

## Generous Giving

### Philippians 4:10-20

Online Sermon:

[http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page_id=3567)

Sitting in a dark dreary prison for five years, chained to a Praetorian Guard,<sup>1</sup> totally reliant on others for the necessities of life and yet still have an attitude of unspeakable joy, would require an abundance of faith! Though Apostle Paul likely had Luke and Timothy by his side this in no way reduced his outburst of joy when Epaphroditus arrived from the church of Philippi. He had a “love offering”<sup>2</sup> not only of risking his life to take a three-month journey from Philippi to Rome<sup>3</sup> but also a substantial monetary gift to help Paul feed, clothe, and take of himself.<sup>4</sup> While the money would somewhat “ease the harsh conditions of his imprisonment,”<sup>5</sup> what gave Paul tears of joy

<sup>1</sup> Paul Barnett, *Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord*, ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 118.

<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 182.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Barnett, *Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord*, ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 118.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel M. Gurtner, “Philippians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2004), 586.

<sup>5</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 366.

was that such a selfless act was proof that the Philippians were not just a financial partner<sup>6</sup> but were continuing their partnership in the Gospel message (1:5). The church’s concern for Paul was truly indicative that they had learned to put others first (2:3-4)!



With likely tears of gratitude Paul was now faced with the challenge of how to thank the church properly. On the one hand he did not want to flatter the Philippians and risk them becoming “puffed up”<sup>7</sup> or have his thanksgiving be seen as a manipulative “request for more money”<sup>8</sup> like the Charlatan philosophers of his day.<sup>9</sup> Paul was not preaching the Gospel message for money but to serve the Lord! On the other hand, those who give, especially out of likely poverty (2 Corinthians 8:1-2), deserve to be honored for bearing fruit that

<sup>6</sup> Osvaldo Padilla, “Philippians,” in *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, ed. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020), 1182.

<sup>7</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 187.

<sup>8</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 186.

<sup>9</sup> Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 234.

pleased the Lord!<sup>10</sup> To say thanks Paul began with first rejoicing in the Lord, “the ultimate Provider of all good gifts.”<sup>11</sup>

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*“This central focus on God transforms the transaction of giving and receiving among Christians from a human, horizontal exchange to a divine-human, triangular interaction. God initiates giving, empowers givers, supplies gifts, and meets needs. Participating in the activity of God by giving and receiving leads to rejoicing greatly in the Lord.”<sup>12</sup>*

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Using a “botanical image of a plant blooming again”<sup>13</sup> Paul publicly praised that Lord that He once again granted the Philippians the means, the faith, the love, and concern to show their renewed support.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 186–187.

<sup>11</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 306.

<sup>12</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 306.

**Reflection.** When another believer does something nice for you do you stop and give the Lord thanks for giving them an opportunity to share the gifts that they have received from God with you? How does Jesus’ statement, whatever you did for one of the least of the brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me” govern to whom and with what frequency you give to others?

## Being Content in all Situations

To make certain his gratitude for the Lord’s provision to the Philippians and their subsequent faithful giving were not seen as a manipulative act to beg for more money<sup>15</sup> Paul told the Philippians, “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.” (4:11). While Aristotle defined contentment as “possessing all things and needing nothing”<sup>16</sup> and the Stoics defined

<sup>13</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 306.

<sup>14</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 186.

<sup>15</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 187.

<sup>16</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon](#), vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 366.

contentment as a “deliberate attitude of the mind”<sup>17</sup> of complete self-sufficiency regardless of one’s circumstances;<sup>18</sup> Paul boldly redefined this Greek philosophical term to mean



something entirely different! While Greek philosophy sees contentment either as independence or the derivative product of the attitude of the “temporal self,”<sup>19</sup> for Paul contentment was not found in self-

sufficiency but on utter dependence on Christ-sufficiency!<sup>20</sup> It is not more or less stuff, or an easy or difficult life that determines contentment<sup>21</sup> but making one’s requests to God and seeking His kingdom first that one receives peace that surpasses all understanding! While it is easy to be content

