

Coming Home - part 1 – Season of Giving not Getting

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BIG IDEA – It's better being a giver, not a getter.

scripture focus - Acts 20:35 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/act.20.35.NLT>

“And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should **remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”**”

“No one wants to actually BE the Grinch! It's funny for sure, entertaining that's a cinch, but no one, not any, wants to be a Grinch.”

And no one wants to be an **Ebenezer Scrooge** either!

A big part of adjusting our attitudes in gratitude is our views about giving and generosity. **It is far better to be a giver, than a getter.** However, the topic of finances and the new money, TIME, can be a touchy subject for some. The simple pushback is, “I can't give because I don't have enough.” Without going all “prosperity gospel,” let's look at God's reasoning about generosity.

I only need “just enough!” I only want just enough for me and my family. Thus, by the laws of generosity, I will barely have enough for me and my family.

And it's not just about money anymore. Time is the platinum of resources post pandemic!

It is widely known that Jesus talked about money more than any other topic, certainly more than he talked about sin and hell. Maybe Jesus' words about loving money causes sin and has the capacity to feel like you're living in or it will send folks to hell.

““No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.**” **Luke 16:13 NLT** The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, heard all this and scoffed at him. Then he said to them, “You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God.” **Luke 16:13-15 NLT**

<https://bible.com/bible/116/luk.16.13-15.NLT>

Look at how Paul challenges a wealthy community of faith, using positive peer pressure to simply help them do what is right. He leads with their reputation, not of being cheap, but of being bold.

Do we need to be reminded to be bold in our generosity?

Context, context, context – every verse has a story behind the words.

Paul builds his case by building the people up first!

The encouragement

2 Corinthians 9:1-2 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/2co.9.1-2.NLT>

“I really don’t need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving.”

1. **You’re smart and informed people!** You already know about what’s happening.
2. **Your passion and motives are amazing!** I know you’re eager (4288 **prothymía** (from 4235 /práos, "before, in front of" and 2372 thymós, "passion") – properly, "before-passion" referring to someone who is already being willing, i.e. an eager disposition which is pre-inclined (already "ready and willing").
3. **I’ve been talking, even boasting about you to others** (2744 **kauxáomai** likely comes from the root, auxēn("neck"), i.e. what holds the head up high (upright); figuratively, it refers to living with God-given confidence.)
4. **Your red-hot excitement is contagious!** Zeal (**zēlos** (an omamopoeic term that mimics the sound of water bubbling over from heat and perhaps derived from 2204 /zéō, "to boil") – properly, **burning emotion** (inner feeling boiling over, "**boiling from heat**," J. Thayer); (figuratively) something very **fervent ("red-hot") as with Spirit-fueled zeal** to serve the Lord. This root (zē-) is used both negatively ("jealousy") and positively ("zeal") depending on the context.)
5. **Others are dying to follow your lead! (erethizó: to stir up)** Macedonian believers.

The admonishment

Then Paul slaps on the admonishment!

2 Corinthians 9:3-5 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/2co.9.3-5.NLT>

“But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that **your money is all collected. I don’t want to be wrong in my boasting** about you. **We would be embarrassed**—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some **Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren’t ready after all** I had told them! So I **thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready.** But I **want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly.**”

1. **Just to be sure, I’m sending the “brothers.”** And I’ve told them, all you have to do is pick it up, because it’s already been collected.
2. **I know you don’t want me to look like a liar!**
3. **WE** would be embarrassed if you didn’t keep your promise.
4. If some of those Macedonian folk came with me and found out, you weren’t all that I said you were... well that would be bad.
5. Like I wrote, the “brothers” are coming **ahead of me.**
6. Oh, and let’s remember, **you want to give it, because you are givers** (a eulogia: praise, blessing!) We don’t want any whining, complaining or **coveting!** (pleoneksía (a feminine noun derived from 4119/pleiōn, "numerically more" and 2192 /éxō, "have") – properly, the desire for more (things), i.e. lusting for a greater number of temporal things greater than that go beyond what God determines is eternally best (beyond His preferred-will, cf. 2307 /thélēma); covetousness (coveting).

