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2 Corinthians 9:6-11

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“Why Is This Person So Cheerful?”

A man was talking with his pastor about giving. “Pastor,” said the man, “I love the Lord, and I love the church. So I’ll give till it hurts! But you need to know, Pastor, that I’m terribly sensitive to pain.”

Most of us are, when it comes to giving. But guess what? God isn’t asking us to give until it hurts.

One of the strong, crystal-clear, consistent messages in the Bible about our giving is that God wants his people to give cheerfully, to give willingly and joyfully. Certainly God understands how hard that can be for us. Certainly our Lord understands that we get anxious or worried about letting go of what we have, and what we need. And certainly our all-wise God understands that it’s human nature for people like us to be a bit greedy and self-centered when we’re asked to share our time and talents with others. But what our God really wants from us, according to the Bible – and what his Holy Spirit is working every day to bring about in our hearts – is cheerful giving, joyful giving, willing giving.

Why is this person so cheerful? Here’s how it works. The cheerful giver is not some happy idiot who’s blissfully unaware of life’s tough realities. The cheerful giver is the Christian who simply stops every so often to realize just how much God has done for her, and then finds a way to say a heartfelt “Thank you, Lord.”



The cheerful giver is not the half-baked person who renounces all worldly possessions, quits his job, forgets about the needs of the family, and decides to serve full-time, year-round, as a Vacation Bible School volunteer. Here's how it really works. The cheerful giver is the child of God who simply takes time to count his blessings, to consider the source of all the good things in his life, and to freely respond to God's goodness in a sincere fashion.

This is how it works, folks. Here's how cheerful giving can happen in your life. The cheerful giver is someone like you or me who simply takes delight in the fact that God would provide salvation and forgiveness free of charge to us through faith in Jesus. The cheerful giver is the Christian who finds it absolutely incredible that God would create this magnificent planet and universe for us to call our home, that God would provide our daily bread and all we need for life, and that God would give us his sacred promise to see us through all the trials and tribulations that this crazy world can throw at us. The cheerful giver gets down on his knees once in a while and says, "God is good to me. God is so good to me! God is so incredibly, stupendously, astoundingly good to me! He's given me so much, and he's done so much for me."

When realizations such as these register up here (*mind*), when these thankful attitudes about God and his goodness prevail in here (*heart*), Christians like us can't help but view our giving a little bit differently. Maybe a lot differently!

That's how cheerful giving works. Start by focusing on God, and all the wondrous things he's done for you; and then ask yourself, "What little thing can I give to God? What service can I do? What talent can I share? What time can I offer, and what volunteer role can I play? What contribution can I make

to help God's kingdom grow, and to help others out there come to know the joy of God's forgiveness and salvation?"

God's chief requirement for our Christian giving – whether it be money, or time, or volunteer service that we're giving – is that we give it willingly, joyfully, cheerfully. And cheerful giving begins when we recognize the tremendous blessings we've already received from God, and when we trust that he's going to take care of us in the future.

Pam Jay talked about it in the video today. It's just a few bags of used clothing, but when she sees what God can do with her humble gift to help others in need, she gives it cheerfully.

Barry Bowling showed it in the video, too. He puts his time and talents to work in service to others, creating that swimming program for the needy, because he feels a need to respond to God's goodness to him.

People in our church are finding joy in their giving. Are you one of them? People in our church are learning to be cheerful givers. And you can, too. Start by focusing on God, and all the awesome things he's done for you; and then simply respond. Let your volunteer service, let your time shared with a person in need, or let your offering dropped in the plate be something that comes from your heart.

St. Paul lays it out for us in 2 Corinthians 9. He's writing to the church in Corinth, back in the late first century AD; but he's talking about their Christian giving, just like we're talking about it today. And here's this strong, crystal-clear, consistent Bible message about cheerful giving. Paul tells the church, in verse 7, *"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

And then Paul goes on. He reminds the Corinthians, and he reminds the people of Hope today, that we are simply responding to what God has done for us. He writes, verse 8, *“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.”* All that we have and own and are, in other words, comes from God; and we’re just giving back to him what he’s first given to us. “We give thee but thine own,” as the hymn writer put it.

And then Paul adds one more thought about cheerful giving, a little promise that cheerful givers know well. Verse 11: *“You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way ...”* God loves a cheerful giver, and it’s God’s heartfelt desire that we would all learn to give cheerfully and willingly. So he gives us his promise that he will enrich us in every way so that we can be even more generous.

What a wonderful God we have! What a joy it is to read his Word, and to live in God’s kingdom! What a privilege to know his grace every day, and to be counted among those who are saved by the blood of Christ! Let’s respond today and always willingly, joyfully, cheerfully! Amen.