

The Joy of Generosity

Scripture Reading

6 The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

A Reflection

“God loves a cheerful giver!” In 2 Corinthians, Paul is working to support the “ministry to the saints” and helping churches share their abundance generously. Paul is concerned about both our attitude toward giving and the effect of giving.

Think for a moment of the most generous person you know. What qualities come to mind? Open. Warm. Helpful. Honest. Full of life. Passionate. Thankful. Compassionate. Joy-filled. These might be just a few. And we might all give thanks to God for the generous people who bless our lives!



Generous people have a certain *attitude* toward giving. They give without complaint; they give to more than one cause or ministry; they understand their generosity to be as much for their own need as for another's; they believe generosity is more than money—generosity encompasses the whole of life, including time, talent, treasure, and temperament.



Generous people are also concerned about the *effect* of giving. They want to be a part of something significant, something that will have a beneficial effect on the world. With Paul, they perceive God's abundance and know that God hopes for that abundance to be shared even as the world feels like a place of scarcity. The mission and ministry of the Church is about being stewards of God's great generosity, God's abundance, and sharing in ways that bring God's blessing and grace to every corner of the earth.

Stewardship, then, is about cultivating generosity in ways that foster these qualities in us as followers of Christ and in our congregations as we serve others in Christ's name. Our stewardship efforts, campaigns, and ministries should nurture joy and share the good news of all that we are called to do in Christ's name.

This November as many of us gather our commitments in pledging and even as we gather around a table of Thanksgiving, may we nurture a joyful generosity and consider the many ways our giving has a beneficial effect on our lives and the lives of others.