

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Sow Generously – Reap Generously

Mark Robbins, CPA

In the past few issues of Christian Money Sense, we have examined principles of the *Grace of Giving* found in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. In this issue, we will discuss the concept of “Sowing and Reaping” (2 Corinthians 9) as Paul likens the agricultural act of sowing to the financial act of giving.

Paul begins by contrasting two types of giving (v. 6): giving sparingly and giving bountifully. He then contrasts two attitudes of giving (v.7): giving grudgingly or giving cheerfully.

Paul writes that giving should not be done grudgingly and by compulsion (*necessity* KJV). The word *grudgingly* means “being painful or causing grief or sorrow.” *Under compulsion* communicates the idea of being under an obligation or pressure to give. Have you ever given a gift that you felt forced to give? If so, it probably wasn’t a pleasant experience. God answers by instructing us to give from a cheerful heart. *Cheerful* is translated from the Greek word *agape*. The giving God desires springs from a heart of love and sacrifice for others. Each person is to decide in his heart what he is going to give and then give it cheerfully.

Let’s return to Paul’s first contrast – the act of giving. Paul uses a very familiar image in this passage when he says that sharing or giving is like sowing seed: The more generously one sows, the greater the harvest. What does this mean? Paul is not saying that if someone gives \$100 to God that He will return that \$100 many times over. There are those who will tell us that we cannot outgive God. That is true. But that does not obligate God to give above what we give to Him. We cannot trick God into blessing us.

Giving sparingly invokes the thought of living miserly. Giving bountifully carries the thought of generosity felt by others. Paul is telling the Corinthian believers that God has the ability to outgive them. By developing this type of attitude, we will be free to give willingly and cheerfully. We will know that when we give, God can make what we have left sufficient for our needs. This will help us be content with what He has given us so that we might be willing to give even more. When we have the conviction that God is able to supply all our needs, we will give generously and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:8-10.)

You have a choice. Are you going to give bountifully and cheerfully and allow God to bless what you have, or are you going to give sparingly and grudgingly and allow God to wither what you have? Proverbs 11:24 and 25 summarizes this well, “There is one who scatters and yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered.” (NASB)

The Grace of Giving is both an attitude and a choice. What will you choose this Sunday in church? What will you choose this month regarding missionaries? What will you choose this year regarding Christian schools? Remember, “...God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. 9:7)

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