Paul gives them an agricultural fact, **you plant little, you harvest little, you plant a lot – you harvest a lot.**

“Remember this—**a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.** You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.” **2 Corinthians 9:6-8 NLT**

<https://bible.com/bible/116/2co.9.6-8.NLT>

Paul quotes Psalm 112:9 to the churches in Corinth. (and he doesn’t feel the need to quote all of it).

2 Corinthians 9:8-9 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/2co.9.8-9.NLT>

“And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. **As the Scriptures**

say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.""

Psalms 112:9 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/psa.112.9.NLT>

"They share freely and give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will be remembered forever. They will have influence and honor."

What is the context of Psalm 112?

On the return from the captivity, **Ezra writes Psalm 112 and talks about the generosity and promise of blessing over the people because of their sacrificial, extravagant gifts.** They came out of 70 years in exile and somehow were able to keep or rebuild their wealth.

"When they arrived at the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, **some of the family leaders made voluntary offerings toward the rebuilding of God's Temple** on its original site, and **each leader gave as much as he could.** The total of their gifts came to 61,000 gold coins, 6,250 pounds of silver, and 100 robes for the priests."

Ezra 2:68-69 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/ezr.2.68-69.NLT>

Then Paul gives them the results of Generosity?

A quick list of who gets what!

Who Gets What?

From Scott Morton, Navigators 4:10 Training School

What does God receive?

11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

9:11-12 Thanksgiving to God

9:13 Praise

The Receiver gets...

9:12 supply needs of God's people

**Main
Principle #1:**

**People need
to give!**

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his

righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God." **2 Corinthians 9:8-11 ESV** <https://bible.com/bible/59/2co.9.8-11>.ESV

The Giver

- 9:8 (a) Grace abound
- 9:8 (b) having all you need
- 9:10 (a) seed to the sower
- 9:10 (b) bread for food
- 9:11 Made rich, to be generous

"while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you." 2 Corinthians 9:14 ESV <https://bible.com/bible/59/2co.9.14>.ESV

- 9:14 Prayers and surpassing grace

Being a giver not a getter, means that it helps us:

- **Exemplify gratitude.** "Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth." 1 Timothy 6:6 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/1ti.6.6>.NLT
- **Stay humble.** One eye on God, one eye on others. "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Philippians 2:3-4 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/php.2.3-4>.NLT
- **Curb our own appetites.** "Just as Death and Destruction are never satisfied, so human desire is never satisfied." **Proverbs 27:20 NLT** <https://bible.com/bible/116/pro.27.20>.NLT
 - o "I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. **There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them.**" – C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

- **Grow our faith.** “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”

Matthew 6:31-33 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.6.31-33.NLT>

- **Mimic God.** ““For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/jhn.3.16.NLT>

Do I hear the whisper of the Holy Spirit challenging me, almost daring me to trust God to be more generous? Like I said, this is far more than a money talk. I would much rather us hear the voice of the Spirit of God and obey than to feel guilty or pressured to be generous.

Recognizing that God is trustworthy and good, would you be willing to step out this season and be generous?

Be generous with your words – bless others.

Be generous with forgiveness – reconcile with someone.

Be generous with time and money – be a giver not a getter.

NOTES

[CRU – Blogpost by Jenny Bell](#)

- 1) Your generosity will grow when you give.
- 2) God will not force you to give.

Tithing Pros and Cons

There is a subculture in the church that believes that God will allow the devil to steal what you don’t give to him in the tithe. These ideas are out of handpicked, out of context scriptures mostly in the book of Malachi, Israel’s last know Old Testament Prophet. I’m not here to judge but these “[tither’s rights](#)” are propagated in many prosperity gospel circles.

There are also well known and respected Pastor/Teacher’s that absolutely believe that tithing (giving 10%) is not just commanded but is a verifiable means of extravagant blessing. Robert Morris is one of my favorites. He speaks about the [Principle of First](#). Does Robert and his wife, Debbie, live extravagantly? No, not really. Do they give extravagantly? Absolutely.

What is the point in both of these discussions? One is about getting what’s yours, the other is about an abundance of blessings that enables one to grow in their generosity.

