

Philippians 4:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

Analysis

Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account (οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν, ouch hoti epizētō to doma, alla epizētō ton karpon ton pleonazonta eis logon hymōn)—Ouch...epizētō to doma ("not that I seek the gift")—Paul again clarifies (cf. v. 11): he's not hinting for more support. Epizētō ton karpon ("I seek the fruit")—karpon ("fruit") is spiritual reward for them. Ton pleonazonta eis logon hymōn ("which increases to your account")—pleonazonta ("multiplying, abounding") and logon ("account") are financial terms. Giving produces dividends in God's economy. Paul's concern is their spiritual benefit, not his material gain. This echoes Jesus: treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-21). Giving is investment in eternal dividends.

Historical Context

Ancient patronage culture involved giving to gain status/favors. Paul subverts this: he doesn't seek gifts for himself but wants Philippians to gain eternal reward. This theology of giving as heavenly investment appears throughout Scripture (Prov 19:17; Matt 6:19-21; 2 Cor 9:6-11; 1 Tim 6:17-19). Generous giving 'abounds to account'—God keeps records and rewards. Paul's pastoral heart prioritizes their eternal good over his temporary comfort.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's focus on their 'account' (logon hymōn) challenge self-serving fundraising?
2. What 'fruit' (karpon) abounds to your account through generous giving?
3. How can you give in ways that store up heavenly treasures, not merely meet earthly needs?

Interlinear Text

οὐχ	ὅτι	ἐπιζητῶ	τὸ	δῶμα	ἀλλ'	ἐπιζητῶ	τὸν	καρπὸν
Not	because	I desire	G3588	a gift	but	I desire	G3588	fruit
G3756	G3754	G1934		G1390	G235	G1934		G2590
τὸν	πλεονάζοντα	εἰς	λόγον	ὑμῶν				
G3588	that may abound	to	account	your				
	G4121	G1519	G3056	G5216				

Additional Cross-References

Titus 3:14 (Parallel theme): And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

Hebrews 6:10 (Parallel theme): For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

John 15:8 (Parallel theme): Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Titus 1:7 (Parallel theme): For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

Philippians 4:11 (Parallel theme): Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Romans 15:28 (Parallel theme): When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

John 15:16 (Parallel theme): Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

2 Corinthians 9:5 (Parallel theme): Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

1 Thessalonians 2:5 (Parallel theme): For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

1 Peter 5:2 (Parallel theme): Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;