

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #55

Romans 15:22-29

Now we may observe that **verse 26** speaks of a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. This collection came from those of Macedonia and Achaia. The main text that talks about this collection is II Corinthians 8-9. There are six Biblical principles of giving we want to see:

Principle #1 - Biblical giving is to be sacrificial. II Cor. 8:2-3

All giving is not sacrificial giving. Sacrificial giving is giving money to God when we ourselves have needs (not wants) for which we could have used our money. Luke 21:1-4 makes it clear that God keeps a very special record of those who are sacrificially giving. Spiritual people are sacrificial people, not mechanical people.

Principle #2 - Biblical giving is to be joyful. II Cor. 8:2; 9:7b

God loves a cheerful giver. It is very clear that God not only takes notice of the amount a person gives, but the attitude in which the offering is given.

Principle #3 - Biblical giving is to be willing. II Cor. 8:3, 12; 9:7

There is absolutely no doubt that giving is very important to God (Malachi 3:8-12). In fact, for a believer not to give is to actually steal from God. However, no church should demand people give or beg or manipulate them to give because God wants people giving willingly of their own volition.

Principle #4 - Biblical giving is to be sanctified. II Cor. 8:5

Sanctified giving is giving that first gives oneself to God and then money. It is possible for one to give money to God and not be spiritual or set apart unto God in one's own personal and private life.

Principle #5 - Biblical giving is to be systematic. I Cor. 16:2a

Obviously, the first day of the week is the best policy of giving.

There are two main dangers when it comes to giving:

(Danger #1) - The danger of legalism - legalistic ritual that one goes through every week.

(Danger #2) - The danger of laxity - just a hit-and-miss giving of whatever is left over.

Principle #6 - Biblical giving is to be proportional. I Cor. 16:2b

We are to give in proportion to how God has prospered us. As I understand it, a good place to begin is ten percent. That is apparently the figure Abraham started with before the law was ever given (Genesis 14:18-20).

This figure was also one that Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, used in his giving (Gen. 28:22). This also was the figure emphasized in the Levitical law (Lev. 27:30-34).

It would seem from general observation that giving God ten percent is a good beginning point; however, the right N.T. mindset is that we will move up the ladder of our giving the more God prospers us. **In other words, ten percent is a good place to begin our giving; it is not necessarily the best place to end our giving.** God makes it clear that the more we give to Him, the more He will entrust us with (II Cor. 9:6).

BELIEVERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO FINANCIALLY CARE FOR THOSE TO WHOM THEY OWE A SPIRITUAL DEBT.

Now specifically in this context the debt was the debt we owe to Israel. However, Paul later develops this same principle to those who work hard at preaching and teaching (I Timothy 5:17-18). In this passage, there are two areas of responsibility these believers had:

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY #1 – The believers had a responsibility to Paul. 15:22-24

It is very important to realize that **verses 22-23** establish the fact that Paul had never been to Rome. He had been “hindered” from going to Rome. He had a great desire to go there, but he had been “hindered” from actually going. Theologically, it is Satan who has the ministry of hindrance (I Thessalonians 2:18), but we also know that God is always in sovereign control even when we are hindered by Satan (Romans 1:9-13).

When Paul writes this, he is nearing the end of his third missionary journey. He had been a believer for well over 20 years. He had traveled somewhere between 4,500 to 6,000 miles. One of his great ambitions was to go to Rome.

Now carefully look at **verse 24**. Paul says, “I intend to go to Spain.” Spain was 750 to 800 miles from Rome straight west across the Mediterranean Sea. Paul says, “I am going to Spain, but first I will stop and visit you and I expect you to help me in providing my trip to Spain.” That phrase “helped on my way there by you” indicates, as Frederic Godet said, that these Romans would provide: 1) Companionship; and 2) Expenditures.

Fritz Rienecker in his *Linguistic Key to the Greek N.T.*, says of this infinitive “to be helped” that it would include: 1) Food; 2) Companionship; 3) Travel arrangements; and 4) Money. I think we could add a fifth to the list and that would be 5) Housing while in Rome.

In other words, Paul is writing to a people whom he has never visited in over 20 years and he informs them that it is their responsibility to help foot the missionary bill for his trip to Spain.

The Romans had reaped the benefits of Paul’s impacting teaching ministry and God gave them the responsibility of financially helping him.

What is the value of understanding a book like Romans? What dollar value can you put on the apostle who just unlocked the Gospel of God that could save them forever?

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY #2 – The believers had a responsibility to believing Jews.
15:25-27

Paul was a man himself who gave to the work of God. One of the major financial projects that he personally undertook was a collection for the Jerusalem believers (I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8:1- 9:15; Romans 15:25-27).

(Reason #1) - Because the Jews were believers. They were “saints.” **15:25**

(Reason #2) - Because the Jews were poor. **15:26**

(Reason #3) - Because the Jews were owed. **15:27**

The Jews of Jerusalem were very poor for at least five Biblical reasons:

- 1) Overpopulation - many Jews moved to Jerusalem expecting Christ’s return. Acts 2:46
- 2) Zealousness - they sold their homes and pooled their resources for the cause of Christ and funds were running low. Acts 2:42-47
- 3) Persecution - Paul himself had chased many of the Jews out of their homes and jobs.
Acts 8:1
- 4) Famine - According to Acts 11:27-30, a major famine had spread through the area just a few years before this letter during the reign of Claudius.
- 5) Taxation - Rome heaped heavy taxes on the Jews.

These were reasons for the poverty and Paul says there is a debt we owe them (15:27). The word “indebted” speaks of financial obligation.

Now look carefully at verse 29, the church that takes its financial responsibilities seriously is destined to receive the fullness of the blessings of God. In other words, full blessing of God comes to those churches who are faithful in their giving.

Questions worth answering:

- 1) Do I desire to give more and more of myself and my money to God?
- 2) If I must make a choice to give money to God or buy something for myself, what do I do?
- 3) When it comes time for us to face Jesus Christ, will His judgment likely be, “You faithfully and sacrificially gave unto Me” or “You faithlessly and selfishly stole from Me?”

Really, when it comes to money, God doesn’t want or need our money; He wants us; He wants our hearts. Does He have it?