



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2017-2018 Midweek/Sermon Starter

Unit 1: Everything Belongs to Him
Sermon Series Title: Can God Trust You?
Sermon 5: Put a Smile On
Bible Passage: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Introduction

On June 30, 2000, McDonald's introduced a new slogan to express the attitude behind their service. McDonald's selected "Put a Smile On" as their new slogan of service to convey that they eagerly anticipate the opportunity to serve their customers with smiling faces.

We are called to use our resources to serve others. However, we must learn not only how to give freely, but also how to give cheerfully. We must learn how to "Put a Smile On."

Background/Context

In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give generously to the saints at Jerusalem who were experiencing difficulties. Additionally, Paul invites us to examine our attitude when giving. God is more concerned with our attitude than with our acts of giving. He not only expects us to be charitable, but God also desires for us to be cheerful givers. We must give with joy "since God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). Yes, God loves a cheerful, hilarious, happy, and joyful giver. He desires hearts that are overjoyed with the pleasure of giving.

A. We Smile because We Sow Spiritually
(2 Cor. 9:6)

Agriculture was a significant source of income for people during Paul's time. The practice of farming was common, and its practices were understood by the masses. Therefore, Paul used an agrarian analogy to depict the proper way to give.

Paul stated, "the person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously." Paul used the word "sow" in place of giving. For Him, givers are like farmers that sow seed into the ground. Farmers are fully dependent on God for seed, soil, and the proper amount of sunshine and rain. Farmers *may* forecast the future, but farmers *must* trust the unknown. In a real sense, it takes faith to farm and it takes faith to give. Indeed, our faith rests not on human wisdom but on the power of God (see 1 Cor. 2:5).

Giving takes faith and requires spiritual maturity. Spiritual people, just like farmers, give believing that God will take care of them. They recognize that the size of the harvest is directly

connected to the amount of seed sown. We smile while we give because we sow spiritually, and we know that God is going to take care of us.

Application Point: How well do you trust God with your finances? Sometimes we are hesitant to trust God with our finances because of fear. Remember, giving requires faith. We must trust that when we give to others, we are following God's will and that our gifts will contribute to a greater harvest.

B. We Smile because We Sow Strategically (2 Cor. 9:7)

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give generously to the saints at Jerusalem. However, Paul cautioned us to never give reluctantly or out of compulsion. Here, Paul spoke out against remorseful, regretful, resentful, and reluctant giving. In a real sense, if we are going to give with rage and rancor then it is best to not give at all.

Additionally, Paul seems to imply that God never wants anyone to give out of coercion. God is not in the business of strong-arming us with guilt and gimmicks. Instead, He wants us to give freely and cheerfully.

Paul offered an alternative way of giving: "each person should do as he has decided in his heart." This concept implies predetermination; a predetermined, premeditated action rather than a single act of impulse. Paul invited us to give strategically. He encouraged us to "plan and pray before we pay." We must be strategic in our giving. This requires prioritization, budgeting, and self-control—the essentials of stewardship. We can smile as we give cheerfully when we have properly prepared ourselves to give.

Application Point: Do you find yourself becoming uncomfortable during offering time? Do you find yourself becoming angry after you give? The truth is that God grants us free will in our giving—we never have to feel ashamed during offering time. We decrease discomfort when we are prayerful and prepared in our giving.

C. We Smile because God Showers Us with Grace (2 Cor. 9:8)

Paul concluded this section of Scripture with a purpose and promise for cheerful givers. Paul wrote, "And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work." Paul emphatically announced that God is able. The word for *able* used by Paul is "*dynatos*," which means power, might and strength. This is the word from which we get "dynamite." Paul wanted his readers to know that God is powerful, strong, and mighty—that God gives powerfully, strongly, and mightily.

According to Paul, God's power, strength and might makes grace overflow to us. Don't forget that we are beneficiaries of God's grace, which gives underserving gifts to undeserving people. We give cheerfully because God possesses all grace and showers us with the infinity of grace.

We give cheerfully because God is a great giver. The Philippian writer was correct, “God will supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). We give cheerfully because God promises to supply our every need. You see, God promises to make sure we always have what we need to meet the demands of our generous hearts so that we may excel in every good work.

Application Point: When has God given you something that you did not deserve? Well, that is grace. The truth is that God gives grace to us so that we might be gracious to others. Be intentional in finding ways to cheerfully give to others in need.