



SERIES: Philippians (May / June) “Finding Joy in the Journey”

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Monday, June 28, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 4:15-17

NC0188

TITLE: Developing a Heart for Generosity

A common question I get is, “How much should I give towards God’s work?” As a pastor, I want to say, “How much ya’ got?” But I don’t. People want a percentage or a dollar amount. The reasons vary from sincere inquiry to religious activity. I know one couple who committed at the beginning of their marriage to give away an additional 1% each year. So year one, they started with 10% by year 25, it’d be 25%, and so on. That was amazing and unique.

So what is a good posture towards giving? Listen to what Paul said to some generous givers in Philippians 4:

“And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.” (4:15-17, ESV).

Now, I know what you’re thinking. Paul didn’t say really anything about giving, except that 10 years ago, no one except the Philippian church gave offerings to Paul. But we miss several key points when we don’t engage in Scripture.

First, Paul was a good steward of God’s resources. Paul says, “[partnership with me in giving and receiving](#).” These are accounting terms. “Partnership” could be translated “account”. “Giving and receiving” could be translated as “debits and credits”. Paul was keeping track of what he received and spent. While on staff at a local church, people would often come with financial woes. I can say 90% of the time, people had no budget. They had no idea where their money was going. They just knew they didn’t have any. Paul was a committed accountant and a good steward.

Secondly Paul said, “I didn’t ask for help from you”. Paul went directly to God for the provision. Now, there’s nothing wrong with asking for help. I’ve done it. You’ve probably done it. But I needed to go to God first. Remember what Paul said, “Worry about nothing. Pray about everything.” So you can ask for help, much like the early church met the needs of each other in fellowship. But we need to go to God first. That’s because we trust Him above anyone or anything else.

Lastly, Paul was applauding their heart in giving. Too many people give for a tax benefit, a brick on a wall, or one more insurance policy for eternity. Not these people - they gave out of the abundance of God's grace.

So giving isn't about a number; it's about right stewardship, trusting God, and right motives.

So here's my challenge for you today: where is it you struggle with your giving? The stewardship, the trusting, or the motives? It might be one, two, or all three. The key is to do something about it.

Share in the comments below where you struggle, and what is one step of obedience you will do to correct it? Will you begin to track your spending for a week? Will you commit to giving a certain amount first to your local church or your favorite ministry? Will you ask God to give you joy when you give?

When we trust God and give accordingly, lives are blessed, and we all win the day.