

2 Corinthians 9

9 There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. 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.

In verse 1, Paul continues encouraging the Corinthian Christians to give their fair share for the believers or saints in Jerusalem. Many translations say "*it is superfluous for me to write to you*". Superfluous means unnecessary. My mom might have said, "I am not going to tell you again but what you are doing is important." Many translations used the word "saints" to describe those in need in Jerusalem. The NLT uses the word "believers" and the NIV calls them the "Lord's people".

In verse 2, Paul pulls out all the stops. In the previous chapter, Paul used the Macedonians as an example of how to give. Now he is encouraging the Corinthians saying that he knows of their "eagerness to help", he has been "boasting about it to the Macedonians".

In the previous chapter, he said that they were willing to give a year ago. Here he reminds them of their willingness to give a year ago when he was with them. He says that the enthusiasm of the Corinthians "has stirred most of them (Macedonians) to action."

He says that he is boasting about their eagerness to help. He uses the Greek word 'kauchaomai' which is translated as 'glory in' or boast. It is the same word that he used in 1 Corinthians 1:31, "*Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.*" where he quoted Jeremiah 9:24.

In the chapter 9, Paul's encouragement reached a similar level and I said, "almost sounds like he is pouring it on pretty heavy". He is doing the same here. He is not comparing his boasting of their willingness to give to his boasting in the Lord.

He is willing to do what it takes to motivate the Corinthians to give assistance to those in need in Jerusalem. It makes me think of 1 Corinthians 9:22, "*To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.*"

Guzik says of the verse, "This may be a "playful" way of encouraging the Corinthian Christians to really be ready and willing to give. Paul may be saying, "Come now, you really can be ready to give. After all, I've already bragged about your willingness to others!"

3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. 4 For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of

having been so confident. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

In verse 3, Paul tells them that he is sending a group of brothers to get your offering for Jerusalem. This might sound weird but this sounds like Paul in his encouraging is saying, “I am sending brothers to get your offering so put your money where MY mouth is.”

He is saying “I have bragged about your giving, so don’t make me look bad.”

In verse 4, Paul says that there may be Macedonians coming to get the Corinthian donation. In fact, Macedonians did come to assist in taking the offering to Jerusalem. Acts 20:4 says that he was accompanied by “*He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica*”.

If the giving of the Corinthian Christians didn’t come up to what Paul had said, then the Macedonians would see this first hand. It could show that Paul’s confidence in the Corinthians was misplaced.

Have you ever been in Paul’s situation? You build up someone, only to be let down. We have had a Mission Chairman in the past that set goals for our mission giving. Her unmet expectations left her upset when we came up short. She took it too personal. Hopefully this letter reaches the Corinthians so they know what is expected of them. It sounds like it based on verse 5.

In verse 5, Paul says that he is urging some of his co-workers/brothers to visit them before they plan on picking up the offering. This would allow the brothers the opportunity to encourage the Corinthians to give what they could, true heartfelt giving.

He finishes verse 5 by saying that he is allowing them more time so that they can give over a time and not be forced to give at the last minute so they aren’t angry about giving. He is trying to give them every opportunity to give cheerfully.

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

If Paul can’t get them to give by bragging on them or maybe some guilt, then he tries to get them to give because they will be blessed if they give. It is believed that he paraphrases:

Proverbs 11:24-25 (NIV) – *“One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”*

Proverbs 22:9 (NIV) – *“The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.”*

What does Jesus say about giving? These are from the NIV.

- a. Luke 6:38 – *“Give, and it will be given to you. . . . For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*
- b. Matthew 6:2-4 – *“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*
- c. Luke 12:33-34 – *“Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

In verse 7, Paul reiterates what he has been saying all along.

- a. Give what is in your heart
- b. Do not give reluctantly or under compulsion,
- c. God loves a cheerful giver.

In verse 8, Paul reminds them what Rev. Jim Alison used to say, “God has a bigger shovel than we do. You can’t out give God.”

9 As it is written:

*“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”*

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

All the way through the Bible, the Israelites always went back to their exodus from Egypt to be reminded of God’s ability to care for His people. The manna from Heaven, the parting of the Red Sea, their ability to defeat those living in the Promised Land, the list of God’s blessings during

that time was almost endless. The Corinthians didn't go through all of those experiences so Paul had to make his reasons for giving broader.

In verse 9, Paul quotes Psalm 112:9. "This verse describes different characteristics of the righteous person, and verse 9 depicts him as generous to the poor. This theme fit well with Paul's emphasis on generous giving at Corinth because these contributions were destined for the poor of Jerusalem. . . The second line of Psalm 112:9, "his righteousness endures forever," . . . It is possible that the psalm focused on the permanence of a righteous person's actions. In other words, God will never forget or ignore a righteous man's generosity (righteousness)." Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 & 2 Corinthians)

Many theologians believe that verse 10 is a prayer offered up by Paul. Paul talks about "*he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food*". Who is he talking about? It is God, the great supplier. James 1:17 says, "*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*" Paul says it another way in Philippians 4:19, KJV: "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

In the second part of this verse, Paul prays that God will bless those that donate in love to those in need. In verse 11, he prays that their lives will be enriched in every way for their gifts to the poor. When they are blessed for what their gifts then they will glorify God for what He has done.

12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

In these verses, Paul gives us the benefits of giving.

- a. Giving helps others meet their daily needs.
- b. Those receiving the gift will praise God.
- c. Your giving will prove your obedience to God.
- d. It will cause those receiving the gift to pray for you.

Too often when we think of giving to organizations or people, we think the worst. We usually ask, "What are they doing with the money?" or "How much of my gift goes to those in need?" It is true that we are to be good stewards of what God has blessed us with but remember what we have read in the last two chapters. Give from the heart.

If you are giving through a relief organization, remember this organization helps collect, fairly distribute and get the money to those in need. It is fair for them to take a portion of the gift.

Regarding the question of what are they doing with the money that is between them and God. The gifts in Chapters 8 and 9 are going to poor Christians. This fact simplifies the discussion here in Paul's letter.

When giving to nonbelievers, you should still give from the heart but there is the hope that your generosity will lead them to want to know more about Jesus.

“Liberal sharing: The ancient Greek word translated sharing is *koinania*. This is the same word used for the ideas of fellowship and communion — it means the sharing of things in common.

- When we share our lives, *koinania* is called fellowship.
- When we share remembrance of Jesus' work for us through the Lord's Supper, *koinania* is called communion.
- When we share our resources so none would be destitute, *koinania* is called sharing.”
(Guzik)