



**Unit 1: You on Mission**  
**Session 3: Money for Missions? (see pp. 110-113)**

**The Question:** How should I respond to missions offerings?

**The Point:** God loves a cheerful giver.

**Background Passage:** 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

**Focal Passage:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-13

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “How should I respond to missions offerings?” and drive home this one truth: God loves a cheerful giver.

**Focus on These Points**

***Give Generously***  
**(2 Cor. 9:6-9)**

On his second missionary journey, Paul visited the city of Corinth. This was his first time visiting the Corinthians. During this initial visit, he made the Corinthians aware of the extreme poverty of the Christians in Jerusalem. The believers at Corinth were initially eager to participate in a relief fund for the church in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-3). However, Paul now decided it was time to visit the church again. They needed to complete their offering. Paul sent representatives ahead of him to collect the funds prior to his arrival (9:5). He would join them later. In doing so, he hoped the Corinthians would arrange a generous collection, not one that was put together “last minute.”

Paul used an agricultural example to illustrate Christian stewardship (v. 6). In the illustration he implied that Christians who give their resources were like farmers who sow seed. When farmers put seed into the ground, they expect it to yield a plentiful harvest. In similar fashion Christians give to good works and expect God to provide a harvest of blessings they can use for their own survival and also for the purpose of helping others. Some people believe that when we give, we obligate God to make a return on our investment. However, we owe God everything; we can never attribute any debt of ours to Him. We are indebted to God, instead; every resource we have belongs to Him and is gifted to us by Him. The concept of giving and receiving is discussed throughout the Old and New Testaments (Prov. 11:24-25, 19:17; 22:8-9; Luke 6:38; Gal. 6:7).

Paul tells his readers, “The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly” (v. 6). When farmers neglect their duties, they likely plant very little. In return, their yield is small. The same is true for Christians whose service to God and others is little. We can expect tiny rewards.

Conversely, “the person who sows generously will also reap generously” (v. 6). Giving generously results in generous rewards from God. But, faithful believers don’t anticipate material rewards.

Worldly riches don't motivate our giving. Instead, we seek to "store up...treasures in heaven" that can't be destroyed or stolen (Matt. 6:20).

By telling "each person" to give "as he has decided in his heart" (v. 7), Paul was stressing that every believer in Corinth make a personal decision as to how much to give. Giving is a heart issue. Paul wanted the believers at Corinth to provide an offering given from generous, genuine hearts.

Paul inserts the word "grace" in verse 8 to refer to everything givers need to perform their act of giving. He used three other words that are a form of the Greek word for *all* to emphasize God's enabling power: "every grace," "every way," and "every good work." When strung together (as in verse 8), these phrases have a powerful effect. They demonstrate God's unending resources and His commitment to bless those who give generously for His sake and His purposes.

### ***Expect Enrichment*** ***(2 Cor. 9:10-12)***

Paul revisits the farming imagery he used in verse 6. In verse 10, "the one" is God. He "provides seed for the sower and bread for food." The sower (the Christian) is the one who desires to pour into others by contributing toward their needs. The seed refers to money or material resources given by the believer. The phrase "harvest of your righteousness" (v. 10) refers to the future reward generous givers can anticipate. The reference to "bread for food" (v. 10) reminds us that God provides for our daily needs. Jesus taught the disciples to pray for "daily bread" in Matthew 6:11. When the generous believer does so, he or she gives on one day and trusts God to provide all of his or her needs the next.

In verse 11, Paul also mentions another outcome of generous giving: "thanksgiving to God." The Christians in Jerusalem and others who heard of the generous gifts from the Macedonian and Corinthian churches would thank God. Since resources for giving originate with God, it is only fitting that He gets the praise and thanksgiving for such acts.

The Corinthian believers' collection of relief funds for the Jerusalem church was labeled "ministry" (v. 12). Here Paul is declaring the act of giving a ministry. Ministry is for all believers (Eph. 4:12) and is not only reserved for those who are ordained (ministerial staff and deacons). According to verse 12, the relief fund the Macedonian and Corinthian churches contributed to resulted in two primary outcomes: (1) It supplied "the needs of the saints." This money would help other saints (believers) in Jerusalem with physical needs like food, clothing, and shelter. (2) It resulted "in many expressions of thanks to God." Not only would the Jews in Jerusalem thank the Gentile churches for their generosity, but they would also thank God. The Gentile believers' generous act would corroborate God as Provider and as the One who changes the hearts of His people to bring about His good will.

### ***Glorify God*** ***(2 Cor. 9:13)***

The Corinthians' generous contributions to the Jerusalem relief fund was "proof" of their "confession of the gospel of Christ" (v. 13). And because of the Gentile churches' generous gifts to the believers in Jerusalem, the Jews would "glorify God" (v. 13). They would acknowledge God's working in the hearts of the donors to provide generous and helpful gifts. The gifts were received with appreciation. Although Paul would be hand-delivering the generous gift, the Jews in Jerusalem would have no doubt that God's hand was involved. He had ultimately provided the gifts. Although people today may be tempted to give accolades to the person God uses to provide relief, believers must be careful to point the attention and glory toward God.

Paul made it plain: the Corinthians had been "obedient" (v. 13) to the Lord in their act of giving. The believers in Jerusalem realized this. God placed the desire to give in the Corinthian believer's hearts. They responded obediently and generously.