

# Life in the Body: Grace-Filled Generosity

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[ 0 : 00 ] Paul is making here sits on the back of 11 verses of theology. Romans chapter 12 verse 1 says, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. Let us use them, if prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in generosity, the one who leads with zeal, the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness. Let me pray.

Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the truth that it exposes our hearts, the reality about you, the ways that it directs us to love each other as a body. Lord, help us as we hear your word to not just hear it, but to be doers of the word as well, that you would grow and strengthen your church through your spirit application of the word. In Jesus' name, amen.

Like I said, this chapter sits after 11 verses of theology, and the connection that Paul is making in this passage is this. In light of all of those truths of Romans 1 through 11, all the truth of the gospel, this is how Christians should live their life. All the work that Christ has done has an impact on how we live our lives. Paul has walked through the gospel. He has talked to us about God redeeming and reconciling sinners to himself. He has redeemed a people, taken them from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of his beloved son. In Corinthians, Paul also says that he made him who knew no sin to be made sin for us, so we might become the righteousness of God through him. Paul says in Colossians and Ephesians, after covering the truth of the gospel, after covering all the things that God has done, he says we should walk in a manner worthy of our calling. And the reality is, our life individually, of course, but also as a corporate body, as members one of another, should be driven and affected and powered by the work that Christ has done.

It's been our intention through this series to continuously point back to the cross and the truth of the gospel as the motivation for healthy body life.

[ 3 : 21 ] As Paul says, this is us presenting our bodies as living sacrifices. Paul's point in verses 1 through 5 is that because of Christ, because all believers are united to Christ and also united to one another, that makes us members one of another. We are members of a combined body.

Paul then goes on and talks about how that should play out in our church, how we should care for each other, how we should love each other. One of the things that he mentions in verse 8 is that those that contribute should contribute with generosity.

That really means that healthy living, sorry, healthy giving and generosity in the body happens when members see what Christ has done for them.

Healthy giving and generosity in the body happens when we see others' needs and respond to them the same way that Christ responded to our need. We can see that clearly when we look at Paul's encouragement to the church in Corinth when he asks and talks to them about the collection for the saints.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul had talked to them about collecting money. He had told them, I'm going to collect money for the saints. I want you to be ready for it.

[ 4 : 46 ] And then 2 Corinthians chapter 8, Paul starts a conversation reminding them about the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. And he gives them the positive example of the Macedonians.

These were people that were poor. Paul says they had extreme poverty. But they joyously gave out of their poverty. They begged Paul and the apostles to be able to give to support their brothers and sisters in Christ.

They were members one of another. They felt and saw the need the saints in Jerusalem had. And so even though they were poor, they begged for the opportunity to give.

They gave above and beyond what would be expected for people who were extremely poor. And in giving that example, Paul wants this church in Corinth to have that same motivation, that same love. So then in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, 7 and 9, Paul gives them the basis for what the right motive of sacrificial giving is.

[ 5 : 48 ] He talks to them about the example of the Macedonians. But then he says in 2 Corinthians 8, 7 and 9, This phrase of Christ's poverty coming poor so that we might become rich is the keystone that sets the argument up for this entire passage in chapter 8 and 9 in 2 Corinthians.

Paul's giving of himself, sorry, Christ's giving of himself for the church is the basis for Paul's guidance. An encouragement for the church to give generously within itself.

In chapter 8 then, Paul addresses their giving directly, which is where we'll spend the rest of our time today. 2 Corinthians chapter 9, we're going to look at verses 6 through 11. 2 Corinthians 9, starting in verse 6, Paul says, The point is this, So Paul goes into this passage talking to them about giving and he says,

When we talk about giving, this could be an uncomfortable phrase for us to use.

And I think it's often because we fear if we use the idea of sowing and reaping, Bountiful giving and bountiful reaping, that we're going to hit the wrong motive.

[ 8 : 38 ] I think we are worried that if we say, If you give bountifully, you're going to get bountifully. We've probably seen prosperity preachers on TV abuse this concept, right?

They'll say, Sow your seed, give to the ministry, and God will bless you. Look, God's blessed me.

Look, I have this jet. God will bless you. You're going to be blessed if you just give. Just give.

So our reaction could be to just skip over this, To say, I don't want to deal with this sowing and reaping concept. But these are concepts that are really taught to us all throughout Scripture.

In fact, Paul uses it. Jesus uses it. Multiple people have used this idea of sowing and reaping.

But Paul presents this differently than teachers on TV present it. Paul obviously states that if we sow a little bit, We'll reap a little bit. And if we sow more, we're going to reap more.

