

Heart of the Matter

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

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In recent times this idea has been perverted by unscrupulous ministers to entice people to believe that the more they give the more they will get in return. They appeal to greed to encourage others to open their pocketbooks, and they give ultimately to get more for themselves

Paul does not pass this principle off as a shrewd investment strategy on how to reap greater material blessings by giving a portion of it to others. If one gives in hopes of attaining greater material prosperity, then one will harvest only spiritual poverty. Paul makes clear in what follows that God rewards generosity with material abundance to make it possible for people to be even more generous.

Paul looks beyond the pressing matter in hand—the finalizing of the collection project at Corinth—to a lifestyle of cheerful giving that will be resourced by God. The addition of καὶ εἰς πάντα at the end of v. 13 points in the same direction—Paul is saying in effect, “Give generously now, and you will find that God maintains your desire to give and increases your resources for further giving

I. What Gives v.6

a. Sparingly - **scanty or meager manner, sparingly**

i. Sow - appropriating the fruits of another's labor

ii. Reap - **to gain results or benefits**

b. Bountifully - Since the concept of blessing connotes the idea of bounty in order that blessed influence might be felt)

i. Sows

1. No farmer considers sowing as a loss of seed because the harvest will provide the seed for the next season. Consequently, no sower begrudges the seed he casts upon the ground or tries to scrimp by with sowing as little as possible. He willingly sows all that he can and trusts that God will bless the sowing with a bountiful harvest. If the farmer, for some reason, stints on the sowing, he will cheat himself of that harvest. The more he sows, the greater the harvest he will reap and the more he will have for sowing for the next harvest.

2. He is implying that a meager contribution from the Corinthians would produce some harvest, but his desire and aim was for a sizable gift that would produce a correspondingly substantial harvest of benefits for both givers and recipients

ii. Reap

1. Here he assures his readers that God is able also in their case to endow them with abundant liberality. At the same time both the context and the following reference to αὐτάρκεια suggest that material blessings are also in view.
2. the harvest to be reaped from lavish and joyful sowing is declared to be God's material and spiritual prospering to make further liberal giving possible (vv. 8–11), the relief of need (v. 12a), and prayers of thanksgiving and intercession on the part of the beneficiaries of the sowing (vv. 12b–14).
3. The reference back to εὐλογία in v. 5 is clear, whether we translate that word there as “gift of blessing” or “generous gift,” referring to a liberal gift that is freely given and that blesses the recipient.

II. How to Give v.7

a. Purposed

i. Purposed - *he has made up his mind to reach a decision beforehand, choose (for oneself), commit oneself to,*

1. As the perfect of προαιρέομαι, “choose (for oneself),” “decide,” προήρηται points to a settled decision to contribute a certain amount to the collection, whether on a regular basis (as in 1 Cor. 16:2) or in a single gift
2. The omission of a verb serves to emphasize motivation for action (cf. καρδία, λύπη, ἀνάγκη) as opposed to the act of giving itself. As in 1 Cor. 16:2 and Acts 11:29, both passages that describe financial giving, the use of ἕκαστος highlights individual responsibility to contribute to an offering that would in fact be sent as a single corporate gift
- 3.

ii. Heart - of the will and its decisions

1. Paul omits the imperative and thereby softens the force of what he wants them to do. Throughout these two chapters, Paul goes out of his way to avoid giving the impression that he is trying to force this project upon them. What the Corinthians are to do is clear, but Paul does not come right out and tell them to do it
2. The decision was to be private (τῇ καρδίᾳ, locative dative), not public, and the giving was to be purposeful, not impulsive

b. How Not

i. Not Grudgingly - *reluctantly*

1. the action of giving: inward sorrow at losing what is given, and outward compulsion that forces one to give, giving that is reluctant and giving that is pressured. To give regretfully or under constraint is to sow sparingly (v. 6), to act with an unwilling heart (cf. v. 7a), and to give joylessly (cf. v. 7b). Paul knew that spontaneity and warmth would be absent from the Corinthians' giving if coercion were present, whether the pressure to give came from him or from any of his representatives. The contemporary analogy for this Jerusalem collection was not the obligatory annual Temple tax that was levied on all adult male Jews, but the voluntary offerings that Jews, proselytes, and even Gentiles made in Jerusalem. More remotely, the closest OT analogy is the "freewill offerings" of money and materials given by the Israelites for the construction of the tabernacle (Exod. 25:1–9; 35:4–9, 20–29; 36:2–7).
- ii. Under Compulsion - *under pressure*
 1. He has already hinted that attitude is more important than the actual amount given (8:11–12): in God's eyes an eager desire to give that is translated into actual giving is one of the criteria that determines the acceptability of a gift; the other criterion is that the size of the gift should accord with one's resources, however meager or substantial they may be. Now in ch. 9 he stresses that sowing that is truly generous or giving that is truly lavish will not be marked by a desire to manipulate the situation for one's own advantage (μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν, v. 5), nor by regret (μὴ ἐκ λύπης, v. 7), nor by surrender to pressure (μὴ ... ἐξ ἀνάγκης, v. 7). Rather, the person who gives should take delight in giving, should be a cheerful giver (ἰλαρὸς δότης, v. 7).
- c. How To
 - i. God Loves
 - ii. Cheerful Giver -**to being full of cheer, cheerful, glad, happy** of things
 1. In both passages the freedom and authenticity of generous giving are marked by the symptom of cheerfulness
 2. Judaism and the Gentile world, as well as Christianity, believe that cheerfulness belongs to the inner freedom of generosity What is Christian is not the thought itself but the new motivation suggested by the context in R. 12:8 (cf. 12:1ff.) and 2 C. 9:7 (cf. 8:9; 9:8ff.) and expressly stated in 1 Pt. 4:9 f. Reception of the gift of God makes us cheerful and drives out γογγυσμός.
 3. Paul underscores this point with a line from Prov 22:8 (LXX) that is absent from the Hebrew text, "for God loves a cheerful give

4. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to" (Deut 15:10).
5. As to attitude, giving should be cheerful, not reluctant; as to motivation, giving should result from a desire to gain God's favor, not from external constraint
6. to appeal to a higher motive for cheerful and willing giving than the hope of reward, namely a desire for God's love

III. Who Gives v.8

a. God Makes

- i. Grace Abound - Of effects produced by divine beneficence which go beyond those associated with a specific Christian's status
 - a. Abound of things that one greatly increases
 2. Abounding in every good work comes from abounding in God's grace. Every good work does not earn grace; grace, already received, generates the good work.
 3. The third reason for giving is that God is lavishly generous and abundantly supplies us with everything necessary to have enough for our own needs and to be generous with others. The phrase "all grace" is quite broad in scope, covering the material blessings and the spiritual motivation to share them.
 4. In 9:8, then, *πᾶσαν ἀντάρκειαν ἔχοντες* refers to one's own contented possession of the necessities of life, both material and spiritual, as a result of God's gracious provision. But this contented possession was not an end in itself, for "everything you need" (*πᾶσαν ἀντάρκειαν*) is linked with having "ample means
 5. it is preferable to regard *χάρις* as encompassing both material and spiritual blessings or benefits. Paul does not see this rich divine provision as a reward for generosity, as though some prior bargain had been struck between the giver and God, but it is the God-ordained outcome of generous and cheerful giving. It is God who grants the harvest, not humans who earn or deserve it. And if God's blessing results from generous giving, as Deut. 15:10

b. Having

- i. All Sufficiency in Everything
 1. Most exegetes understand him to use *ἀντάρκειαν* in the sense rendered in BAGD as 'sufficient supply'
 2. Which meaning does Paul have in view? The sense 'inward self-sufficiency' is strongly supported by Meyer: God is able to bestow

upon believers a complete inward contentment that desires nothing from anyone else

3. The whole purpose of the collection, therefore, is not to establish the independence of the Gentile Christians from the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem but to deepen their interdependence
4. Paul also differs from the Cynics and Stoics in the use of *autarkeia* in his assumption that self-sufficiency does come from one's own earnest self-discipline. It is a gift of God. Therefore "self-sufficiency" is a misnomer, since it is sufficiency that comes from God not from the self
 - a. αὐτάρκεια was an important term in Greek philosophy, especially among the Stoics and Cynics, denoting the self-sufficiency and contentment of the person who was self-supporting and independent of other people and of circumstances
5. The more we give, the more we will be given by God to share with others. We may not have all the money that we want, but we will have all the money we need to be abundant in our giving to others.
6. Having enough does not simply mean reducing one's craving for material goods and becoming independent from everyone. It means reducing what one wants for oneself so that one has enough to share with others and create an interdependence with them. Having what is sufficient helps Christians "to relate more effectively to other people, not to withdraw from them."
7. First, for Paul αὐτάρκεια is not "self-sufficiency" but "God-sufficiency," not reliance on one's own inner resources apart from any outside help, but a total dependence on God's unlimited ability to create the desire to give and to supply the resources to give. When Paul uses the cognate adjective αὐτάρκης in Phil. 4:11, he is describing the state of contentedness he had reached, whatever his circumstances, whether he was facing plenty or hunger, bounty or need (Phil. 4:12). But his ability to cope contentedly with affluence or poverty was dependent on the empowering of Christ (Phil. 4:13); this is a "Christ-sufficiency." Second, for Paul αὐτάρκεια involves not "self-sufficiency" but sufficiency for self and ample resources for others.

