



**Gracious Generosity Part 3
Promises To the Generous
2 Corinthians 9:6-15
Westport Christian Church
January 24, 2010**

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. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, "He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness endures forever."

Now 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; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Bob Benson, in his book *See You At The House*, told about a Sunday School picnic he went to years ago. He had forgotten about it until the last minute, so he ran home to see if he could find something to take for his lunch. All he found in the refrigerator was one dried up piece of baloney and just enough mustard in the bottom of the jar that it got all over his knuckles trying to get it. Two slices of stale bread and a crumpled up brown paper sack completed the preparations.

He got to the picnic and sat down at a table next to a family that had prepared a feast! There was fried chicken, baked beans, potato salad, homemade rolls, sliced tomatoes—two big chocolate pies rounded out the feast.

That what they spread out next to Bob and his baloney sandwich.

Then one of them said to him, “Hey Bob, why don’t we just put it all together?” “Oh, No, I couldn’t do that . . . Couldn’t even think of it,” he said in an embarrassed voice. “Oh come on, there’s plenty of chicken and plenty of pie and plenty of everything . . . Besides we just love baloney sandwiches . . . let’s put it all together.”

And so there he sat eating like a king when he came like a pauper!

Well, here we are—“Paupers, living like kings!” So far we have looked at the “Marks of Generosity,” we’ve looked at how we can “Administrate Generosity,” and today I want us to see the “Promises to the Generous.”

Today I would like to answer the question: “What’s in it for me?” “If I give God’s way, what is God going to do for me?” “Should I take the risk, what possible benefits could come my way?”

If you have never been a giver God’s way, then you have no idea the blessings God has in store for you!!

Jesus said, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6:38 NIV)

Here is where I have to be very careful! I don’t want you to misunderstand, and I don’t want to be guilty of messing up the Gospel

message. Our MOTIVE for giving makes all the difference in the “Grace Called Giving.”

You know I don't subscribe to a “health and wealth gospel.” God will not provide all of us Rolls Royce to drive. He is not going to fill up your bank account because you put some money in the plate. However, if you will allow me to use a metaphor, “When we bring our baloney to God, we share in the bounty of His generous feast!”

“What are the promises to the generous?”

I. Generous Sowing Results in Generous Reaping.

Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (2 Cor 9:6 NASU)

Daniel Webster may have said it the best when he said, “God never puts money into a closed fist.”

Biblical giving is based upon two factors: Capability and Percentage.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.” (Mal 3:10 NASU)

As the offering was being collected, those who had a lot were putting in enough to be noticed by those around them. However, there was an elderly widow who gave all she had because of her love for her Lord. It just so happened that Jesus was there that day and noticed what had happened.

I wonder what it would be like on a given Sunday if the Lord Himself was handing you the offering plate—How much would you give and why?

May I remind you that in chapter eight it says they gave what they had the ability to give. You know what you are capable of giving and you know what percentage you are giving, so I must ask, “are you robbing God?”

If the answer is yes, then please don't expect God to bless your lack of

liberality.

Many of us are willing to give as long as we are giving someone's else's money, time, possessions, etc.

Bob Hope tells about the time that he and Jack Benny came to a toll booth. Bob Hope was driving and he asked Jack if he had a dollar to pay the toll. Benny reluctantly handed him a \$20 bill saying, "I don't have any ones." Hope handed the \$20 bill to the toll keeper and said, "Keep the change," and drove on.

It's real easy to be generous with someone else's money. But the promise is for the one who "sows generously."

The old farmer was asked how it was that he was able to give so much. He said he operated on the shovel system. He shoveled to God and God shoveled back—but God's shovel was a whole lot bigger than his!

Generous sowing results in generous reaping!

The second promise is . . .

II. God's Ability to Bless Has No Limitations.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
(2 Cor 9:8-9 NIV)

There are no limitations on God's ability to bless us.
—"To make all grace about to you"—"in all things—at all times"—"having all that you need."