[ 9 : 40 ] Paul is not saying that if you sow enough money, You're going to get that BMW. Paul is not saying that if you sow enough money, You're going to get that house, Or that promotion, Or that big bank account.

Paul is not saying, Give enough money to God so that you're wealthy. He's not saying, Sow a seed into this ministry, And God is going to give you more money. No.

His point is this. If you sow more, If you give more, If you are generous in your giving, Then God will meet your needs. And well, God will give you more money to be generous with.

God says, He will give you more, In order so that you can give more to others. This is borne out really in verses 10 and 11 as well.

Verses 10 and 11 says, He who supplies seed to the sower, And bread for food, Will supply and multiply your seed for sowing, And increase the harvest of your righteousness.

[ 10 : 40 ] You'll be enriched in every way, To be generous in every way, Which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. If you're afraid to give money to God, If you're afraid to give time to people, If you're afraid to give of anything, Your car, Your house, Your free time, If you're afraid to give because you're worried you won't have enough for yourself, Paul's point is, God is able to meet your needs, And provide money for you to continue being generous.

A farmer doesn't begrudgingly put seeds in the ground. Can you imagine that? A farmer goes and he buys his seed, And he looks at it and he's like, Man, I really don't want to get rid of this.

I could eat this. But instead he goes and he plants it, And he puts it in the ground, And he sows his seed. He's not sad because he had grand plans for them. A farmer plants seeds, Temporarily losing them, Giving them away, But getting back more.

Like I said, We don't sow to get more money. We don't give just to get. But when we're giving, When we're serving, When we're giving of our time, Giving of our offerings, We're not wasting and losing those things.

The scriptures promises God will meet our needs. We're stowing up for ourselves treasures in heaven. We don't sow this money to get more money. We're gaining back eternal riches.  
[ 12 : 07 ] We're gaining back treasures. We're building the kingdom of God Through the means that he's given us. We don't waste the things that we give.

There's this promise of reaping. There's a promise of a harvest of righteousness. Giving never earns us standing. Right? So Paul says, In verse 10, He will increase the harvest of your righteousness.

Giving doesn't earn us standing. Giving money is not going to make us righteous before God. That's only something that Christ can do. Brother Paul means that our spiritual maturity, Our fellowship with God, Our obedience to God, The things that he's called us to do In terms of living our lives And caring for others, Those things are increased and nurtured When we trust God and give bountifully. We are blessed when we bless others. Jesus is quoted in Acts as saying, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Sometimes we worry about giving.

And Jesus reminds us that it's more blessed to give than to receive. The second promise regarding reaping is, You will be enriched in every way, To be generous in every way.

[ 13 : 33 ] God meets our basic needs. He says in verse 10, He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, God's going to meet our basic needs.

And when you sow bountifully, When you give bountifully, When you serve bountifully, God will then trust you with more and more, Allowing you to give more.

Again, we're not sowing So that we get that BMW or Mercedes Or promotion or great stock dividends Or stock portfolio. We're sowing because Christ has given himself for us.

We're sowing because we trust God to use What we give for his good, For his kingdom, For his glory. So we've seen that Scripture is clear that when we sow, What we sow, we reap.

If we sow reservedly and little, We'll reap little. If we sow bountifully, We'll reap bountifully. But Scripture is also concerned with our hearts And how we give.

[ 14 : 43 ] And verse 7 digs into both The heart and the method Of how we should give. Verse 7 says, Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, Not reluctantly or under compulsion, For God loves a cheerful giver.

So, Paul's intention for this church, For these people, Is that They should Have decided.

We should give Decidedly. We should give Intentionally. We should plan To give. You've probably heard This saying, If you don't, He who fails to plan, Plans to fail.

Right? If you're not planning, If you're not Being intentional about things, Things happen accidentally Or by themselves. We aren't giving cheerfully When we're giving accidentally.

And I'd say When we're just putting What's in our wallet In the plate, We're not giving cheerfully. We're not giving decidedly. We're not giving What we've decided in our heart.

[ 15 : 50 ] We're giving what we have Available. Paul expects The church members To have already decided In his or her heart To come ready to give. Practically, And I say this At the risk of being Too prescriptive, I think this means That giving Is part of your budget.

Giving should be part Of how you allocate Your money that you're giving. If you have a budget Where you put X number of dollars For rent And X number of dollars For bills, Your giving Should be set aside As well.

Part of us Presenting our bodies And our lives As living sacrifices Is that we Worship Intentionally. You got up this morning, Hopefully you got up On time Intending to come To church.