ii. Abundance

1. Every good deed - here refers to acts of charity (see 1 Cor 15:58)

- a. **Abundance** - *be extremely rich or abundant, overflow I have received full payment, and have more than enough* vs. **18.** π. εἰς πᾶν ἔργον *have ample means for every enterprise*
- b. Money is a commodity that should be used in the service of others (*leitourgia*), not something to display one's virtue publicly, to gain honor, or to bring others into one's orbit of power
- c. Reward can only be expected from God, not from others, an Old Testament view that runs counter to Greco-Roman social expectations. Giving to others in need reaps spiritual dividends from God.
- d. God bestows the material wealth that we share with others, and consequently God, not the giver, is the one who is to be blessed and thanked
- e. Sharing with other Christians is identified as *koinōnia*—joining in partnership with them. In no way should the benefactors assume that the recipients of their gifts become their social inferiors or are obligated to return the favor with material benefits.
- f. in every circumstance you may always have everything you need and still have ample resources for every kind of good work.” The provision of πᾶσα χάρις was designed to promote, not passive ease, but active benevolence, as well as supplying adequately all personal needs

It is one thing to chide a church for being dilatory in their giving. It is something else to motivate individuals in the church to be free and unselfish in their giving. How does one develop in individuals such a happy spirit about giving? Church leaders throughout the ages have faced the same challenge that confronted Paul. In the next verses Paul presents four principles that are not directed to the Corinthian church as a whole but to individuals whose contributions will make up the church's gift

Background

”—a common sharing in divine grace—that unites the two factions of Christendom in Paul’s day. Raising this money gift was fraught with deeply felt theological and ecclesiological desires on Paul’s part.

Summary : The first half of the verse summarizes Paul’s point in the previous verses: God will provide the means for them to be generous. They will not be enriched so that they can become like the rich fool who sits back in comfort and says to himself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry” (Luke 12:19). They are enriched solely to give them every opportunity to be generous with others. God is generous in giving people wealth so that they may be generous with others. What we do with our money, then, becomes a litmus test for our relationship to God. If we try to hoard it or to spend it all on ourselves, that should set off alarm bells that our relationship with God is out of balance or worse,

One expression of this generosity was the contribution to the Jerusalem saints, administered by Paul. Not only would this service (vv. 12–13; cf. 8:4; 9:1) meet the pressing needs of Jerusalem Christians but it would also overflow in many expressions of thanks to God and bring praise to God. The Corinthian participation in this charitable gesture would demonstrate the reality of their confession and the vitality of their spiritual lives.

The abounding grace mentioned in verse 8 refers to more than provision for one’s needs of the moment. Charity reaps an eternal reward (cf. Prov. 19:17; Matt. 25:40). A person who “fears the Lord” (Ps. 112:1) and gives gifts to the poor (from Ps. 112:9, which Paul quoted) will be vindicated on the last day (cf. Matt. 6:1). Practical righteousness endures forever not

only through the deeds but in the doer as he is progressively transformed into Christlikeness (2 Cor. 3:18). Ultimately a believer's reward is the culmination of the process (Phil. 3:14, 21). The One who supplies what is needed is God alone (Phil. 2:13). God (who supplies seed ... and bread) enlarges the harvest (rewards or blessings) that results from righteous, generous living. The riches of righteousness are inestimable (cf. 6:10).

9:11–13. The more one gives to others, the more he is enriched, and thus he can be generous on every occasion. Such a generous spirit toward others results in more and more people giving thanksgiving to God

I. Demand

a. Jerusalem Church

- i. Struggling with poverty
- ii. Not in their area
- iii. No mutual benefit

b. Corinth Church

- i. The Corinthians' need to complete what they had eagerly begun (8:6, 10) concerned Paul. He had not found it necessary to write about the need to give aid to Jerusalem Christians. The Corinthians had agreed enthusiastically (8:11) to be involved in this service (diakonias) to the saints (cf. 8:4; 9:12–13). They were eager to help (cf. 8:4), a fact that Paul had relayed to the Macedonians the year before, which in turn had spurred the Macedonians on (stirred ... them to action). The difference between the Macedonians and the Corinthians, however, lay in their diligence in seeing the project through to completion. Slow starters, the Macedonians finished quickly. But the Corinthians,

willing in spirit, needed help in disciplining the flesh (cf. Matt. 26:41; Rom. 6:19)

- ii. Paul's continuation of his discussion in 9:6–15 to remotivate the Corinthians to give generously may also be related to the Corinthians' cultural conventions about giving and receiving. These conventions were at odds with Paul's biblical understanding of the spiritual significance of giving. He needs to reeducate them on what it means to give to others. Paul approaches giving from a Jewish perspective found in the Old Testament: "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land" (Deut 15:11; see Exod 23:10–11; Deut 14:28–29; 24:19–22). This view differs significantly from the perspective in the Greco-Roman world. Peterman points out: "Generally speaking ... in Greco-Roman society generosity toward the poor out of compassion for them in their state was not considered a virtuous act and therefore could expect no reward from God. It was more blessed to give than to receive among the Greeks and Romans, not because of the display of compassion seen therein, but because giving displayed one's personal virtue and social power"

Word Studies

Sows- appropriating the fruits of another's labor, without doing any work θερίζων ὅπου οὐκ ἔσπειρας¹

Sparingly- **scanty or meager manner, sparingly**²

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 936.

² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1051.

Bountifully - Since the concept of blessing connotes the idea of bounty³ in order that blessed influence might be felt). ⁴Because it springs from such unconditional love, εὐλογία can also be used, as in the OT (→ 759), for the gift which Paul seeks as a collection for Jerusalem (2 C. 9:5 f.).⁵

Reap- **to gain results or benefits, reap**⁶

Purposed - *he has made up his mind to reach a decision beforehand, choose (for oneself), commit oneself to, prefer* (X., Pla.+) τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου οὐ προείλαντο *they did not choose the fear of the Lord* ⁷

Heart - of the will and its decisions⁸

Grudgingly - *reluctantly*

Compulsion - *under pressure*

³ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 409.

⁴ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 409.

OT Old Testament.

⁵ Rudolf Bultmann and Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, “Εὐλογέω, Εὐλογητός, Εὐλογία, *Ενευλογέω*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 763.

⁶ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 453.

X. **X.** = Xenophon, V–IV B.C.—List 5

Pla **Pla** , V–IV B.C.; s. also Ps.-Plato—List 5

⁷ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 865.

⁸ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 509.

Cheerful -to being full of cheer, *cheerful, glad, happy* of things⁹ At 2 C. 9:7 Paul quotes loosely from Prv. 22:9: ἡλαρόν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός. Unlike the LXX, he makes ἡλαρός an attribute of δότης. It thus has the sense of “cheerful,” as ἡλαρότης obviously means “cheerfulness” at R. 12:8 (ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἡλαρότητι). In both passages the freedom and authenticity of generous giving are marked by the symptom of cheerfulness, ἡλαρότης almost has the sense of ἀπλότης (→ I, 387), which is used alongside it at R. 12:8 (ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι) and which is elsewhere regarded as the true mark of benevolence. This cheerfulness is contrasted with the γογγυσμοί (→ I, 736) and διαλογισμοί (Phil. 2:14) which destroy the unity of the act and falsify it.

Cf. the admonition of 1 Pt. 4:9: φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ. Similarly we have γογγυστής alongside μεμψίμοιρος at Jd. 16, → 297.

Judaism and the Gentile world, as well as Christianity, believe that cheerfulness belongs to the inner freedom of generosity (→ 298 and cf. Sen. Ben., II, 1 f.; 7, 1).⁶ What is Christian is not the thought itself but the new motivation suggested by the context in R. 12:8 (cf. 12:1ff.) and 2 C. 9:7 (cf. 8:9; 9:8ff.) and expressly stated in 1 Pt. 4:9 f. Reception of the gift of God makes us cheerful and drives out γογγυσμός.¹⁰

Giver-

Grace- Of effects produced by divine beneficence which go beyond those associated with a specific Christian's status¹¹

⁹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 473.

Sen. L. Annaeus Seneca, of Cordova in Spain (c. 4 B.C.–65 A.D.), politician, poet and moral philosopher of the later Stoa, ed. C. Hosius and E. Hermes, 1914 ff.

