

2 Corinthians 9:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Analysis

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart (ἔκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ)—The verb proaireō (προαιρέω) means "choose beforehand, decide in advance." Giving should be deliberate, premeditated, not impulsive. The **heart** (kardia, καρδία) represents the seat of will and affection, not mere emotion. God desires giving that flows from transformed desires, not external compliance.

Not grudgingly, or of necessity (μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης)—lypē (λύπη, "grief, sorrow, reluctance") describes the pain of parting with money. Anankē (ἀνάγκη, "necessity, compulsion") indicates external pressure. Both corrupt giving. God rejects offerings given with resentment or coercion (see Cain's grudging sacrifice, Gen 4:5; Ananias and Sapphira's false generosity, Acts 5:1-11).

For God loveth a cheerful giver (ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός)—hilaron (ἰλαρόν, "cheerful, joyful") gives us "hilarious." This quotes Proverbs 22:8 LXX: "God blesses a cheerful and giving man." The present tense agapaō (ἀγαπᾷ, "loves") indicates God's continuous delight in joyful generosity. Cheerfulness reveals that the giver has grasped grace: "You can't out-give God." This is the heart of the gospel applied to money.

Historical Context

Greco-Roman patronage systems compelled giving through social obligation—clients gave tribute to patrons to maintain favor and protection. Jewish tithing was legally mandated. Paul revolutionizes giving: Christian generosity is voluntary, joyful, and grace-motivated. This countercultural approach puzzled ancient audiences accustomed to compulsory religious taxes and socially coerced donations. True worship requires freedom.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How would you honestly assess the emotional quality of your giving—joyful, neutral, or reluctant?
2. What specific aspect of God's grace to you in Christ most motivates cheerful generosity?
3. How can you cultivate 'premeditated' giving that flows from heart transformation rather than external pressure or emotional manipulation?

Interlinear Text

ἔκαστος καθὼς προαιρεῖται τῇ καρδίᾳ μὴ^ν
Every man according as he purposeth in his heart so let him give not
G1538 G2531 G4255 G3588 G2588 G3361

ἐξ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· ιλαρὸν γὰρ δότην
grudgingly G3077 or grudgingly necessity a cheerful for giver
G1537 G2228 G1537 G318 G2431 G1063 G1395

ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός
loveth G3588 God
G25 G2316

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 8:12 (Parallel theme): For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Acts 20:35 (Parallel theme): I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

1 Chronicles 29:17 (References God): I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

Exodus 25:2 (Parallel theme): Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.

Proverbs 11:25 (Parallel theme): The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Proverbs 22:9 (Parallel theme): He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Romans 12:8 (Parallel theme): Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Peter 4:9 (Parallel theme): Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

Exodus 35:5 (Parallel theme): Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,

James 5:9 (Parallel theme): Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

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