows generously is acting in hope, trust, and expectation.
- B. **Generosity is an act of faith** — In God's economy, giving is sowing. A stingy heart says, "I must hold tightly, because if I let go, I may not have enough." A generous heart says, "God is able to use what I release for His purposes."
- C. **This applies to more than money** — It also applies to time, energy, abilities, attention, encouragement, hospitality, and acts of service. People who pour themselves out find that God uses it in lasting ways.
- D. **The whole Bible supports this view of stewardship** — Ex. 1 Chron. 29:14: David says everything comes from God, and we only give from what He first gave us. Proverbs 3:9: We honor the Lord with our possessions, not just with our words. Stewardship begins with the realization that none of this belongs to us.
- E. **Application:** *Am I living like an owner or a steward? Do I treat my money, time, and abilities as mine to protect, or God's to use? Am I sowing generously into the kingdom of God, or only giving leftovers? A person says they love the church, but they give it no time, no service, and no financial support. That is sparse sowing.*

2. MATURE BELIEVERS GIVE WILLINGLY AND CHEERFULLY (v. 7)

- A. **Giving is to be deliberate** — Paul says each person should do as he has decided in his heart. Christian giving is not to be careless, impulsive, or thoughtless. It should be prayerful, intentional, and settled before God.
- B. **Giving is not to be grudging** — Paul says not reluctantly or out of compulsion. God is not honored when we give while inwardly resenting it.
- C. **God loves a cheerful giver** — Cheerful giving is giving with gladness, not because giving is painless, but because God is worthy and others matter. A cheerful giver

understands: "I am not losing by giving to God." Cheerfulness does not mean pretending sacrifice costs nothing. It means the heart is glad to be used by God.

- D. **This is where tithing needs to be addressed** — The New Testament emphasizes generous, willing giving, not bare minimum legalism. 1 Corinthians 16:2 shows believers setting aside money regularly and intentionally. The whole Bible consistently presents giving to God as normal for His people. So if a Christian is not giving regularly to the church, that is not spiritual maturity. That is disobedience or immaturity that needs to be addressed. Tithing should not be treated as some extreme idea. It is a baseline discipline of honoring God with what He has given.
- E. **Jesus warns against hollow giving** — In Matthew 23:23, Jesus rebukes those who tithed outwardly while neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness. God cares not only that we give, but how and why we give. It should be w/a God-honoring heart.
- F. **Application:** *Do I give intentionally or only occasionally? Do I give joyfully or grudgingly? Am I honoring the Lord with my income? If I am not tithing to the church, what is that saying about my heart and priorities? Am I generous only when it is convenient? Some people will finance hobbies, subscriptions, eating out, vacations, and comforts, but act like giving to the church is impossible. Some people will gladly give hours to entertainment, but almost no time to ministry. Cheerful stewardship asks: "Lord, how can I honor You first?"*

3. MATURE BELIEVERS TRUST GOD TO SUPPLY WHAT THEY NEED FOR

GENEROUSITY (v. 8)

- A. **God is able** — Paul says God is able to make **every** grace overflow to you. The foundation of generosity is not our abundance, but God's ability. We do not give because we feel financially invincible. We give because God is worthy and faithful.
- B. **God supplies so that His people can abound in good works** — Paul says so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work. God does not promise to make us rich. He does promise to supply what is needed for faithful obedience and fruitful generosity.
- C. **Generosity flows from trust** — Fear says, "If I give, I will not have enough." Faith says, "God knows what I need and will provide what is necessary for obedience." This includes not only money, but strength, time, wisdom, patience, and energy. Sometimes people do not serve because they assume they have nothing to offer. Paul both pushes us to trust that God can supply grace for what He calls us to do.
- D. **Stewardship is for eternal impact** — It is not for maintaining comfort. The point is excelling in good works. Maturity asks, "How can I preserve as much as possible for myself?" but, "How can what God gave me make an eternal difference?"
- E. **Application:** *Do I trust God enough to obey Him with my resources? Am I afraid to give, serve, or commit because I am acting as if everything depends on me? What would generosity look like in my schedule, abilities, money, and energy if I truly believed God was able? Am I stewarding my whole life for God, or just giving Him scraps? Am I using my schedule, skills, and resources for eternal impact? Is my life marked more by possession or by surrender?*

WHAT IS TRUE & WHAT TO DO: *God is the owner; we are the stewards. Spiritual maturity shows itself in a life that gives freely, gladly, and faithfully with what God has entrusted to us. So steward your time intentionally, use your talents to serve others, and give financially with joy and faith. Ask yourself: Am I living like an owner or a steward? A growing Christian stops saying, "This is mine," and starts saying, "This belongs to God, and I want to use it for His glory and the good of others." That is true stewardship: not merely giving God a portion, but recognizing that all of life is His.*