Ben. *De Beneficiis*.

⁶ Wnd. 2 C. on 2 C. 9:7.

¹⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, “ἡλαρός, ἡλαρότης,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 299.

¹¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1080.

Abound - of things that one greatly increases¹²

Sufficiency - external, **state of having what is adequate, *sufficiency, a competence***¹³

Abundance - *be extremely rich or abundant, overflow*¹⁴ *I have received full payment, and have more than enough* vs. **18.** π. εἰς πᾶν ἔργον *have ample means for every enterprise*¹⁵

Deed- of the deeds of humans, exhibiting a consistent moral character, referred to collectively¹⁶

¹² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 805.

¹³ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 152.

¹⁴ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 805.

¹⁵ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 805.

¹⁶ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 390.

Commentary Study

9:6 τοῦτο δέ, ὁ σπείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει, καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις ἐπ' εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει. “What I mean is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows generously will also reap generously.” τοῦτο δέ not only looks forward (“And remember this,” Cassirer; “Now this *I say*,” NASB) but also backward, with the “sparingly-generously” contrast restating the εὐλογίαν-πλεονεξίαν antithesis of v. 5 in reverse order, and the repeated ἐπ' εὐλογίαις reflecting the repeated εὐλογίαν also in v. 5. So τοῦτο δέ is

appropriately rendered “What I mean is this”:¹ or “The point is this” (RSV, NRSV). Given the use of the full expression τοῦτο δέ φημι in 1 Cor. 7:29; 15:50, it is safe to assume that here φημί or λέγω can be supplied,² that τοῦτο is both prospective and retrospective,³ and that δέ is transitional, not adversative.

What follows τοῦτο δέ is an agricultural axiom, stated aphoristically without consideration of differing circumstances or exceptions. “ ‘scanty sowing, scanty harvest; plentiful sowing, plentiful harvest’ ”⁴ (TCNT). The proverb is expressed in the form of two juxtaposed chiasms (ABBA). It is assumed that the person who sows (ὁ σπείρων, generic article) is also the person who reaps (καὶ θερίσει, adjunctive καί⁵ and a gnomic future).⁶ φειδομένως, a *hapax* in Biblical Greek, is an adverb formed from the present participle (φειδόμενος) of φείδομαι, “spare,” thus “sparingly” or “meagerly” or “with a niggardly hand” (Weymouth). Matching this adverb of manner is the prepositional phrase ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις, literally “on the basis of blessings,”⁷ that is, in the hope of receiving the blessing of a bountiful harvest (cf. 1 Cor. 9:10), and so, as the opposite of φειδομένως, “bountifully,” “generously,” “liberally.”⁸ The reference back to εὐλογία in v. 5 is clear, whether we translate that word there as “gift of blessing” or “generous gift,” referring to a liberal gift that is freely given and that blesses the recipient. If Paul is stating a general principle

¹ Bruce, *Paraphrase* 147. In his paraphrase Phillips ends the paragraph with v. 6.

RSV Revised Standard Version

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

² But Meyer (604) construes τοῦτο as an accusative absolute, “Now as concerns this [viz. ὡς εὐλογίαν κτλ.], it is the case that....”

³ Similarly Thrall 573 nn. 61, 62.

⁴ On the agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping in Paul, see Betz 98–100; Williams 38–40.

TCNT Twentieth Century New Testament (1904)

⁵ But καί could be seen as emphatic, “indeed,” “certainly.”

⁶ Contrast with this John 4:36–38, which illustrates the saying, “One sows and another reaps” (John 4:37).

⁷ Cassirer has “by a rule of bountifulness”; Isaacs, “on generous lines ... on lines no less generous”; Winer (392), “with blessings, so that blessings attend.”

⁸ Young and Ford express this contrast colorfully: “with a closed fist ... with an open hand” (271). The two adverbial ideas could be rendered by direct objects, as in GNB: “the person who sows few seeds will have a small crop; the one who sows many seeds will have a large crop.”

of farming in this verse, θερίσει is unlikely to refer to a single harvest such as the harvest at the end of the age (*pace* Plummer 258), although that is the application in Gal. 6:7–8 where the harvests to be reaped are φθορά and ζωὴ αἰώνιος. But as the general principle of v. 6b is applied to the Corinthian situation in vv. 8–14, the harvest to be reaped from lavish and joyful sowing is declared to be God’s material and spiritual prospering to make further liberal giving possible (vv. 8–11), the relief of need (v. 12a), and prayers of thanksgiving and intercession on the part of the beneficiaries of the sowing (vv. 12b–14).

Paul’s point is the correspondence between the quantity of seed sown and the quantity of the harvest.⁹ He is implying that a meager contribution from the Corinthians would produce some harvest, but his desire and aim was for a sizable gift that would produce a correspondingly substantial harvest of benefits for both givers and recipients. Paul would have been fully aware, of course, that on occasion there could be poor harvests even after extensive sowing (cf. Hag. 1:6), for other circumstances such as the climate or the condition of the soil could affect the nature of the harvest. One could even, metaphorically speaking, sow wheat but reap thorns (Jer. 12:13) or sow the wind and reap the whirlwind (Hos. 8:7). But such exceptions apart, Paul knew that it was true in the realm of financial stewardship as also in farming that generous sowing meant a generous harvest.

This reference to the quantitative aspect of giving did not mean that Paul had surrendered his primary interest in the qualitative. He has already hinted that attitude is more important than the actual amount given (8:11–12): in God’s eyes an eager desire to give that is translated into actual giving is one of the criteria that determines the acceptability of a gift; the other criterion is that the size of the gift should accord with one’s resources, however meager or substantial they may be. Now in ch. 9 he stresses that sowing that is truly generous or giving that is truly lavish will not be marked by a desire to manipulate the situation for one’s own advantage (μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν, v. 5), nor by regret (μὴ ἐκ λύπης, v. 7), nor by surrender to pressure (μὴ ... ἐξ ἀνάγκης, v. 7). Rather, the person who gives should take delight in giving, should be a cheerful giver (ἡλαρός δότης, v. 7).

Paul presents v. 6 as a self-evident truth with which his readers will concur. No precise parallel is known to us; indeed, the φειδομένως-ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις antithesis is probably a Pauline creation. But the general thought, “As you have sown, so you shall reap” (Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.65 [261]), was a commonplace in contemporary morality,¹⁰ as also in the Jewish wisdom tradition (e.g., Job 4:8; Sir. 7:3), with the closest parallel being in the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* (= *3 Baruch*), possibly a product of Syrian Judaism in the second century A.D., “Those who have sown well, also reap well” (*3 Baruch* 15:2, Greek). But what prompted Paul to cite this axiom? Gale suggests (163) that it may have been Prov. 22:8 (LXX), ὁ σπείρων φαῦλα θερίσει κακά (“the one who sows evil

⁹ Furnish rightly observes that in Gal. 6:7–8 the issue is the content of the sowing (“to his own flesh ... to the Spirit”), here the quantity of the sowing (447).

¹⁰ See the references cited in Georgi 200 n. 7.

will reap trouble”), since Paul immediately goes on (in v. 7) to allude to the next sentence in Proverbs, ἄνδρα ἱλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεός (Prov. 22:8a, LXX) (on which see below).

9:7 ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης. “Each person should give as much as he has decided in his heart to give, not with regret or under compulsion.” Here is supplementary advice about sowing generously. Being both asyndetic and elliptical, this statement is correspondingly forceful. With ἕκαστος we may supply the aorist optative δῶη (Lietzmann 138), “May each give,” or some imperative such as δότω (Winer 587) or διδότην (Robertson, *Pictures* 248), “Let each give,” or ποιείτω (Robertson, *Pictures* 248), “Let each act,” “Let each do this [sow generously, v. 6].” The omission of a verb serves to emphasize motivation for action (cf. καρδίᾳ, λύπη, ἀνάγκη) as opposed to the act of giving itself.¹¹ As in 1 Cor. 16:2 and Acts 11:29, both passages that describe financial giving, the use of ἕκαστος highlights individual responsibility to contribute to an offering that would in fact be sent as a single corporate gift.¹² If the meaning of καθὼς (“as,” “just as”) is expanded, it will carry the sense “what/as much as (he has decided).” As the perfect of προαἰρέομαι, “choose (for oneself),” “decide,” προήρηται points to a settled decision to contribute a certain amount to the collection, whether on a regular basis (as in 1 Cor. 16:2) or in a single gift.¹³ The decision was to be private (τῇ καρδίᾳ, locative dative), not public, and the giving was to be purposeful, not impulsive.¹⁴

ἐκ λύπης and ἐξ ἀνάγκης are not exactly “different ways of stating the same fact,”¹⁵ although the two ideas are closely related, but are two different subjective states that may accompany (ἐκ

LXX Septuagint

¹¹ Verbrugge finds in the omission of an imperative such as διδότην a softening of Paul’s tone, a view that reflects his overall thesis that in 2 Corinthians 8–9 “Paul displays extreme hesitancy to tell the Corinthians to get on with the project of the collection for Jerusalem” (259).

