

Generosity – My Role in Helping My Family in Christ

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10 year old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. “How much is an ice cream sundae?” “Fifty cents,” replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it. “How much is a dish of plain ice cream?” he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table and the waitress was a bit impatient. “Thirty-five cents,” she said brusquely. The little boy again counted the coins. “I’ll have the plain ice cream,” he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and departed. When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies - her tip.

- What stands out to you the most from this story?

Read 2 Corinthians 9

- What verses do you find surprising and why?
- Do you find it interesting that God says that if you give sparingly you reap sparingly?

At times it may seem hard to give more than what you think you have. In life, we tend to focus on the here and now, as well as what am I getting out of this. Also you might say that, “This is my money that I have earned, why shouldn’t I use it for myself?” However this is not the mindset that God wants us to have. He has given us many gifts, both spiritual and material. As Christians it is our job to be good stewards of everything that God has given us, which involves giving back to those around us to further the kingdom because they have been given to us freely.

It is not to say to that you shouldn’t take care of your own personal needs, because you should. However, one needs to realize that you cannot reach people, if you are grounded in the mindset of money. It will become a stumbling block because you may always just look at the “numbers.”

Now in all of this, you shouldn’t give just because someone is telling you to. It has to be given from the heart. God says that He loves a cheerful giver. If you give grudgingly, then it’s not truly a gift nor does it really come from the heart.

On the other hand, when you help within the family of Christ with a selfless heart, this is when you have removed yourself from being number 1 to putting God in the forefront. With God being the center of what you are doing, this is when He is truly working. He also sees the sacrifices that you are making and will not forget.

God knows what His children need and will always provide. It is a step of faith to give more than you have.

Closing Thought:

When we think of generosity, we tend to focus solely on money and forget that generosity comes in many different forms. We can also be generous with our time, our talents, and resources.

- Think about what God has blessed you with.
 - How can you use what He has given you to bless those around you with in the body of Christ and outside?
 - Can you see where in your life it may be harder to be generous?

Scriptures: 2 Cor 9:1-15

1There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. **2**For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. **3**But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. **4**For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. **5**So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Generosity Encouraged

6Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. **7**Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8**And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **9**As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever."^a

10Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. **11**You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

12This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. **13**Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. **14**And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. **15**Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!