

# KEEP THE CHANGE



## CHEERFUL GIVING.

You know how sometimes people say, “I love them but I don’t like them!”? My dad has a follow-up statement, “Knowing someone loves me but doesn’t like me doesn’t make me feel very loved at all!”

The same can be said for giving. “I didn’t want to give this to you but I felt like I had to so I did.” Well, that’s not a fun gift to receive. In fact, most of us would probably insist they keep the “gift.”

God is delighted to give good gifts to his children. He generously lavishes love & mercy & grace on us. In turn, if we learn to hold our finances with a loose grip - if we can learn to give joyfully (excitedly!) - God promises good things will come from that joy-filled generosity.

My mom learned about cheerful giving when she traveled to Ghana. There, everyone came up and put their offering in a bucket at the front of the church. But they didn’t just stand in line - they *danced* and laughed and spun their way to the front. She was even more surprised when everyone went around *again*. She asked why this happened:

“The first time, we give our tithes. The second time, we bring up our above-and-beyond offerings!” And both times, they did so joyfully.

What would it look like for us to live joyfully generous as well?

# IN THE BIBLE.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

I really don't need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. 2 For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving.

3 But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don't want to be wrong in my boasting about you. 4 We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren't ready after all I had told them! 5 So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly.

6 Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. 7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." 8 And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. 9 As the Scriptures say,

"They share freely and give generously to the poor.

Their good deeds will be remembered forever."

10 For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

11 Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. 12 So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.

13 As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. 14 And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!

# QUESTIONS.

*Feel free to talk through some or all of these questions*

- 1.) What sticks out to you in the verses above?
- 2.) What challenges you in this chapter? What encourages you?
- 3.) What are some of the things Paul lists as results of the Corinthians' cheerful generosity?
- 4.) How can you begin to implement cheerful giving in your life?

## TAKE TEN:

- How did you see God work in your life this week?
- What has God been teaching you in His Word?
- What kind of conversations are you having with your pre-Christian friends?
- What good can you do around here? (in your life/circumstance)
- How can we help you in prayer and what do you want us to ask you about next week?

**Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:**

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?