¹² Acts 11:29–30 refers to relief aid for Judean Christians sent from the Antiochian believers by the hand of Barnabas and Saul—a collection that was a forerunner of Paul’s “great collection.”

¹³ A similar emphasis on giving in accordance with the promptings of the heart is found in the accounts of the monetary or material offerings made for the construction of the tabernacle (e.g., Exod. 25:2, “You are to receive the offering for me from all whose hearts prompt them to give”; Exod. 35:21, “all who were willing and whose hearts moved them came and brought an offering to the Lord to be used for the Tent of Meeting”). But in 2 Cor. 9:7 a decision about the amount to be given is involved.

¹⁴ The repeated εὐδόκησαν in Rom. 15:26–27 also makes it clear that the decision to contribute to the collection rested wholly with the donors.

¹⁵ Plummer 259, who explains “The man who gives ἐξ ἀνάγκης gives ἐκ λύπης.”

λύπης)¹⁶ or give rise to (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) the action of giving: inward sorrow at losing what is given, and outward compulsion that forces one to give, giving that is reluctant and giving that is pressured. To give regretfully or under constraint is to sow sparingly (v. 6), to act with an unwilling heart (cf. v. 7a), and to give joylessly (cf. v. 7b). Paul knew that spontaneity and warmth would be absent from the Corinthians' giving if coercion were present, whether the pressure to give came from him or from any of his representatives. The contemporary analogy for this Jerusalem collection was not the obligatory annual Temple tax that was levied on all adult male Jews,¹⁷ but the voluntary offerings that Jews, proselytes, and even Gentiles made in Jerusalem.¹⁸ More remotely, the closest OT analogy is the "freewill offerings" of money and materials given by the Israelites for the construction of the tabernacle (Exod. 25:1–9; 35:4–9, 20–29; 36:2–7).

ἱλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός. "For it is the cheerful giver that God loves." Here Paul supplies a scriptural motive for avoiding giving that is reluctant or pressured. Prov. 22:8a (LXX) reads ἄνδρα ἱλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεός, "God blesses the man who is cheerful and a giver" = "a cheerful and generous man." Paul's text differs in two respects.

1. ἱλαρὸν qualifies δότην, and ἄνδρα and καὶ are omitted.
2. ἀγαπᾷ replaces εὐλογεῖ.

These differences may be accounted for by saying that Paul is quoting from memory,¹⁹ is following a Greek text or form of the LXX not known to us,²⁰ or has made deliberate changes. Given Paul's propensity for slightly modifying texts to suit their new context²¹ and the general similarity between the two texts, it is not inappropriate to assume his dependence on Prov. 22:8a and to seek reasons for his changes. The first change removes the awkward conjunction of adjective (ἱλαρόν) and noun (δότην), both qualifying ἄνδρα, and makes the aphorism applicable to both women and men. Various reasons have been suggested for the change from εὐλογεῖ to ἀγαπᾷ (both are gnomic presents, expressing timeless truths): to avoid emphasizing "the

¹⁶ ἐκ may on occasion denote "circumstances which accompany an action without necessarily being the source of it" (BAGD 235 s.v. 3.g.γ., citing 2 Cor. 2:4: ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως; cf. 482a, where ἐκ λύπης is rendered "reluctantly").

¹⁷ See SB 1.760–70; Nickle 74–93.

¹⁸ So G. Kittel, *TDNT* 4.283; E. Bammel, *TDNT* 6.909.

LXX Septuagint

¹⁹ So Plummer 259.

LXX Septuagint

²⁰ Cf. Hughes 331 n. 65.

²¹ See, most recently, Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*.

material or supernatural rewards of generosity”;²² to appeal to a higher motive for cheerful and willing giving than the hope of reward, namely a desire for God’s love;²³ or Paul may have been influenced by a later verse (v. 11) in Prov. 22, ἀγαπᾷ κύριος ὁσίας καρδίας, “the Lord loves holy hearts.”²⁴ Whatever the reason for the change, with the word ἀγαπᾷ Paul is affirming that God has a special love for those who are cheerful as they give,²⁵ in that he showers them with special blessings²⁶ or takes special pleasure in the type of giving—cheerful giving—that reflects his own manner of giving (cf. Heb. 13:16).

As to attitude, giving should be cheerful, not reluctant;²⁷ as to motivation, giving should result from a desire to gain God’s favor, not from external constraint. From this perspective ἰλαρόν matches ἐκ λύπης, and ἀγαπᾷ answers to ἐξ ἀνάγκης.

9:8 δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς. “Indeed, God has the power to provide you with every kind of blessing in abundance.” Vv. 8–14 form a commentary on the notion of “reaping bountifully” (v. 6b), indicating the benefits that accrue to the giver if the principles of giving stated in vv. 6b–7 are followed.²⁸ δέ is emphatic (“indeed”) rather than merely continuative (“and”). περισσεύω here is transitive, “cause to abound,” “give in abundant measure,” “provide richly,” and, along with πᾶσαν (“every kind of,” BAGD 631c), points to the bounty of God’s provision. Once again the key word of 2 Corinthians 8–9 (χάρις) appears, this time having the connotation of εὐλογία so that πᾶσαν χάριν means “every kind of blessing” or “every benefit” (Furnish 441). Some restrict χάρις here to earthly blessings or temporal benefits

²² Spicq, *Agape* 31.

²³ Windisch 277, citing John 14:21, 23; Heb. 13:16.

²⁴ A view mentioned by Betz (107), who himself proposes that “Paul attempted to quote a scriptural proverb from memory” (107).

²⁵ Both ἰλαρόν and ὁ θεός are emphatic by position: “It is the cheerful giver who is loved by God.”

²⁶ Cf. Deut. 15:10, “Give generously to him [a poor fellow countryman], and do so without a grudging heart, for because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do and in all that you undertake.”

²⁷ On the link between giving and cheerfulness, see, e.g., Sir. 35:11; and for rabbinical teaching, SB 3.524.

²⁸ Some commentators, however, link v. 8 principally with v. 7 and believe that in v. 8 Paul is discussing the resources of grace that God makes available for cheerful generosity rather than the recompense that follows bountiful sowing (see, e.g., Thrall 578).

or material prosperity,²⁹ but since the Macedonians' generosity of spirit is attributed to the operation of God's χάρις in their lives (8:1–4) and the use of πᾶσαν does not encourage any restriction of sense, it is preferable to regard χάρις as encompassing both material and spiritual blessings or benefits. Paul does not see this rich divine provision as a reward for generosity, as though some prior bargain had been struck between the giver and God, but it is the God-ordained outcome of generous and cheerful giving. It is God who grants the harvest, not humans who earn or deserve it. And if God's blessing results from generous giving, as Deut. 15:10 so emphatically asserts,³⁰ it is also true that it is God who implants in humans the χάρις of προθυμία, the "grace" of "the willingness to give" (cf. 8:11–12).

ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν. "So that in every circumstance you may always have everything you need and still have ample resources for every kind of good work." The provision of πᾶσα χάρις was designed to promote, not passive ease, but active benevolence, as well as supplying adequately all personal needs. ἵνα is probably final ("so that ... you may have," REB) but may be consecutive ("thus you will have," NEB). Especially noteworthy in this verse is the alliteration involving the initial π, the four uses of πᾶς (cf. πάντοτε; BDF §488[1a]), and the two instances of περισσεύω. These last two features stress the totality and profusion of God's provision.

αὐτάρκεια was an important term in Greek philosophy, especially among the Stoics and Cynics, denoting the self-sufficiency and contentment of the person who was self-supporting and independent of other people and of circumstances.³¹ In comparison with that viewpoint, the present passage has two distinguishing features. First, for Paul αὐτάρκεια is not "self-sufficiency" but "God-sufficiency," not reliance on one's own inner resources apart from any outside help, but a total dependence on God's unlimited ability to create the desire to give and to supply the resources to give. When Paul uses the cognate adjective αὐτάρκης in Phil. 4:11, he is describing the state of contentedness he had reached, whatever his circumstances, whether he was facing plenty or hunger, bounty or need (Phil. 4:12). But his ability to cope contentedly with affluence or poverty was dependent on the empowering of Christ (Phil. 4:13); this is a "Christ-sufficiency."

²⁹ E.g., Meyer 605; Hodge 220.

