

Learning to Give with Joy

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (NIV)

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. [2] Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. [3] For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, [4] they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. [5] And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

1. WE GIVE OUT OF OUR JOY OF HELPING THOSE IN NEED.

v. 2 *"Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity."*

Proverbs 28:27 (NIV)

He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

- Giving with joy rarely comes when things are going smooth.
- Giving with joy has very little to do with wealth.
- Generosity has more to do with attitude than ability to give.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NIV)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. [7] Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] 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. WE GIVE OUT OF LOVE FOR FELLOW BELIEVERS.

v. 3, 4 *"For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints."*

Hebrews 6:10 (NIV)

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

- The joy of giving means we "get to" give instead of "have to" give.
- The motivation for giving is love.
- Sharing our resources is a privilege, not an obligation.

3. WE GIVE OUT OF OUR DEDICATION TO CHRIST.

v. 5 *"And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will."*

Proverbs 3:9 (Msg)

Honor God with everything you own; give him the first and the best.

- The more we love God, the more we look for opportunities to give.
- The key to stewardship is giving ourselves to God, long before we give our money.
- Stewardship is not an idea added by the church, it's a part of God's plan for his children.