

Intro: Sometimes amazed at what Paul says when he is writing to the Churches. “You can’t say that!” For instance:

- Last Week: *I hurt your feelings...I’m not sorry...Just for a little while...you got over it...and it helped you!!!!*
- Today, Just as soon as he finished THAT discussion: “Lets talk about money!” Way to win friends influence people!
- Talking about money: VS “I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with others!” Seriously...

I read that stuff and I’m like...no wonder they got mad at him! Paul was how shall we say... “Focused!”

This morning he makes a major transition in the book of 2 Cor. Most extensive teaching on giving in the NT.

2 Sections: 1. Principles for Giving 2. Promises for Giving

Today: Principles For Giving:

2 Cor 8:1-9:5 Pg 820

Background:

- ❖ Church in Jerusalem was struggling financially (*famine, persecution by being ostracized, overpopulation in general*)
- ❖ Paul was challenging the Gentile churches to help (Cuba: Container Project)
- ❖ This effort had been going on for a couple years
- ❖ Paul had talked to them about it before...they wanted to...things got off track...now he’s coming back to them
- ❖ He takes this opportunity to teach them...and us...about giving!

Whenever we start to talk about giving, and money in church, many people get nervous and uncomfortable.

I think that is mostly because they have a misunderstanding about giving as it related to our spiritual life.

The abuses we see in some church and religious organizations have led to that.

Understanding these two chapters will go a LONG way toward helping you get a grip on NT concept of giving.

6 Principles That Underlie All NT Giving

Principle #1: The First Thing You Give Is Yourself

8:1-5

If you have heard me talk about giving over the years here at RTBC you almost always hear me say the same thing.

“God doesn’t want your money. God wants YOU!”

Reality: If he has YOU...He has your money...and your time...and your heart...and your gifts...and your talents!!!

Vs 5: Gave themselves **FIRST:** “First in time, order, place and/or importance”

Before you ever start to talk about amounts, tithes, offerings, ... any of the things we normally begin with...Start HERE

Q: “Have I given MYSELF to God?” Or, am I just giving Him a spiritual “Tip” because I think it’s the right thing to do?

Question: “Have you come to the place in your life where God owns you? Or, are you still negotiating on who you belong to?”

“You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” 1 Cor 16:19-29

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

Illus: Pastor Jorge:	How has God blessed you?	My family, my job, my health
	How has God provided for you?	Give me food, home, shelter
	What has God given to you?	Son, Eternal Life, This life
	How would you give back to Him?	

First Things First: First You Give Yourself (Otherwise...save your money...not buying your way into heaven...blessings!!)

Principle # 2: Make It Your Goal To Excel In Your Giving

8:6-7

Second principle Paul teaches us as it relates to giving is that we should make it our goal to “Excel” in our giving

Vs 7: **EXCEL** in this grace: “to superabound, be abundant, enough and to spare, exceed, excel, increase” (Lk 9:17 Bread)

Pauls says: Listen: You get it when we are talking about other spiritual things “graces”

- Faith: *Know and trust God*
- Speech: *Capacity to help others know God*
- Knowledge: *Understanding of who God is and how He works*
- Earnestness: *Desire to pursue him with all your heart*
- Love: *Deep concern and care for me and for others*

In every one of those areas you want to grow and develop and mature. You want to go further and deeper

That’s the SAME attitude that you should have toward your giving!

Illus: That word for Excel: Used to describe what happens when a flower bud matures, blooms and opens...fully alive

Paul says...that’s the way you should view your giving.

Don’t stay just a single bud...bloom...Flourish...learn how to grow in the grace of giving like every other grace

Q: When is the last time you examined your giving? Looked at and said...Am I growing in how I give? Staying the same?

Principle #3: Giving Is Always About Attitude, Not Amount.

8:8-12

Vs 12: WILLINGNESS: “predisposition, readiness of mind, forwardness of thinking; anticipation”

Here is what Paul says to us about our ATTITUDE: If your attitude is right...The AMOUNT is ACCEPTABLE!