³⁰ See n. 26 and the emphatic "for because of this" (in Deut. 15:10), namely the act of giving freely and ungrudgingly. The twofold biblical principle is "bless others, because you have been blessed by God" (cf. Deut. 15:14); "bless others, in order to be blessed by God" (e.g., Deut. 14:28–29; 15:10, 18; Prov. 22:9; cf. 1 Pet. 3:9).

REB Revised English Bible (1990)

NEB New English Bible

BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961)

³¹ On the relation of Paul's concept of αὐτάρκεια to Greek philosophy, see further Betz 110–11.

Second, for Paul αὐτάρκεια involves not “self-sufficiency” but sufficiency for self and ample resources for others. The only other NT use of αὐτάρκεια is in 1 Tim. 6:6. “Godliness (εὐσέβεια) with contentment (αὐτάρκεια) is great gain.” That is, the practice of the Christian faith yields high dividends when it is accompanied by “contentment” with one’s possessions and lot in life. Such αὐτάρκεια means being free from πλεονεξία, “the desire to have more,” “acquisitiveness,” and the attendant disregard of the needs and rights of others. In 9:8, then, πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες refers to one’s own contented possession of the necessities of life, both material and spiritual, as a result of God’s gracious provision.³² But this contented possession was not an end in itself, for “everything you need” (πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν) is linked with having “ample means” (BAGD 651a) available for doing “every kind of good work,”³³ that is, a surplus from which the needs of others can be met.³⁴ “The Christian αὐτός cannot be considered in isolation. His αὐτ-άρκεια arises only when the ἄλλος has a share in it” (G. Kittel, *TDNT* 1.467). In v. 8a περισσεῦσαι is transitive (“cause to abound,” “supply richly”) and a timeless aorist, whereas in v. 8b περισσεύετε is intransitive (“abound,” “have in excess of what is necessary”) and present tense, of an ongoing surplus.

In the adverbial expression ἐν παντί and πάντοτε, as also in the final phrase εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν,³⁵ Paul looks beyond the pressing matter in hand—the finalizing of the collection project at Corinth—to a lifestyle of cheerful giving that will be resourced by God. The addition of καὶ εἰς πάντα at the end of v. 13 points in the same direction—Paul is saying in effect, “Give generously

³² It is significant that the only use of the cognate verb αὐταρκέω (“supply with necessities,” “maintain”) in the LXX occurs in Deut. 32:10 in reference to God’s providential care of Israel in the wilderness by providing not only food but also instruction (ἐπαίδευσεν αὐτόν) and careful protection (διεφύλαξεν αὐτόν).

BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979)

³³ That link, implied by the participle ἔχοντες, is probably temporal (“while you have”), but may be causal (“because you have”) or even modal (“by having,” Betz 87; cf. 110). If ἔχοντες is rendered as a finite verb (“so that you may have”), the temporal significance of ἔχοντες can be brought out by translating περισσεύετε as “and still have ample resources.”

³⁴ The contrast between Corinthian need and that of others is well reflected in Moffatt’s rendering: “... so that you may always have quite enough for any emergency of your own and ample besides for any kind act to others.”

TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

³⁵ This expression, πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν, is common in the Pastorals (1 Tim. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Tit. 1:16; 3:1; also Col. 1:10; 2 Thess. 2:17).

now, and you will find that God maintains your desire to give and increases your resources for further giving.”¹⁷

6. Τοῦτο δέ, ὁ σπείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει, καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει. Paul has just made an implicit plea for generosity. Now he embarks on a more extensive encouragement to liberality, supported by a number of scriptural allusions. He begins with the elliptical Τοῦτο δέ,⁶¹ which both connects v. 6 with v. 5 and also introduces what follows. Hence, the meaning is something like ‘ “the point is this” ’.⁶²

¹⁷ Murray J. Harris, [*The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 632–639.

⁶¹ See BDR 481. Here, it is suggested, we are to supply φημί (cf. 1 Cor 7:29; 15:50); it is noted that the use of ellipsis in letters may be due to imitation of ordinary speech.

⁶² Hughes, p. 328 n. 61. See also Martin, p. 287: ‘To enforce the point’. Betz, p. 102, claims that Τοῦτο δέ is a ‘citation formula’, with the sense ‘ “consider the following” ’. But Paul’s use elsewhere of καὶ τοῦτο, τοῦτο δέ φημι, λέγω δὲ τοῦτο and τοῦτο (δὲ) λέγω (Rom 13:11; 1 Cor 7:29; 15:50; 1:12; 7:6, 35; Gal 3:17) suggests that the τοῦτο will refer backwards as well as forwards.

In itself, the point is made very generally, by means of an image familiar both in Jewish and in Graeco-Roman culture.⁶³ One 'reaps' what one 'sows'. Here, the 'reaping' is lavish or the reverse in proportion to the extent of the 'sowing':⁶⁴ the image is to be applied to the Corinthians' contribution to the collection, so that it is a matter not so much of the quality of the 'seed' sown (which will clearly be good) as of its quantity (plentiful or sparse). Paul's readers should 'sow' lavishly, i.e., make a generous contribution. This is obvious. It is less obvious, however, what the second half of the image means. What does the 'reaping' signify for the Corinthians? For some commentators the harvest stands for the final judgement at the end of the world.⁶⁵ Supporting evidence for this interpretation would be found in Gal 6:7–8,⁶⁶ where the harvest a person may reap is either φθορά or ζωὴ αἰώνιος, and in the use of the image elsewhere in the NT (Mt 13:39⁶⁷; Rev 14:14–20⁶⁸) and in other eschatological contexts (4 Ezra 4:26–32⁶⁹; 3 *Apoc. Bar.* 15:2⁷⁰; see also Joel 4:13 (LXX)⁷¹). It has to be said, however, that the context in 2 Cor 9 gives no positive support for this line of exegesis. There is nothing to indicate that Paul is thinking of the reward of eternal life (which could scarcely be bestowed in a quantitative fashion) or of particular blessings of the world to come.

⁶³ See the references to be given below.

⁶⁴ Note the chiasmic formulation in both halves of the verse, which emphasises the adverbial expressions 'sparingly' and 'bountifully', and the contrast between them. For the phrase ἐπ' εὐλογίαις see below, p. 575 n. 76.

⁶⁵ Meyer, pp. 374–5; Plümmer, p. 258.

⁶⁶ Cited by Plümmer, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Cited by Plümmer, *ibid.*; also by Windisch, p. 276, though he does not definitely support this interpretation.

⁶⁸ Cited by Georgi, *Kollekte*, p. 68, n. 268, though he does not accept this interpretation in the present verse.

⁶⁹ Cited by Georgi, *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Cited by Barrett, p. 236.

LXX *Septuaginta*, ed. A. Rahlfs, Stuttgart, sixth edition.

Metzger, B. M., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London and New York, 1971.

⁷¹ Cited by Georgi, *Kollekte*, p. 68, n. 267.

The alternative is to suppose that the rewards of ‘harvest’ come about in this present life. What we have here, according to Georgi, is simply a gnomic saying in the Wisdom tradition.⁷² The notion in itself, then, is a general one: the consequences of one’s actions are consonant with, and proportionate to, the actions themselves. The image is used in a wide variety of contexts.⁷³ For its common application to morality, see Prov 22:8⁷⁴: ὁ σπείρων φαῦλα θερίσει κακά (‘He who sows evils will reap ills’). In the present context the ‘harvest’ Paul has in view may be what he promises his readers in vv. 8–10, i.e., God’s abundant provision for their needs, together with the prospective thankful prayers of the Jerusalem church on their behalf and affectionate longing for them (vv. 13–15).⁷⁵ In this way they will reap generously⁷⁶ the results of their own generosity.

The following selection of examples will illustrate the use of the metaphor of sowing and reaping.

Aristotle, *Rhet. (Rhetoric)* III 3:4:

σὺ δὲ ταῦτα αἰσχροῶς μὲν ἔσπειρας, κακῶς δὲ ἐθέρισας

7. ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, ἱλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός. Each should give⁸² as he has inwardly determined⁸³. Georgi would see here an echo of Stoic discussion of freedom of decision, as found, for example, in Epictetus. He refers to *Diss.* I 17:21.⁸⁴ The context in which the question of freedom of moral choice arises is, of course, very different. In Epictetus, the point is that the Stoic is inwardly free from any constraint which might prevent him from assenting to the truth or might force him to accept what is false. Paul is talking about freedom from compulsion to participate generously in a good work. His terminology, nevertheless, has some similarity to that of Epictetus. Whilst the verb προαιρέομαι does not occur in the discussion in I 7:20–29, we find the cognate terms προαίρεσις and τὸ

⁷² Georgi, *Kollekte*, pp. 68–9.

⁷³ See below for some examples cited by commentators.

⁷⁴ Cited by Windisch, p. 276; Furnish, p. 440; and others.

