Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Sow Sparingly; Reap Sparingly
Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9
Code: BQ011311

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6–7)

The point of those verses is clear: The more one gives, the more God gives back in return.

In this passage Paul expressed that principle using familiar agricultural imagery: **Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.** Every farmer recognizes that the size of the harvest is directly proportionate to the amount of seed sown. The farmer who **sows** seed **sparingly** will **reap** a meager harvest; the one **who sows bountifully will … reap** a great harvest. In the spiritual realm, the principle is that giving to God results in blessing from God; **bountifully** translates *eulogia*, which literally means “blessing.” Generous givers will reap generous blessings from God, while those who hold back selfishly fearing loss will forfeit gain.

In chapters 8 and 9, Paul sought to motivate the Corinthians to complete their giving for the needy members of the Jerusalem church. First, he reminded them of the example set by the Macedonians (8:1–9), then he gave them a direct exhortation (8:10–9:5), and in this section he pointed out the potential benefits. God graciously promises a harvest in accord with what believers sow. The appeal is not, of course, to self-interest. The promise is not that God will reward generous givers so they can consume it on their own desires. The real purpose of God’s gracious rewarding of believers will become evident as the passage unfolds.

To motivate the Corinthians to give, Paul gave a description of the harvest that would result: love from God.

It is hard to imagine a more precious promise than to be the personal object of God’s love. All the world’s acclaim, honor, and rewards given to all philanthropists put together does not come close to this privilege of being loved by God. Yet that is what He promises the **cheerful giver.** God loves the world in a general sense (John 3:16), but He has a deeper, more wonderful love for His own (John 13:1; 1 John 4:16), and a special love for **each one** of His who gives cheerfully.

Cheerful giving comes from inside, from the heart, rather than from external coercion. It begins by giving **just as** one **has purposed in his heart.** Once again, Paul stressed the truth that Christian giving is strictly voluntary. But though it is not forced, neither is it casual, careless, or a mere afterthought. *Proaireo* (**purposed**), used only here in the New Testament, has the idea of predetermination. Though there is spontaneous joy in giving, it is still to be planned and systematic (1 Cor. 16:2), not impulsive and sporadic. Nor is giving to be done **grudgingly.** *Lupe* (**grudgingly**) literally means, “sorrow,” “grief,” or “pain.” Giving is not to be done with an attitude of remorse, regret, or reluctance, of mourning over parting with what is given. And, as noted above, it is not to be **under compulsion** from any legalistic external pressure.

The giving that God approves of comes from **a cheerful giver. Cheerful** translates *hilaros,* from which the English word *hilarious* derives. Happy, joyous givers, who are joyous in view of the privilege of giving, are the special objects of God’s love.

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