There are two qualifiers we need to be aware of.

a. God's blessings take time. You don't sow the seed one week and reap the harvest the next week. You have to prepare the soil, plant the seed, fertilize, cultivate, weed, water and then wait. Just because you sow today doesn't mean you'll reap a harvest of riches next week.

The second qualifier is that not all of God's blessings are material.

Brad Johnson said, "Not everything that counts can be counted." Money cannot buy life's most valuable possessions. Peace—Love—A good name—Integrity.

A wealthy man begged God for the privilege of taking some of his wealth with him when he died. The man was extremely persistent so the Lord finally agreed that he could bring a small amount. When the man died, he stood at the gate before St. Peter with a bag of gold. Pete told him he couldn't bring that with him. The man told Pete that he had permission and he should call the Lord. Peter calls up God and said, "Lord there is a man standing at the gate with a bag in his hand and he told me You gave him permission to bring it in with him." "Now there are two questions Lord that I would like to ask. First, did you give him permission and second why would he want to bring in street paving materials?"

Not all of God's blessings are material.

Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. (Matt 19:27-30NIV) God's ability to bless has no limitation.

There is a third promise and that is . . .

III. Our Generosity Will Be A Testimony Praising God.

Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all . . . (2 Cor 9:13NASU)

God expects His children to behave in a manner that honors Him. He expects His children to following the example which has been given to them. God is not impressed with our pretense of worship. He wants to know if we practice His word!

In 1Samuel we read, "To obey is better than sacrifice." If you really

want to find yourself in communion with God, then simply obey Him.

God expects us to be obedient in this grace of giving. Giving encourages unselfishness within us. Our giving brings other needed relief and hope. Giving forces us out of our own tight little world. Giving keeps us from becoming too hooked on the world! Giving models the life of Christ. Giving results in eternal rewards. Giving makes us more cheerful caring people. Giving provides an example for others to follow.

When we walk with the Lord in grateful praise of obedience—our testimony praises God! Things such as, caring for the homeless, giving food, providing basic daily needs. People recognize a giving community when they witness one.

A church member once asked Wayne Smith, “If I don’t tithe will I go to Hell?” Wayne responded, “No, but somebody will!”

There is a fourth promise and that is . . .

IV. Others Will Be Praying On Your Behalf.

“While they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.” (2 Cor 9:14 NASU)

Paul was right, we pray for generous people, don’t we?!

Wayne Smith gave so much to his daughters that his wife Marge, who was very frugal, would say, “Wayne, you can’t buy their love.” Wayne got a note from one of his daughters which she wrote: “Remember dad, you can’t buy my love, but please keep trying!”

I pray that God will bless our generous givers. I pray that God will encourage more of us to become generous givers. I try very hard to thank people I know who have given generously. Paul says it is important to do so!

How long has it been since you prayed for the generous givers in your life?

Conclusion; Would you like to share in the promises to the generous? You can. You need to examine your heart. You need to give cheerfully. You

need to realize the pleasure which God receives from our generous giving.

It had been a hard winter in the Appalachian area, the snow had piled up deeper and deeper. Mercury dropped, rivers froze, people suffered. The Red Cross used helicopters to fly in supplies. One crew had been working day after day, long hours. They were on their way home late in the afternoon when they saw a cabin submerged in the snow. There was a thin whisper of smoke coming from the chimney. The rescue team figured they were probably about out of food and perhaps needed some medical supplies. They landed the helicopter about a mile away. Put on their heavy packs with emergency supplies, trudged through the waist-deep snow and reached the cabin.

Exhausted, panting and perspiring they pounded on the door. A thin gaunt mountain woman opened the door and the lead man gasped, "We're with the Red Cross." She stood there silent for a moment then said, "It's been a hard winter Sonny, I just don't think we can give you anything this year!"

That is the spirit of generosity that each of us should have. Looking to give—not receive!

Amen.