⁷⁵ Theobald, *Gnade*, p. 293, connects the harvest with Jerusalem. Furnish, p. 447, sees it as the further resources God will provide to enable further generosity.

⁷⁶ On the phrase ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις see BAGD s.v. ἐπί II.1.b.ζ. It corresponds to an adverb, with the meaning ‘generously’. Betz, p. 103, renders it ‘bountifully’.

⁸² Plümmer, p. 259, notes the ellipsis of the main verb, and suggests that it makes the sentence more forcible.

⁸³ For προήρηται (X B C F G P 0243, 6, 33, 104, 365, 1175, 1739, 1881 *pc lat co Cyp*) some witnesses (D Ψ 048 m) have προαιρεῖται, which may be a scribal error due to similarity in pronunciation.

⁸⁴ Georgi, *Kollekte*, p. 69.

προαιρετικόν.⁸⁵ And Paul's ἐξ ἀνάγκης is paralleled by the three cognate words ἀναγκάζω, ἀναγκαστός and ἀνανάγκαστος in Epictetus. It is not impossible that Paul might consciously be employing some of the language of popular philosophy as likely to have some appeal to his readers. His μὴ ἐκ λύπης, however, is reminiscent of Deut 15:10,⁸⁶ where, in reference to giving, it is said: οὐ λυπηθήσῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ('you shall not become sad at heart'). It may be that the μὴ ἐκ λύπης and the ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης are two ways of making the same point: giving under compulsion is regretful giving.⁸⁷ The compulsion which Paul here hopes to avoid could come either from his envoys or from himself when he arrives. It could, however, take the form only of this very kind of moral persuasion which he is employing in this letter itself.⁸⁸

The plea that the Corinthians' donations should not be made regretfully is then reinforced by means of an allusion to Prov 22:8a (LXX): ἄνδρα ἱλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ Θεός ('God blesses a cheerful man and giver'). One might ask why Paul has ἀγαπᾷ instead of εὐλογεῖ, which might have seemed the more suitable in view of v. 6.⁸⁹ It may be that he is quoting from memory,⁹⁰ or perhaps from a version of the Greek text different from that of the LXX.⁹¹ A further suggestion is that he may be consciously introducing a new thought: to desire God's love is a higher motive

⁸⁵ Both are rendered 'moral purpose' in the LCL translation.

⁸⁶ Noted by Plümmer, p. 259.

⁸⁷ Plümmer, p. 259.

⁸⁸ It is not very likely, as Héring, p. 75, notes, that he would be thinking of the imposition of a fixed contribution on the individual members of the congregation. In the first place, he would have no means of enforcing payment. And, secondly, any such attempt would surely rupture yet again his good relationship with the Corinthians, only lately restored.

LXX *Septuaginta*, ed. A. Rahlfs, Stuttgart, sixth edition.

Metzger, B. M., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London and New York, 1971.

⁸⁹ See Windisch, p. 277.

⁹⁰ Plümmer, p. 259; Betz, p. 107. Paul presumably could not count on access to the actual text of the Scriptures wherever he might be. Did he have the greater part of them roughly by heart? Or did he, when texts were available, take pains to memorise such sections as would be useful for his current preoccupations—here the collection?

LXX *Septuaginta*, ed. A. Rahlfs, Stuttgart, sixth edition.

Metzger, B. M., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London and New York, 1971.

⁹¹ Hughes, p. 331 n. 65.

than to expect reward.⁹² This is not impossible. In any case we need to ask how Paul understood his assertion, whether a conscious alteration or not. It might very well seem to conflict with his deeper theological principles. Barrett, arguing that the sense of 'love' is 'approves' or 'values', suggests that otherwise there would be a contradiction of Paul's belief in God's love for the sinner, 'the man who will not give at all, cheerfully or otherwise'.⁹³ Georgi, differently, does accept the meaning 'loves'. He claims, however, that what is in view is God's love as the atmosphere in which the cheerful giver moves. It is not the consequence of human giving but its ground. This must be Paul's meaning, since all his other references to God's love are concerned with the saving love manifested in the death of Christ.⁹⁴ This second interpretation is certainly too elaborate.⁹⁵ But whether, with Barrett, we need to give a reduced sense to ἀγαπᾷ is also questionable. Paul is not saying that God loves *only* the cheerful giver: he is giving his readers positive encouragement, not a negative warning. And whilst he certainly regards the love of God as prior in a fundamental sense to human attitudes and activities, this need not exclude the possibility that it could be seen also as a response on particular occasions to such activities or attitudes. He does not suppose that the behaviour of believers has no effect on God: he speaks elsewhere of pleasing God (1 Th 4:1) or the Lord (1 Cor 7:32), and also of provoking the Lord's jealousy (1 Cor 10:22).

The general idea of giving cheerfully is widespread.⁹⁶ Some similarity to the language of Paul's quotation may be seen in Ecclus 35:8(11): ἐν πάσῃ δώσει ἰλάρωσον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ('with every gift show a cheerful face', NRSV).⁹⁷ See also Philo, *Spec. Leg.* IV 74, where he urges the rich man to alleviate the hard life of the poor by means of ἰλαραῖς μεταδόσεσιν ('cheerful distributions of benefits').⁹⁸

⁹² Windisch, p. 277.

⁹³ Barrett, p. 236.

⁹⁴ Georgi, *Kollekte*, p. 70.

⁹⁵ Wolff, p. 185 n. 155, comments that Georgi fails to take sufficient account of the character of the saying as belonging to the Wisdom tradition. Furnish, p. 441, disagreeing with Georgi and agreeing with Barrett, notes examples from the Wisdom literature where there are similar references to those whom God loves: Wisd 7:28; Prov 22:11 (LXX); Ecclus 4:14 (the first two are also cited by Windisch, p. 277).

⁹⁶ See Plümmer, pp. 259–60; Windisch, p. 277; Barrett, p. 236; Furnish, p. 441; Betz, pp. 107–9.

⁹⁷ Cited by Barrett, p. 236; and by Furnish, p. 441.

⁹⁸ Cited by Georgi, *Kollekte*, p. 69; also (in translation) by Furnish, p. 441.

8. δυνατεῖ⁹⁹ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν. Paul adds some further encouragement, in the form of the promise of abundant divine grace. The basic point is clear, but there is some difference of opinion as to the precise connection with what he has already said. One suggestion is that he is returning to the notion of recompense which has appeared in v. 6 and which is amplified in v. 7, in that the recompense is shown to derive from God's appreciation of Corinthian giving.¹⁰⁰ In opposition to this view, however, it is argued that Paul, here, is not formulating God's response to the activity of the Corinthians, but rather is indicating the condition, i.e., God's grace, which makes such activity possible.¹⁰¹ Lastly, there is an intermediate position proposed by Furnish. The grace is indeed the 'harvest' of v. 6, but Paul does not view it as any kind of reward or payment. Furthermore, it is given for the promotion of 'specific acts of Christian service', like that of the collection.¹⁰² Which of these three suggestions is most suited to the context? The first should not be ruled out on *a priori* dogmatic grounds: Paul does speak elsewhere of reward (1 Cor 3:8, 14). And if it should prove plausible, i.e., if he does see the promised divine grace as in some sense the result of Corinthian generosity, it is difficult, *pace* Furnish, altogether to eliminate the notion of reward.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, the second suggestion makes the best connection with v. 7.¹⁰⁴ If we take πᾶσαν χάριν in a comprehensive sense,¹⁰⁵ we can see Paul as amplifying or elucidating his scriptural quotation: God is able most abundantly

⁹⁹ The verb δυνατέω, which here means 'be able' (BAGD s.v. 2.), although used twice elsewhere by Paul (Rom 14:4; 1 Cor 13:3), is very infrequent. Hence δυνατεῖ (℣⁴⁶ ℞ B C* D* F G 104 t vg Ambst) is replaced in some witnesses by δύναται (33 pc f g p vg^{ms}) and in others by δυνατός (C² D² Ψ 048, 0243 m b).

¹⁰⁰ Windisch, p. 277.

¹⁰¹ Theobald, *Gnade*, p. 294. See also Georgi, *Kollekte*, p. 70, who similarly rejects the idea of recompense.

Furnish, V. P., *II Corinthians*, AB 32A, New York, 1984.

¹⁰² Furnish, p. 447.

Furnish, V. P., *II Corinthians*, AB 32A, New York, 1984.

¹⁰³ A further difficulty inherent in Furnish's interpretation is that he appears to relate the divine activity of v. 8 wholly to some post-collection activity on the part of the Corinthians, whereas v. 14 shows that it is participation in the collection itself that Paul primarily has in view when he speaks of the grace God is able to bestow on them.

¹⁰⁴ And with v. 14.

