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Generous Living

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GENEROUS LIVING

“God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7)

Have you ever considered what it means to be a cheerful giver?

In 2 Corinthians 8:1, Paul describes the Macedonians as an example of generous living, “For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.” Did you notice how he described the Macedonians? Severely afflicted and overflowing with joy, extremely impoverished and overflowing in generosity. How is this? Too often our circumstances affect our joy and giving. Yet, according to the testimony of Paul, the Macedonians discovered that you can be severely afflicted and overflowing with joy, and extremely impoverished and overflowing in generosity.

Randy Alcorn, author of the *Treasure Principle*, helps us discover the secret of joyful giving and generous living. Alcorn says we are living on a continuum. There is a line that goes from eternity past to eternity future, and we are just a dot on that line. We can either live in that dot or we can live on that line. We can live for now, or we can live for eternity. When we understand that it’s all God’s and that God freely supplies all things, then giving of ourselves — our time, our talents, and our treasures — becomes an eternal perspective, not a temporal one.

The Macedonians understood this. They understood what it meant to give freely with a Kingdom purpose in mind, not to satisfy themselves with the trappings of this world, but to be satisfied in Jesus Christ, our greatest treasure, and to have a Kingdom perspective in generous living. The Macedonians had an attitude of gratitude. Even in their severe affliction and persecution, they were thankful to God and gave of themselves and their possessions joyfully.

When we give of ourselves, our time, our talents, and our treasures, we are enriched in every way and God is glorified. Warren Wiersbe says it this way, “Giving is not something we do, but something we are.” He goes on to say our giving encourages others to give, blesses us, meets the needs of others, glorifies God, and unites God’s people together in praise and thanksgiving.



In 2 Corinthians 9:6–7, Paul underscores two principles in generous living. First is the principle of sowing and reaping. “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” Second is the principle of intent or motivation. Paul says, “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” The Greek word translated as “cheerful” literally means hilarious. If something is hilarious, there is an outward expression, an abundance of joy that wells up within us. Paul describes a kind of cheerful giving, joyful giving, and happy giving that wells up within us and exudes joy.

My challenge for all of us is to live generously, to give generously, and to give cheerfully for the needs of others. I believe that there is a correlation between giving and joy. When we give of ourselves, we will find great joy. It is God who supplies all things. It is not giving out of our self-sufficiency, but giving out of God’s all-sufficiency. Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift.

For His glory and our exceeding joy.

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