

Bragging Rights

2Corinthians 9:1-7

Paul writing to church in Corinth to complete the collection of funds for poor saints in Jerusalem--one year earlier they eager to do— Jerusalem church persecuted & fallen hard times--now had physical needs. Paul had asked Gentile churches to be involved using Corinthians as model. Do what they are eager to do, show love by sending offering. Paul bragged on church in Corinth so others to get involved. Problem was one year passed and they hadn't completed their commitment. Ch 8 instructed Corinthians to get the offering together before we come to pick it up. Ch 9 he continues

1 For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; 2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, & your zeal has stirred up most of them.

No need for me to go on and on because I know your love & willingness to follow thru. Because I boasted about you to other churches they came on board. Your zeal inspired others but it's been one year and you haven't followed thru on what I know you are willing to do.

3 But I have sent the brethren, that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; 4 lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to speak of you) should be put to shame by this confidence.

Paul sent Titus and two others to receive the money taken up for the church in Jerusalem. But he is somewhat concerned that his bragging about their generosity and zeal of support which motivated others would be interpreted as insincere. He's hoping they come thru w/ what they said they would do that his boasting in them not be in vain.

Paul is concerned if they are not prepared and some from Macedonia come w/ him or hear about it and you aren't ready and only then cobble together some funds on the spur of the moment my boasting in you would look bad, they'd think I was just hyping other churches about you to get money out of them and it was all a big sham. I will be humiliated and so will you. So Paul says follow thru.

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5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not affected by covetousness.

Paul didn't want them to take up an offering when he was there. *Optics*; it would look bad, as if you weren't expecting it & not prepared but it was a spur of the moment thing. And critics would talk saying Paul is a charlatan he's in it for the bucks. Paul is careful not wanting critics to bring any accusation against the ministry—Lord/church *'Christianity is only about the \$'*.

Sadly many bring shame to Christ & the church because over emphasis on giving. They are charlatans, fleecing the flock instead of feeding the flock. Paul avoiding this at all costs so he sent some brothers--advance team ahead so all the giving was completed before he got there. He didn't want any collections while he was there. Sad when others use you to raise money. Chuck's own words Farrington HS

A few years back, I was over in Hawaii speaking at a Bible conference, where I've been invited to speak at this Bible conference. And so the first night, when the fellow went to take the offering, he took about ten minutes, and you know, "We have asked our brother Chuck to come over here, and it cost, you know, the money and all to get him here. And we want to make sure that he's well taken care of and all, and so we want you to really give tonight to provide for our dear brother Chuck's needs." And all this kind of stuff. And I sat there on the platform just embarrassed silly. And so when I finally got a chance to get up, I said, "I appreciate what this brother said about your poor brother Chuck, but I want you to know, I'm not going to take one penny for being here. For I have an extremely wealthy Father who takes care of all of my needs, and I don't have to depend upon people to provide for my needs, because my Father so adequately takes care of me. Gives me a generous expense account and supplies all of my needs. And so, if you want to take up offerings here, that's fine. If you want to give, that's good. But don't give for poor brother Chuck, 'cause he's not going to take a cent from you. I'm here to give and not to receive."

Later Chuck said to me *I was just really embarrassed. I don't like my name used as the goat or the gimmick or whatever to get people to give. I do trust in my Father to supply my needs, and He does, and He's very good about it. He's very faithful in that. And so, really, I sort of modeled myself after Paul in this regard*

Bragging Rights 2Corinthians 9:1-7

Chuck would later say he went to the opposite extreme because of the overemphasis and robbed the people of the grace for giving not given them opportunity for God's blessing in giving.

God doesn't need our help we need His help. He doesn't need our support we need His support. So when it comes to giving simply give the opportunity--no urgent pleas for funds, no catastrophic request that if you don't it will be the end of program or ministry. It is God's church not ours so He will supply all our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. So Paul says receive the offering before I get there.

And yet there is God's spiritual law of giving which I don't understand of sowing and reaping...sows sparingly, reap sparingly—sow bountifully, reap bountifully. *Gravity*-drop egg & watermelon 10 stories which hit first?

Gravity accelerates all objects equally. Electricity-Volcano Lightning **Also called** "dirty thunderstorms", these lightning strikes occur in the wake of massive volcanic eruptions (*Pic*). There's **no consensus on the cause**

Tired hardly keep eyes open—forth to go surf and wide awake filled w/ energy.

Spiritual laws in giving *Lk 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."*

How does it work the more you give to God the more you get back from God I don't know how it works but it works those who have lived by it. Paul puts it out there

6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.

If we take the spiritual and put it in planting seed I can understand it a little better. If I sow a lot of papaya seed, mango seeds, banana I'll have a bigger harvest and more fruit but if only a seed or two a smaller harvest

So I begin to understand the spiritual law-more you give the more God returns back in God's harvest field. Interesting that it is the only law God

Bragging Rights 2Corinthians 9:1-7

ask us to prove Him in. *Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and put Me to the test now in this,*” says the LORD of armies, *“if I do not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.* We are to prove Him in tithes & offerings.

7 Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

So Paul says each one *lit* every one of us as we purpose or decide *Ellicott-Grk word purpose does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament & is used in its full ethical significance as indicating, not a passing impulse nor a vague wish, but a deliberate resolve..not the outcome of a spent emotion, or a promise half-regretted, but formed with a clear well-defined perception....& therefore neither “grudgingly,” as regards amount, nor w/ reluctance, as giving under pressure.*

Begrudged giving like begrudged service doesn't belong where Jesus lives. It offends God and He takes it personally. What He's done for us & then we complain about what we do or give to Him. *'hell son bags cost money'*...keep it. When something is given or done for the church w/ strings attached-makes it very uncomfortable. 'It's been in our house for long time and we're moving so keep it save it's got sentimental value when we come to visit....Now we are obligated

But God doesn't want giving to be pressured by sob stories & going out of business stories or you will get back 100 fold w/ your seed faith money to our ministry. But what you give is between you & God & done cheerfully-- that kind of giving God respects & honors. So what you purpose is between you and God and He blesses on that basis.