¹⁰⁵ See below, pp. 578–9.

to bestow both the spiritual quality of cheerful generosity and the practical resources for its implementation, so that the individual Corinthian may truly fulfil the role of the ἱλαρὸς δότης.

That the content of πᾶσαν χάριν may include spiritual blessings is in one sense obvious. In relation to the collection the point is reinforced by the way Paul has spoken in 8:1–4, where the Macedonians' urgent desire to participate in the project is seen as the result of the divine grace bestowed upon them.¹⁰⁶ Here he assures his readers that God is able also in their case to endow them with abundant liberality. At the same time both the context and the following reference to αὐτάρκεια suggest that material blessings are also in view. Windisch supposes that Paul is anticipating questions as to how his readers are to be expected to find money for their contribution, and their own means of livelihood as well.¹⁰⁷ Hence the content of the χάρις is both spiritual and material.¹⁰⁸

Its comprehensive and unlimited character is emphasised by the repetition of πᾶς in various forms in the second half of the verse,¹⁰⁹ and also by the recurrence of περισσεύω. It will enable the Corinthians to be prolific in every kind of good work, and especially, as v.9 will show, in contributing to the collection.

This is because they will be possessed of αὐτάρκεια in the highest degree.¹¹⁰ How is this gift to be defined? In BAGD s.v. two basic meanings are given: 1. 'sufficiency', 'a competence'; 2. 'contentment', 'self-sufficiency'. The first of these, however, itself comprises two different senses. The lexicon notes that from Plato onwards the word 'means the state of one who supports himself without aid from others', but that in one of the papyri (P Oxy 729:10) it has the sense 'sufficient supply'. Under 2. there is the observation that self-sufficiency was 'a favourite

¹⁰⁶ The parallel is noted by Hughes, p. 331. In his view the whole canonical letter is a unity, but the point holds good also if chap. 9 is a separate letter, since what Paul says in 8:1–4 shows his way of thinking.

Windisch Windisch, H., *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, MeyerK 6, Göttingen,⁹1924 (reprinted 1970).

¹⁰⁷ Windisch, pp. 277–8

¹⁰⁸ So, e.g., Plümmer, p. 260; Windisch, *ibid.*; Allo, p. 234.

¹⁰⁹ Theobald, Gnade, p. 294.

¹¹⁰ See BAGD s.v. πᾶς l.a.δ: The παντὶ πάντοτε probably qualifies the participial phrase: 'in every respect, at all times, possessing the highest degree of αὐτάρκεια'.

BAGD *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago and London,²1979, revised and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and R. W. Danker from Bauer, *Wörterbuch*,⁵1958.

virtue of the Cynics and Stoics'. The person Who possesses this virtue, of contentment 'in relation to his own inner possibility', is independent of others, Kittel notes-he needs no one.¹¹¹

Which meaning does Paul have in view? The sense 'inward self-sufficiency' is strongly supported by Meyer: God is able to bestow upon believers a complete inward contentment that desires nothing from anyone else.¹¹² But this is scarcely the point in the present context. As commentators remark, there is a substantial difference between the Stoic αὐτάρκεια and What is meant here. The Stoic virtue is an end in itself, Whilst, for Paul, the purpose of the αὐτάρκεια is to enable one to assist the needy.¹¹³ For Paul, it is something Which facilitates relationship With others, not withdrawal from them.¹¹⁴ It is unlikely that he is thinking of the inner quality, even in a reduced, non-philosophical, sense.¹¹⁵ Most exegetes understand him to use αὐατάρκεια in the sense rendered in BAGD as 'sufficient supply'.¹¹⁶ The Corinthians Will have a sufficient income, a sufficient livelihood, sufficient material goods to enable them to share with others, and, in particular, to contribute generously to the collection.¹¹⁷ In the latter respect, practically speaking, Paul must mean that, if they do not yet have this surplus, they are nevertheless to give liberally, in the confidence that divine grace will make up the deficit later.¹⁸

¹¹¹ G. Kittel, on αὐτάρκεια, in *TWNT I*, pp. 466–7; the quotation is from *TDNT I*, p. 466

¹¹² Meyer, p. 377.

¹¹³ Windisch, p. 278; Bachmann, p. 331; Barrett, p. 237;

¹¹⁴ Furnish, p.448.

¹¹⁵ Meyer does not specifically mention the Stoics. Bachmann, p. 331 makes the general point that the inward quality provides no certain motivation to do good works.

BAGD *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago and London,²1979, revised and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and R. W. Danker from Bauer, Wörterbuch,⁵1958.

¹¹⁶ This would also imply the possession of αὐτάρκεια in the sense 'state of being self-supporting'.

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., Windisch, p. 278; Bachmann, p. 331; Barrett, p. 237; Georgi, *Kollekte*, p. 71; Furnish, pp. 447–8.

¹⁸ Margaret E. Thrall, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*](#), International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 573–580.

It is one thing to chide a church for being dilatory in their giving. It is something else to motivate individuals in the church to be free and unselfish in their giving. How does one develop in individuals such a happy spirit about giving? Church leaders throughout the ages have faced the same challenge that confronted Paul. In the next verses Paul presents four principles that are not directed to the Corinthian church as a whole but to individuals whose contributions will make up the church's gift. First, he appeals to a proverb to make the point that bountiful giving leads to bountiful rewards; stingy giving leads to stingy rewards (9:6). Second, he cites Scripture to encourage giving generously and freely because God loves a cheerful giver (9:7). Third, he refers to God's readiness to provide all that is necessary for generosity (9:8–10). Paul reassures those who might worry that they do not have enough seed to sow to attain a rich harvest. God will provide all that they need. Fourth, he maintains that their generosity will bring a great harvest of thanksgiving to God (9:11).

The benefits for giving that Paul sketches out in this unit can be summed up as follows:

1. It will make them spiritually rich (9:8–10).
2. It will bring thanksgiving to God (9:11–13).
3. The recipients will respond with prayers for them (9:14).
4. It will advance the well being and solidarity of the worldwide Christian community (9:13–14).

9:6 Paul's first point draws on a well-known analogy from farming: those who sow sparingly will get a sparse harvest, those who sow generously will get a generous harvest.¹³⁰ "Generously" in the NIV renders "upon blessings" (*ep' eulogiais*) and may be explained as "upon the principle of blessings." What does this mean? No farmer considers sowing as a loss of seed because the harvest will provide the seed for the next season. Consequently, no sower begrudges the seed he casts upon the ground or tries to scrimp by with sowing as little as possible. He willingly sows all that he can and trusts that God will bless the sowing with a bountiful harvest. If the farmer, for some reason, stints on the sowing, he will cheat himself of that harvest. The more he sows, the greater the harvest he will reap and the more he will have for sowing for the next harvest. Applying this analogy to giving means that plentiful giving will result in a plentiful harvest. But what kind of harvest is reaped by generosity?

The idea that generosity to the poor would meet with overflowing blessing in return was common in Jewish thinking (cp. Prov 11:24–25; Mal 3:10; Sir 35:10–11). In recent times this idea has been perverted by unscrupulous ministers to entice people to believe that the more they give the more they will get in return. They appeal to greed to encourage others to open their pocketbooks, and they give ultimately to get more for themselves.¹³¹ But this verse must be interpreted in terms of what follows. Paul does not pass this principle off as a shrewd investment strategy on how to reap greater material blessings by giving a portion of it to others. If one gives in hopes of attaining greater material prosperity, then one will harvest only spiritual poverty. Paul makes clear in what follows that God rewards generosity with material abundance to make it possible for people to be even more generous.

9:7 Paul's second reason is directed specifically to individuals: "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give." The verb "should give" is not in the text and must be supplied. Plummer claims that the absence of a verb makes the request more forcible, but Verbrugge argues just the opposite.¹³² Paul omits the imperative and thereby softens the force of what he wants them to do.¹³³ Throughout these two chapters, Paul goes out of his way to avoid giving the impression that he is trying to force this project upon them. What the Corinthians are to do is clear, but Paul does not come right out and tell them to do it.¹³⁴ This approach means that if they comply, they will do so out of obedience to their Lord who gave himself for them, not out of obedience to Paul.

¹³⁰ Proverbs 11:24 provides a biblical parallel: "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; / another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty."

NIV New International Version

¹³¹ An old English proverb warns, "He who serves God for money will serve the devil for better wages."

¹³² Plummer, *The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 231.

¹³³ Verbrugge, *Paul's Style of Church Leadership*, 259.

¹³⁴ Paul uses a similar strategy in his request to Philemon about Onesimus.