You got in your car And you drove to church. And you came prepared With your coffee, Your water, Your candy. We come expecting To sing, To pray, We come expecting To hear The word of God Preached.

And Paul is saying As well, Hey, Come to church Expecting To give. Come to church Decided in your heart That you're going To give. In his first epistle To Corinth, When he was talking To this church About their collection For the saints, He gave them directions About how he wanted Them to Collect it.

[ 17 : 15 ] In 1 Corinthians 16, 1 and 2, He says, Now concerning The collection For the saints, As I directed The church in Galatia, So you also Are to do. On the first day Of every week, Each of you Is to put something Aside and store it up As he may prosper So that there will Be no collecting When I come.

So Paul's expectation is that this giving to the church, to the saints, is intentional and purposeful. Maybe that means that you write your check before you leave the house and it's already written out and you know you've got it and you're going to bring it.

Maybe it means you write your check quickly before the, during the prayer during the offering. Maybe you stop at an ATM to collect the money if you're going to give cash or you visit the website to give online.

Regardless of the mechanism or the method that's used, the direction that Paul has is clear. Giving should be something that we are thinking about, that we are planning to do, that we are doing intentionally.

Make a plan to give or your giving will be accidental, if at all. The passage in 1 Corinthians 16 also shows us that our giving should be proportional.

[18:31] He says, in the first day of every week, each of you was to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper. The phrase as he may prosper means set aside a relative amount of money based on how much money you have.

So if you're bringing in money, set aside a portion of that. If that money increases, set aside a bigger portion. In the Old Testament, people were giving 10%.

There were tithes that were committed in Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. Even before Moses, we see Abraham and Jacob as a response to God's goodness and blessing giving 10%. Now we have no commandment in the New Testament that says give your 10%. Some people will argue and there are plenty of books and articles written about is 10% still the thing that's required or not.

I think it's a reasonable starting point for those who have been brought from darkness to light. From those who have had a savior who has been poor who gave himself for them.

[19:37] But regardless of 10% or 5% the point is that we are proportionally giving part of our income to the body. Now that could be that you're giving it to the church and the plate.

That could be that you're giving it to other people throughout in their meeting their needs. But the expectation is that we are giving a portion of our income to the body.

This 1st Corinthians passage says that we are to set aside something according to how we prosper. With more prosperity. With more blessings given or received.

There should be more blessings given. So if 10% of your income sounds like a crazy amount of money to give away. Remember what we discussed just a moment ago.

We've seen the idea of sowing and reaping and the promise that God is able to supply seed to the sower. God is able to supply the money for you to keep giving generously.

[20:40] God has promised to meet your needs. But not only meet your needs but to also provide the money you need to be generous. To bless others with. So our giving should be intentional.

It should be purposeful. And it should be proportional to the money that God has given to us. But our giving should also be cheerful. Our passage says that God loves a cheerful giver.

What does it mean to give cheerfully? I think we can look back at the example that Paul provided in Chapter 8. Look at the Macedonians.

They had extreme poverty. But they were begging Paul to be able to take part in this act of grace. The phrase in verse 4 2 Corinthians 8 says they begged us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.

These Christians loved their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. And they begged Paul to let them take part in this act of grace. Give us the favor of helping these other Christians.

[21:54] They were cheerful givers. They were cheerful and happy to give even when it was uncomfortable. Even when it hurt. Even when they were poor. They wanted to support their brothers and sisters.

But primarily we have a better example of a cheerful giver. We have an example of a cheerful giver in Christ and what he has done. Remember what we just read in Chapter 8.

It says for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Paul gives an excellent example of what that looked like in Philippians Chapter 2 where he very strongly ties our relationship with each other to the example of Christ.

He says in Philippians Chapter 2 Verses 4 Through 8 Look Let each Of you Look Not only To his Own interests But also To the Interests Of others Have this Mind among Yourselves Which is Yours in Christ Jesus Who though He was in The form Of God Did not Count equality With God A thing To be Grasped But emptied Himself By taking On the Form of A servant Being born In the Likeness Of men And being Found in Human form He humbled Himself By becoming Obedient to The point Of death Even death On a cross Christ took On the Form of A servant Humbled Himself To the Point Of death Hebrews 12 2 Says That we're To look To Jesus The founder And perfecter Of our Faith Who for The joy That was Set before Him Endured The cross Despising The shame And is Seated at The right Hand Of the Throne Of God So Christ Is the Example Of a

