

From Getting to Giving

2 Corinthians 8:1-9; 9:12-15



Pastor Ron Graff
Sunday,
Dec 23, 2007

Continuing the series: From Secular to Sacred

Introduction

CHRISTMAS CAN BE A BIG DISAPPOINTMENT FOR PEOPLE WHO FOCUS ON GETTING, BUT IT CAN BE A GREAT BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE PRIVILEGE OF GIVING.

✦ “I Want” (Getting)

☆ Self-Centeredness

- * The “Me Generation”
- * What’s in it for me?

☆ Materialism

- * “Want Lists” – Letters to Santa
- * The more we get the more we want

☆ Christmas Satire

- * Mr. Scrooge
- * The Grinch
- * “Green Christmas”

☆ The Best Gift 2 Corinthians 9:15

- * *God’s Indescribable Gift*

✦ “I Want To Share” (Giving)

☆ Christmas Customs

- ✦ St. Nicholas
- ✦ “The Little Drummer Boy”

☆ Biblical Images

- ✦ The Wise Men
- ✦ The Macedonians

☆ Biblical Teaching – 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; 9:12-15

- ✦ The Desire to Give Comes From God
2 Corinthians 8:1,5-9
 - A special kind of grace
- ▲ From Devotion to the Lord
 - Gave themselves first to the Lord
 - Excel in the grace of giving
- ▲ From the Example of the Lord
 - Though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor.
 - So that you might become rich
- ✦ The Ability to Give Is Universal
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 - Extreme poverty
 - Gave beyond their ability
- ✦ The Act of Giving Is A Privilege
2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:12-15

Application

From Getting to Giving

2 Corinthians 8:1-9; 9:12-15



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Introduction

I would like to use the first point of our message as the introduction to this problem, and the second point to show the Biblical solution.

S- CHRISTMAS CAN BE A BIG DISAPPOINTMENT FOR PEOPLE WHO FOCUS ON GETTING, BUT IT CAN BE A GREAT BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE PRIVILEGE OF GIVING.

S- ✦ “I Want” (Getting)

☆ Self-Centeredness

Two well-known expressions illustrate the extent of self-centeredness in our times. The first is a title...

✦ The “Me Generation”

The other is a question...

✦ What’s in it for me?

S- Benjamin Franklin said, “A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle.” –

Another word for this problem is “Consumerism.” Consumerism is the endless search for more and better things. It makes some sense in process of buying the things you need. But it leads to the accumulation of more things than we need, or can even afford.

Believe it or not, the church is also affected by consumerism. According to George Barna’s statistics, most of the growing churches in our generation are the megachurches that can offer the most impressive “program” for their audience, while most smaller churches are losing their members to these consumer-oriented giants.

S- Love Yourself ???

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Jesus said all of the commandments could be summarized like this:

S- Matt 22:37-40

37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
(from New International Version)

But In the Bible we are never told to love ourselves.

On the other hand, The Bible assumes that we do love ourselves.

S- Eph 5:28-30

28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-
(from New International Version)

Jesus said deny yourself or you will lose your life

S- Luke 9:23

23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

One famous preacher of our generation wrote a book entitled "Self-Love"

"Love yourself or die--physically and spiritually!...Love yourself or you will die spiritually."(Robert Schuller, "Self-Love," p. 43)

"Self-esteem then, or pride in being a human being,' is the single greatest need facing the human race today. .. I strongly suggest that self-love is the ultimate will of man--that what you really want more than anything else in the

world is the awareness that you are a worthy person. ... Do not fear pride: the easiest job God has is to humble us. God's almost impossible task is to keep us believing every hour of every day how great we are as his sons and daughters on planet earth."

<http://www.letusreason.org/Poptea1.htm>

Before we leave this point, there is a Biblical balance here. While the Bible shows that Pride is the original sin, and arrogance and self-centeredness are an ongoing problem, millions of people do suffer from a bad self-image, and God has a solution for that.