Look he says, it doesn't matter what the AMOUNT is...God isn't impressed with the number of Zero's on your check!

He is looking at the attitude of your heart. If the Attitude is good...the Amount is acceptable!

Illus: Jesus taught us that very clearly Mark 12:41-44 “He watched HOW they gave!” What was her ATTITUDE?

<>Gave out of her lack

<>Gave sacrificially

<>Gave Without expectation of return or reward

Applic: We get confused about giving. If you Give according to your means, Give with a good heart...and God is pleased!

Approved: Lit = *to be well received!*

Principle #4: God's Goal Is Equality In Giving, Not Equality In Amount.

8:13-15

Equality: Lit = *to be even, or alike, or to be equal*

Illus: Remember when you were a kid, and you only had enough to buy ONE candy bar?

Do you remember the line you used to use? You CUT...I CHOOSE!

If you were the CUTTER...then you went to great pains to make SURE the two pieces were ALIKE EQUITABLE!

Paul is saying to us, when all is said and done, we as the body of Christ are to be equal in sacrifice and giving Not amount...but in the end result!

Illus: Take them back to the wilderness, and the gift of manna from God. Collect it each day

There was enough for everyone...but ONLY if those who gathered more than they needed shared!

Jesus: Luke 12:16-21: Gathered more than needed....Keep it all for himself...You Fool!

Question: Am I giving out of my abundance to the need and poverty of others.

Cuba Container project (Give, Financially, Skills, Knowledge)

Principle #5: Our Goal Is To Give Responsibly As Good Stewards.

8:16-24

In these few verses Paul is telling us that we have the responsibility before God to use what He has entrusted to us well!

He talks to the Cor church about the practical logistics of the offering, and how it is going to end up in Jerusalem

- A couple of trusted men will take it, NOT just Paul! (Titus and two others that are known and trusted!)
- They are going to be careful in how they handle it: Avoid criticism (already had some against Paul, no more!)
- They are going to Do what is right in God's eyes...and Men's Transparency!

Applic: When you give you give to those that are trustworthy to use it well

When you give you give to those that are careful in how they handle finances

When you give you give to those who are transparent and open in how they manage their finances

Because, you are a STEWARD of what God gave you...NOT just for you...But also for those that use what you contribute

Principle # 6: Our Goal Is To Give Generously, Not Grudgingly!

9:1-5

Paul tells the Cor church, listen, you said you wanted to give, and you made a great start.

Titus is on the way to collect what you promised, and I want you to be ready.

I have talked about you, and your desire...and the Macedonians are on the way with us...so get ready!

Generous: Lit = *act of bountiful blessing, act of overflowing blessing*

Grudging: Lit = *covetous, greedy, unwilling offering*

All of this speaks to the way you look at the opportunity to give. What do you see when the offering comes?

- **Generous:** Is a way to express the overflow of your heart. You are thankful to God for all He gives you, Pours out
- **Grudging:** Is talks about an unwilling obligation. You do it because you MUST. Pry it out of your hands

When you give...is it an OUTPOURING of Generosity, or a PRYING OUT of grudging giving?

In Lev 19 there is an entire section on bringing an offering to the Lord...From the herds and flocks of the people

Don't bring something that is deformed, sick, not from your very best

Illus: Hey, time to take and offering to the Lord to say thank you for blessing us. *Someone go get that Lamb with one eye...*

CONCL:

Paul says no, Our Giving to God is an act of Worship. WE offer our very best! We give from a thankful, overflowing heart

I had Bill move the offering today to the end of the service...because I want us to think about our giving today.

Challenge you with 6 Questions.

1. Have you given YOURSELF to God?
2. Are you growing...Excelling in your giving...or has it become stagnant, a rote act, going through the motions
3. Look at your attitude; If you gave at home, or online...think about it Or, Think about when did taxes! Attitude?
4. Are you carrying your responsibility within the body? Do you think about what God would have you do?
5. Do you give responsibly, as a good steward? Do you pay attention to how we manage the funds you give?
6. When you give...does it POUR out... Or Does it have to be PRIED out of your hands?