Paul echoes Scripture to bolster the need to give generously: those who give spontaneously from the heart are especially prized by God. In the Old Testament, giving reluctantly or under compulsion is portrayed as cancelling out any benefit that could be received from the gift while giving with a glad heart promises reward from God: “Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to” (Deut 15:10). Scripture assumes that what is crucial is the attitude of the one who gives, not the amount. God, who knows and appraises our hearts, values only those gifts that come as a free expression of the deepest part of our souls. Gifts given under some sense of external compulsion will always be halfhearted at best. That is why the amount makes no difference if it is given with a glad heart (8:12).¹³⁵ But if it is given resentfully with a gloomy countenance, that attitude cancels any merit the gift might have no matter its amount.

¹³⁵ Seneca writes: “Let us give in the manner that would have been acceptable if we were receiving. Above all let us give willingly, promptly, and without hesitation.... No gratitude is felt for a benefit when it has lingered long in the hands of him who gives it, when the giver has seemed sorry to let it go, and has given it with the air of one who is robbing himself. Even though some delay should intervene, let us avoid in every way the appearance of having deliberately delayed; hesitation is the next thing to refusing, and gains no gratitude. For, since in the case of a benefit the chief pleasure of it comes from the intention of the bestower, he who by his very hesitation has shown that he made his bestowal unwillingly has not “given,” but has failed to withstand the effort to extract it” (*On Benefits* 2.1.1–2). A rabbinic tradition list four types of almsgivers: “he that is minded to give but not that others should give—he begrudges what belongs to others; he that is is minded that others should give but not that he should give—he begrudges what belongs to himself; he that is minded to give and also that others should give—he is a saintly man; he that is minded not to give himself and that others should not give—he is a wicked man” (*m. ’Abot* 5:13).

Paul underscores this point with a line from Prov 22:8 (LXX) that is absent from the Hebrew text, “for God loves a cheerful giver.”¹³⁶ The LXX has God “blesses” a cheerful giver. The Hebrew text reflects the idea of blessing in Prov 22:9, “A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.” It is not that God does not love the one who gives grudgingly or not at all but that God loves, in the sense of “approves,” the one who is delighted to give to others. God loves a cheerful giver because that is precisely what God is, a cheerful giver.

Horrell reflects on how this verse can be twisted to mean something other than Paul intended:

The comfortable rich who wish to remain so may interpret this to mean that if they can only give a little cheerfully, and would resent giving more, then God would rather they give only a little. Paul, it is clear, puts things rather differently: where the grace of God abounds, there people of their own free-will abound in good deeds (9:8), like the righteous one whom the scripture describes as scattering gifts freely to the poor (9:9).¹³⁷

9:8 The third reason for giving is that God is lavishly generous and abundantly supplies us with everything necessary to have enough for our own needs and to be generous with others. The phrase “all grace” is quite broad in scope, covering the material blessings and the spiritual motivation to share them. Most people become miserly in their giving because they worry that they will not have enough for themselves. Paul assures them that God will supply them with plenty for their needs at all times and uses alliterative repetition to carry his point: “All grace ... so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every [all] good work.”

LXX Septuagint

¹³⁶ A wide variety of Jewish traditions place an emphasis on cheerfulness in giving (see particularly Deut 15:7–11). A later rabbinic tradition interprets the teaching “receive all men with a cheerful countenance” to mean that “if one gives his fellow all the good gifts in the world with a downcast face, Scripture accounts it to him as though he had given him naught. But if he receives his fellow with a cheerful countenance, even though he gives him naught, Scripture accounts it to him as though he had given him all the good gifts in the world” (*Abot R. Nat.* 13). Philo argues that in no other action does one resemble God as in showing kindness in redressing the misfortunes of neighbors: So then let not the rich man collect great store of gold and silver and hoard it at his house, but bring it out for general use that he may soften the hard lot of the needy with the unction of his cheerfully given liberality” (*Special Laws* IV.74). In *T. Job* 12:1 Job says, “On occasion a man cheerful of heart would come to me saying, ‘I am not wealthy enough to help the destitute. Yet I wish to serve the poor today at your table.’ ”

LXX Septuagint

¹³⁷ Horrell, “Paul’s Collection,” 79.

Reluctance to sow generously, then, reflects a refusal to trust that God is all sufficient and all gracious. It also assumes that we can only give when we are prospering and have something extra that we will not need for ourselves. Paul says that at all times God provides us with all that we need so there is never any time when we cannot be generous.

In 9:8 the word “having all you need” translates *autarkeia*, a word that Greek authors used to mean “self-sufficiency” or “contentment.” The Cynics and Stoics of Paul’s day understood self sufficiency to be related “to freedom from external circumstances and other people.”¹³⁸ In this tradition one developed this self-sufficiency by disengaging oneself from human needs and from other humans. Paul does not use this term in a philosophical sense but in an economic sense. Having enough does not simply mean reducing one’s craving for material goods and becoming independent from everyone. It means reducing what one wants for oneself so that one has enough to share with others and create an interdependence with them.¹³⁹ Having what is sufficient helps Christians “to relate more effectively to other people, not to withdraw from them.”¹⁴⁰

For Paul, having all you need means having enough for every good work. Paul’s point is that “God will provide the means to be generous, that one can sow *liberally* (which also means freely and cheerfully, v. 7a) in the confidence that God will bestow a liberal harvest.”¹⁴¹ The more we give, the more we will be given by God to share with others. We may not have all the money that we want, but we will have all the money we need to be abundant in our giving to others.

When God gives us our resources, God gives us more than we need, not so that we can have more, but so that we can give more to others. God does not bestow material blessings so that one can hoard them for oneself or withdraw from others but so that they might be shared with others. The whole purpose of the collection, therefore, is not to establish the independence of the Gentile Christians from the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem but to deepen their interdependence.¹⁴²

Paul also differs from the Cynics and Stoics in the use of *autarkeia* in his assumption that self-sufficiency does come from one’s own earnest self-discipline. It is a gift of God. Therefore “self-sufficiency” is a misnomer, since it is sufficiency that comes from God not from the self (see Phil

¹³⁸ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 442.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 447.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 448.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 447.

¹⁴² This concept comports well with a similar understanding about almsgiving that is found in the Babylonian Talmud: “Tinnius Rufus asked: Why does your God, being the lover of the needy, not Himself provide for their support? R. Akiba replied: By charity wealth is to be made a means of salvation; God the Father of both the rich and the poor, wants the one to help the other, and thus to make the world a household of love” (*b. B. Bat.* 10a).

4:11–13).¹⁴³ Paul believes that God bestows both the generosity and the resources for generosity which explains why he lists “liberality” as a spiritual gift (Rom 12:8).

Paul assumes in this verse that the most valuable thing about money is that we can use it for every good work. He avoids the plural “works,” which he tends to connect with “works of law” and the ritual acts of piety, such as circumcision, and observing food laws. “Every good work” here refers to acts of charity (see 1 Cor 15:58) and is little different from what James says about supplying the needs of the brother or sister who is naked and lacks daily food (Jas 2:14–17).¹⁴⁴ Abounding in every good work comes from abounding in God’s grace. Every good work does not earn grace; grace, already received, generates the good work.

Paul is trying to teach the Corinthians about the value of money that differs significantly from the value attached to it in their culture (and almost every other culture, ancient and modern). Peterman shows a correspondence between what Paul writes here in 9:8–13 and what he writes to the Philippians. He draws important conclusions from these texts that are particularly relevant in any culture awash in crass materialism.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ In Horace’s *Satires*, Davus the slave is allowed to speak freely and says: “Who then is free? The wise man, who is lord over himself, whom neither poverty nor death, nor bonds afright, who bravely defies his passions, and scorns ambition, who in himself is a whole, smoothed and rounded, so that nothing from outside can rest on the polished surface, and against whom Fortune in her onset is ever maimed” (2.7.83–87).

¹⁴⁴ Cp. 1 Tim 6:18–19: “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

¹⁴⁵ He spots the following parallels:

9:8	αὐταρκεία	Phil 4:11 (adjective)
9:10–11	God’s reward	Phil 4:19
9:12	λειτουργία	Phil 2:25, 30
9:12	thanks to God	Phil 1:3
9:13	κοινωνία	Phil 1:5; 4:15

1. Christians should know contentment (*autarkeia*, “having enough”) in every state.
2. Money is a commodity that should be used in the service of others (*leitourgia*), not something to display one’s virtue publicly, to gain honor, or to bring others into one’s orbit of power.
3. Reward can only be expected from God, not from others, an Old Testament view that runs counter to Greco-Roman social expectations. Giving to others in need reaps spiritual dividends from God.
4. God bestows the material wealth that we share with others, and consequently God, not the giver, is the one who is to be blessed and thanked.
5. Sharing with other Christians is identified as *koinōnia*—joining in partnership with them. In no way should the benefactors assume that the recipients of their gifts become their social inferiors or are obligated to return the favor with material benefits.
6. Giving to others proves that one’s confession of Christ as Lord is true.¹⁹

¹⁹ David E. Garland, [2 Corinthians](#), vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 404–410.