But the solution is not to just accept yourself as you are. It is to find fulfillment in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

During my Prison Fellowship years I used to teach down-and-out prisoners a course that I called,

S- "What You Are In Christ."

In Jesus you are a new creation,
You are A child of God,
You are An heir, and joint heir with Jesus Christ,
You are An ambassador of the Kingdom of
Heaven,
You are A temple of the Holy Spirit,
And so much more!!!

So, you are great, and do have a great future, but that greatness does not depend on you own self-

effort. It depends on the infinite power of God released in your life through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Pride has no place. Selfishness and Self-Centeredness have no place. Jesus Christ is all and all. And it is a totally satisfying way of living the rest of your life!

S- ☆ Materialism

- * “Want Lists” – Letters to Santa
- * The more we get the more we want

This matter of self-centeredness is illustrated by some of the well-known villains of the Christmas season. Here are a few of these villains:

S- ☆ Christmas Satire

- * Mr. Scrooge
- * The Grinch
- * “Green Christmas”

Before we leave this first point, let’s consider the fact that we all want something. And the greatest of all our needs comes from what Pascal called “A God-shaped vacuum in our hearts.

**S- “There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus”
– Blaise Pascal**

**S- ☆ The Best Gift 2 Corinthians 9:15
* *God’s Indescribable Gift***

S- ✦ “I Want To Share” (Giving)

**The Lord Jesus himself said,
“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”**

-Acts 20:35

S- ☆ Christmas Customs

* St. Nicholas

* “The Little Drummer Boy”

S- ☆ Biblical Images

* The Wise Men

* The Macedonians

Who were the Macedonians?

**S- Please turn in your Bible to 2
Corinthians, chapter 8.**

2 Corinthians 8 and 9 are the classic chapters in the Bible about giving. We will look at some of the major points in this passage. But first, who were the Macedonians? Start with verse 1.

8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

Then, in verse 5...

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.

Now, let's explore briefly the Biblical teaching about the joy of giving. We will return to this passage later in January, but let's get some Christmas-giving information from it now.

**S- ☆ Biblical Teaching – 2 Corinthians 8:1-9;
9:12-15**

- ★ The Desire to Give Comes From God
2 Corinthians 8:1,5-9
- A special kind of grace

8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches

▲ From Devotion to the Lord

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. 6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But just as you excel in everything-in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us-see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

▲ From the Example of the Lord

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

We love because He first loved us. – 1 John 4:19

We give because He has given us so much.

★ The Ability to Give Is Universal

2 Corinthians 8:2-3

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,

★ The Act of Giving Is A Privilege

2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:12-15

4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

GIVING OUR “SERVICE”

12 This service that you perform is

HELPING THE POOR AND
NEEDY

not only supplying the needs of God's people

S- Matt 25:34-40 [Turn to this passage](#)

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your

inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

(from New International Version)

**CAUSING PEOPLE TO THANK
GOD FOR OUR HELP**

but is also overflowing in many
expressions of thanks to God. 13

Because of the service by which you

have proved yourselves, men 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!

Application

What can we give? Certainly not just money.

Give our hearts to The Lord

Give Love for everyone – Family, church family, friends, coworkers, strangers, enemies

Give a godly example (like the Macedonians)

Give our service – Time and talent

Give our prayers

2 Cor 8:1-9

**THE DESIRE TO GIVE COMES FROM GOD
GIVING IS A SPECIAL KIND OF GRACE**

8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

FROM DEVOTION TO THE LORD

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. 6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But just as you excel in everything-in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us-see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

FROM THE EXAMPLE OF THE LORD

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

(from New International Version)

THE ABILITY TO GIVE IS UNIVERSAL
THE POOR CAN BE THE MOST GENEROUS
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,

THE ACT OF GIVING IS A PRIVILEGE
GIVING IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE
4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

2 Cor 9:12-15

12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.
13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men 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!**

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