There are others that do not believe that the [Bible requires Christians to tithe](#), but it doesn't mean Christians should not be generous in giving.

A great, balanced resource is from Dave Ramsey, [7 Common Questions About Tithing](#). Ramsey has been giving financial advice for over 20 years.

“Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.” Deuteronomy 8:18 NLT
<https://bible.com/bible/116/deu.8.18.NLT>

Scriptures

Luke 6:38 NIV <https://bible.com/bible/111/luk.6.38.NIV>

“**Give, and it will be given to you.** A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.””

Acts 20:35 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/act.20.35.NLT>

“And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should **remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’**””

2 Corinthians 9:1-5 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/2co.9.1-5.NLT>

“I really don't need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving. But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don't want to be wrong in my boasting about you. We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren't ready after all I had told them! So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly.”

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“Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.” For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. As a result of your ministry, they will

give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!"

Psalms 112:1-6 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/psa.112.1-6.NLT>

"Praise the Lord! How joyful are **those who fear the Lord and delight in obeying his commands. Their children will be successful everywhere; an entire generation of godly people will be blessed. They themselves will be wealthy**, and their good deeds will last forever. Light shines in the darkness for the godly. **They are generous, compassionate, and righteous. Good comes to those who lend money generously and conduct their business fairly.** Such people will not be overcome by evil. Those who are righteous will be long remembered."

Psalms 112:9 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/psa.112.9.NLT>

"They share freely and give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will be remembered forever. They will have influence and honor."

Questions

- Q: Agree/Disagree – is it better to be a giver than a getter?
- Q: Would you be willing to share your thoughts about giving?
- Q: Do you have a personal story of God's faithfulness you could share?
- Q: Why do you think money is so addictive?
- Q: What is the difference between tithing and generosity?
- Q: What do you think of Paul's "methods" for getting Corinth to fulfill their promise?
- Q: In Paul's writing, the giver far out-receives the benefits, what do you think about that?

Diving Deeper into God's Word

Strong's Concordance

2 Corinthians 9:1

#4288 **prothymía** (from 4235 /práos, "before, in front of" and 2372 thymós, "passion") – properly, "before-passion" referring to someone who is already being willing, i.e. an eager disposition which is pre-inclined (already "ready and willing").

#2744 **kauxáomai** likely comes from the root, auxēn("neck"), i.e. what holds the head up high (upright); figuratively, it refers to living with God-given confidence.)

#2205 Zeal (**zēlos** (an onomatopoeic term that mimics the sound of water bubbling over from heat and perhaps derived from 2204 /zēō, "to boil") – properly, **burning emotion** (inner feeling boiling over, "**boiling from heat**," J. Thayer); (figuratively) something very **fervent ("red-hot") as with Spirit-fueled zeal** to serve the Lord. This root (zē-) is used both negatively ("jealousy") and positively ("zeal") depending on the context.)

#2042 **erethizó: to stir up**

2 Corinthians 9:2

#2129 **eulogia**: praise, blessing!

#4124 **pleoneksía** (a feminine noun derived from 4119/pleiōn, "numerically more" and 2192 /éxō, "have") – properly, the desire for more (things), i.e. lusting for a greater number of temporal things

greater that go beyond what God determines is eternally best (beyond His preferred-will, cf. 2307 /thélēma); covetousness (coveting).

Internet Links

[How the Grinch Stole Christmas!](#) is a 1966 American animated television special, directed and co-produced by Chuck Jones. It is based on the 1957 children's book of the same name by Dr. Seuss, and tells the story of the Grinch, who tries to ruin Christmas for the townsfolk of Whoville below his mountain hideaway. Originally telecast in the United States on CBS on Sunday, December 18, 1966, it has gone on to become a perennial holiday special. The special features the voice of Boris Karloff as the Grinch and the narrator.

[A Christmas Carol](#), is a novella by Charles Dickens, first published in London by Chapman & Hall in 1843 and illustrated by John Leech. A Christmas Carol recounts **the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly miser who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come**. After their visits, Scrooge is transformed into a kinder, gentler man.

