



SECOND CORINTHIANS

The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People



Part 3I—“Biblical Principles for Christian Charity”— 23 June 2024

Introduction: Thoughts on Self-Sufficiency

In the Greco-Roman culture of the 1st c. A.D., as in our own, respect was given to those who were “self-sufficient.” Those who were able to make their own way in the world and to establish their own fortunes were highly esteemed. Both the Stoic and Cynic philosophers of the day understood self-sufficiency to be related to contentment that arose from the freedom from external circumstances and other people.

While the Scriptures exhort us towards stewardship and the taking of personal responsibility, they do not support the idea of a pure libertarian society. Rather, believers are dependent both upon their relationship with God and their relationships with others.

Main Point: God has purposed that both those who give and those who receive Christian charity should do so with an attitude of _____ and _____.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Passage Overview

Paul has exhorted the Corinthians to follow through on their desire to take part in the collection for the impoverished saints in Jerusalem. Having also overviewed the authority and accountability that he and his fellow co-workers were operating under, Paul now sets forth some important general principles for Christian charity and then lists several benefits that will come from this specific act of charity on behalf of the believers in Jerusalem.

Exposition

1. Those who “_____” will do so in accordance with what they have “_____”. (Principle #1)

“sparingly”—φειδομένως (pheidomenōs)—in a scanty or meager manner; to be miserly.

“bountifully”—ἐπ’ εὐλογία (ep’ eulogia)—lit. “unto bounty;” it can mean “upon the principle of blessing,” a proverbial saying.

“No farmer considers sowing as a loss of seed because the harvest will provide the seed for the next season...He willingly sows all that he can and trust that God will bless the sowing with a bountiful harvest. If that farmer, for some reason, stints on the sowing, he will cheat himself of that harvest. The more he sows, the greater harvest he will reap and the more he will have for sowing the next harvest.” —David Garland

⇒ Paul employs this proverb to exhort the Corinthians to think about the ultimate goal of their giving and to then give _____ with that in mind.

2. Those who give, should do so _____ and for God’s _____. (Principle #2)

(+) “as he has decided in his heart”

(−) “not reluctantly”—ἐκ λύπη (ek lypē)—lit. “from pain/grief”

“or under compulsion”—ἐξ ἀνάγκη (ex anagkē)—constraint, pressure, or obligation

⇒ The OT recognizes that giving that is done in a grudging manner undermines the blessing that one receives from giving joyfully from one’s heart towards God (Deut. 15:10). Paul grounds this exhortation here in a partial quotation from the book of Proverbs that he somewhat alters to convey his point.

Prov. 22:8 (LXX)—God blesses a cheerful and generous man, but he will bring to an end the vanity of his deeds.

“...God loves, in the sense of “approves,” the one who is delighted to give to others. God loves a cheerful giver because that is precisely what God is, a cheerful giver.” —David Garland

3. God will supply all that we need, both to _____ us and to _____ our generosity. (Principle #3)

“God is able to make all grace abound to you”

⇒ “Grace” here should be understood in both a material and spiritual sense. God provides for our physical needs, but also provides what we need in order that we might be willing to give generously to others.

“all sufficiency”—αὐτάρκεια (autarkeia)—the state of having what is adequate; competence, contentment, sufficiency

all sufficiency → *in all things* → *at all times*

⇒ God's purpose in making all grace "abound" to us so that we might "abound" in every good _____.

⇒ To reinforce his point, Paul quotes from Psa. 112:9 [LXX Psa. 111]. The psalm describes the one who is righteous and fears the Lord.

Key Point: Generosity with all that we have been given by God flows naturally _____ and is an expression _____ our worship of the Lord.

4. There are multiple benefits that will result from the Corinthians _____ in the collection for Jerusalem.

(1) God is going to _____ what the Corinthians will need in order to give generously, and He will also be the _____ of the harvest that results.

⇒ Paul partially quotes Isa. 55:10 (LXX) to emphasize the power of God's Word to accomplish these things.

(2) The generosity of the Corinthians will _____ thankfulness from the saints towards God.

(3) The saints will recognize that this gift is an expression of their mutual _____ and they will be rejoice and give thanks.
"submission that comes from your confession of the Gospel"

(4) The saints will _____ for them and ask the Lord to continue to bless them.

Key Point: Thanksgiving to God is the proper _____ of those who are recipients of or witnesses to His provision through the generosity of His people.
"Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"

Concluding Thoughts

- All believers are recipients of God's generous grace, and we are therefore called to be generous with all that He has _____ to us.
- Being a generous people in the natural fruit of _____ and _____ a generous God.



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