

Teaching 6 of 11

Giving from a Happy Heart

Not grumbling. Not fear. Joy.

“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:7

Two kids bring gifts to a birthday party. One boy's mom picked and wrapped his gift, and he shoved it at the birthday girl. The other girl saved her own coins for weeks and bounced with joy when her friend opened it. Which gift meant more?

A plan, not a price tag

“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper” (1 Corinthians 16:2). Give often. Everyone take part. Give in step with what God has given you. Paul set a habit, not a number.

Giving is a grace

χάρις

charis (KAH-rees)

Grace: a free and kind gift.

Paul calls giving “this act of grace” (2 Corinthians 8:7). The word is χάρις *charis*, the same word for how God saves us. Giving is not a bill you pay.

It is grace flowing through you.

κοινωνία

koinōnia (koy-no-NEE-ah)

Sharing; being partners; a close family bond.

The poor churches of Macedonia gave “beyond their means, of their own accord” and begged for the joy of κοινωνία koinōnia, of taking part (2 Corinthians 8:3-4). They did not see giving as a loss. They saw it as joining hands.

Decide in your heart

προαιρέομαι

proaireomai (pro-eye-REH-oh-my)

To decide ahead of time.

ἱλαρός

hilaros (hih-lah-ROS)

Cheerful, glad. We get "hilarious" from it.

“As he has decided” is προαιρέομαι proaireomai, to choose ahead of time with God, not on a whim or out of guilt. “Not reluctantly or under compulsion”: God does not want gifts pulled out of you by fear. “God loves a cheerful giver”: ἱλαρός hilaros, where we get “hilarious.”

The model is Jesus

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

Jesus did not give ten percent. He gave everything. The bar is not ten percent. The bar is the cross: a higher bar, reached with love, not fear.

The first church in Jerusalem sold land and houses, “and there was not a needy person among them” (Acts 4:34). No one passed a law. Their hearts had changed.

Freedom is not stinginess

“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly” (2 Corinthians 9:6). Many who leave the tithe law find they give more, not less. Fear only pushes you to the line. Love pulls you past it.

If you have very little, God sees you. The widow’s two tiny coins were more than all the rich gifts (Mark 12:43). God looks at the size of the heart.

Some simple steps

Pray first and decide in your heart. Make a plan and give often. Give more when you have more. Look for needs: the widow, the orphan, the hungry. Support those who teach you (Galatians 6:6). And give with joy. “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). That is not a rule. It is a secret.

Remember this

God does not want your money pulled out by fear. He wants your heart moved by love. And love often gives far more than ten percent.