[The Top 10 Reasons People Don't Tithe](#)

[The Great Tithing Misunderstanding](#)

[How To Be More Generous](#)

- Practice gratitude
- Shift from a scarcity to an abundance mindset
- Learn to identify the needs of others
- Accept the generosity of others

[The Science of Generosity](#)

Happiness - Why does generosity make us happy? According to self-determination theory, humans depend on satisfying three basic needs for optimal psychological well-being: relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) [534]. Research on the connection between spending money on others and happiness suggests that giving scenarios that help people satisfy these needs result in the most happiness for the giver. People are happiest when their giving is coupled with a social connection (relatedness), such as by not only buying a treat for a friend but also getting to spend time with the friend while she enjoys it; when they are given explicit information about how their donation will be used (competence); and when they are free to choose how much to give (autonomy) (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2014) [77].

Reciprocity- Generosity also seems to carry benefits when interactions between people do not go as planned because of unexpected circumstances (what is termed "social noise"). For example, imagine this scenario: Your friend did not respond to your email because of a problem with his inter-net connection. Because you did not know of the problem, you may

think your friend is ignoring you, which may lead you to delay responding to the next email from your friend as a form of reciprocation. One study found that generosity can help overcome the detrimental effects caused by this type of “noise” in social dilemmas. The study found that rather than responding to someone's actions with strict reciprocity in “tit-for-tat” fashion, behaving slightly more generously than that person's last action leads to more overall cooperation. This suggests that adding a small generosity buffer and giving someone the benefit of the doubt may lead to more cooperation and stronger relationships.

[Cooperative behavior cascades in human social networks](#) – in other words, generosity is contagious!

The Joy of Giving Lasts Longer Than the Joy of Getting

“If you want to sustain happiness over time, past research tells us that we need to take a break from what we’re currently consuming and experience something new. Our research reveals that the kind of thing may matter more than assumed: Repeated giving, even in identical ways to identical others, may continue to feel relatively fresh and relatively pleasurable the more that we do it.

Prosperous Corinthians And Needy Macedonians

In 2 Corinthians 8:2, Paul mentioned the “**deep poverty**” of all or most of the Macedonian believers. In Greek, the word “**poverty**” here is “ptocheia” which means “a state of having insufficient possessions” ^[1] or “poverty”. ^[2] The word “**deep**” in this verse in Greek is a form of the word “bathos” which means in this context “an extreme degree” ^[3] or “an extreme point on a scale of extent”. ^[4] Bauer says that when used together in 2 Corinthians 8:2, “bathos” and “ptocheia” mean “extreme poverty”. ^[5]

Despite being in such deep poverty, the Macedonian churches, including the Philippian Church, had very generously helped the even more poverty-stricken believers in Judea.

THE POOR GIVE MORE (THE MACEDONIAN CHURCH)

The Bible tells us a wealth of stories about true generosity from the heart. Let me introduce you to one such inspiring story in the Second Book of Corinthians. Meet the Macedonian church. *In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.* (2 Cor. 8:2-4)

The Macedonian Believers Model Generosity (8:1-5)

Paul seeks to motivate the Corinthians by making reference to a longstanding competitor. Greece and Macedonia (called the “barbaric North”) have a lengthy history of political rivalry. Although Philip of Macedon united all of Greece through brute force in 338 B.C., it was a union not destined to last. But now the Macedonians are put forward as a competitor of a different sort. These churches were experiencing the most severe trial (v. 2). The Greek is literally “a great testing of affliction.” The genitive defines the content of the testing: “a severe test consisting of afflictions.” The noun dokime means a “testing” that proves someone's or something's worth or genuineness (compare 2:9). The term thlipsis (“pressure”), found nine times in this letter, is commonly used of the harassment that God's people experience at the hands of the world. No further details are provided about the nature of the harassment or the circumstances. But this may well be the same trouble that Paul faced prior to his

rendezvous with Titus (7:5). If one can gauge from the frequency with which the topic crops up in Paul's letters, persecution was almost a way of life for these churches (Phil 1:29-30; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:3-4; 2 Thess 1:4-10).