[ 23 : 43 ] Cheerful Giver Christ Endured The cross Christ Emptied Himself Humbled Himself For the Joy That was Set Before Him So that Means that You and I Should be Cheerful Unafraid Givers Because Christ Has given Himself For us Dane Ortlund In his Commentary On this Passage Says A gospel Formed Person Does not Have Generosity Dragged Out Of him Or Even Dragged Out Of him By Himself That Is No Generosity At All Giving Is Something Everyone Sorry Giving Is Something One Does Delightedly That Is Giving Is Simply What A gospel Formed Life Looks Like Even More Deeply It Is What A Christian Does Because It Reflects Who We Are Now A Stingy Christian Is A Contradiction In Terms We Are Ourselves Have Been Gifted Into New Life In Christ We Have Been Gifted Into Becoming Givers And Such

Giving Is What God Loves Maybe There Are Some Hangups We Have With Being Cheerful Givers Maybe Giving Any Money Doesn't Sound Cheerful Maybe It Fills You With A Sense Of Dread Or Anxiety Maybe You Worry Not Having Enough So You Will Give A Safe Maybe Almost Accidental Amount Whatever You Have In Your Wallet Gets Thrown In Maybe Your Anxiety Keeps You From Being A Cheerful Giver Maybe You Love Money Too Much Maybe Money Is Your Idol Maybe You Worry About It And Love It Too Much To Let Too Much Of It Go Maybe You Feel Like If You Gave Bountifully You Couldn't Have The Luxuries That You Deserve Or Maybe You Just Like The Security Of Watching Your Savings Account Grow While Your Brothers And Sisters Struggle If We Struggle With These Things And I Think All Of Us Do At Some Point We Should Be Seeking God And Prayer And Repentance Because If We're Honest Our Giving Is Never Going To Match The Giving That Christ Has Shown Us Our Giving Is Never Going To Be What It Should Be And Even If The Amount Is What It Should Be Our Hearts Probably Aren't Ever Truly As Cheerful As They Should Be We Should Pray We Should Repent We Should Ask God To Give Us A Cheerful Heart To Remove Our Anxiety But Also For Him To Give Us A Desire To See Us Power His Kingdom Through Our Giving To See Us Enable The Work He Has For Us For Him To Use What We Do Give For His Kingdom We Should Pray Asking God To Show Us Where He Could Use Our Cheerful Intentional And Proportional Giving To Enhance And Grow The Kingdom We Don't Need To Be Afraid To Give If God Has Promised To Supply Our Needs As Well! To Keep On Giving As We Close I Want Us To Remember That Christ's Giving Of Himself Of The Church Is Paul's Basis And Guidance And Encouragement For How The Church Should Give Generously Within Itself I'll Read Again 2nd Corinthians Chapter 8 And Verse 9 It Says Paul Makes That Even Clearer In Ephesians Chapter 2 When He Talks About How Much Christ Has Done For Us And Then He Says That God Has Prepared Good Works For Us To Do Including Being Generous Ephesians Chapter 2 Verses 4 Through 10 Says!

But God Being Rich In Mercy Because Of The Great Love With Which He Loved Us Even When We Were Dead In Our Trespasses! Made Us Alive Together With Christ By Grace You Have Been Saved And Raised Us Up With Him And Seared Us With Him In The Heavenly Places In Christ Jesus So In The Coming Ages He Might Show The Immeasurable Riches Of His Grace And Kindness Toward Us In Christ Jesus For By Grace You Have Been Saved Through Faith This Is Not Your Own Doing It Is A Gift Of God Not A Result Of Works So That No One May Boast For We Are His Workmanship Created In Christ Jesus For Good Works Which God Prepared Beforehand That We Should Walk In Them When We Get A Glimpse Of The Work That Christ Has Done To Redeem Us When We Get A Glimpse Of The Grace And Mercy When We Survey The Cross And We See The Amazing Grace And The Gift God Given To Us It Should Drive

[ 28 : 47 ] Us To Care For And Love! Other In This Building And Brothers And Sisters Across The World It Should Drive Us To Want To Be Intentional And Engaged In The Day To Day Aspects Of Church Life It Should Drive Us To Be Cheerful Givers Because Our Savior Cheerfully Laid His Life Down For Us The Pattern That We See Is That God Blesses And His People Respond By Blessing

Others God Has Blessed Christ We Respond By Blessing Others And Giving Healthy Giving And Generosity In The Body Happens When The Members See What Christ Has Done For Them  
Healthy Giving And Generosity In The Body Happens When We See Others!  
Needs And Respond As Christ Has Responded Let's Pray