when on the mountaintops of blessings, it is not so easy to rejoice in valleys of trials and tribulations! People tend to “complain about their homes when thousands have no home. People gripe about work when many have no jobs. They fuss about their cars when many have never seen a car.”<sup>22</sup> What Paul is saying is that “Christian contentment is a mystery to those on the outside and can only be learned from the inside by those who are in Christ.”<sup>23</sup> It was Christ who enabled Apostle Paul to be content during the difficult times when he was beaten with rods, pelted with stones, and shipwrecked; and the times of incredible blessings such as being caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 11:24-29, 12:1-6).<sup>24</sup> Over the last 30 years of ministry Paul<sup>25</sup> learned the key to joy was to trust in the Lord who empowers His own to be content in all situations.<sup>26</sup> Paul finished this section by boldly stating, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (4:13)! While this is one of “the most highly quoted verses in the Bible, but unfortunately, it’s one of the most misapplied verses in the

<sup>17</sup> Paul Barnett, *Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord*, ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 120.

<sup>18</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 366.

<sup>19</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 183.

<sup>20</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 187.

<sup>21</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 188.

<sup>22</sup> Alan Carr, “[The Secret Society of the Satisfied \(Phil. 4:10–13\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 3031.

<sup>23</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 185.

<sup>24</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 184.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Barnett, *Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord*, ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 119.

<sup>26</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 192.

Bible.”<sup>27</sup> Paul is not saying that through Christ you become superhuman<sup>28</sup> by rubbing Him like a genie in a bottle!

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*Faith in Christ will not enable you to golf with scores below 70<sup>29</sup> or bench press twice your weight, but instead by one’s faith and His grace you can do anything that God wills for your life!*

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In the context of this passage, however, Paul is not talking about our accomplishments but instead how Christ will strengthen us to be content in both good and bad times.

**Reflection.** Are you content with whatever God sends your way in life? When you go through trials and tribulations or on the mountain tops of blessings are you able to rejoice in the Lord or do you find you are grumbling a lot because you have not cast your anxiety upon the Lord and counted your blessings and

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<sup>27</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 191.

<sup>28</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 186.

<sup>29</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 187.

<sup>30</sup> F. F. Bruce, [Philippians](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Peabody, MA: Baker Books, 2011), 152.

<sup>31</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 317.

named them one by one? Which would you rather have, an easy life filled with earthly possessions, or a life filled with the Lord’s presence? Which one you chose makes a huge difference in your contentment and joy!

## The Gospel Giving Partnership

So that the Philippians might not view his words of being content as “ungraciousness on his part”<sup>30</sup> for their financial support and risk hurting their feelings,<sup>31</sup> like a “teacher congratulating a student”<sup>32</sup> Paul again expressed the joy he found in them being his Gospel partner (1:5)!<sup>33</sup> “Even though they were a young church,”<sup>34</sup> Philippians refused to be mere consumers or lukewarm, hearers but not doers of the word (James 1:22) but instead chose to partner with Apostle Paul’s mission to the Gentiles by practically taking care of his needs.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 316–317.

<sup>33</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 315.

<sup>34</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 194.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 121.

Paul wanted the Philippians to know that he did not see them as consumers but co-laborers<sup>36</sup> and a partner in sharing in the Gospel message. The “inseparable relationship between financial giving and Gospel partnership,”<sup>37</sup> was evident in



Philippi for when Paul first set out from Macedonia, they were the “only church that shared with him in the matter of giving and receiving” (4:15)! In the context of the

Greco-Roman culture such acts were “idioms of the deepest affection and friendship.”<sup>38</sup> For Paul they were also proof that the Philippians were willing to not grumble or complain either about being persecuted or living in poverty but deeply desired to hold fast to the word of life (2:14-16) as demonstrated by putting the interests of others first (2:3-4). While Paul as a rule did not allow the other churches to give him financial aid (2 Cor. 11:8–9) but

instead “chose to work with his hands for his own support” (1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Thess. 3:7–10),<sup>39</sup> Philippi was the exception! He was not worried that Philippian generosity in poverty would be misconstrued as them supporting a patron or Charlatan, but instead precious proof of their love for him<sup>40</sup> and their desire to financially aid the one called to minister to the Gentiles!

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*Their generosity for Paul was a sign of their regenerate hearts (Luke 19:8.9)<sup>41</sup> that shined brightly like stars in the sky as eternal proof that Paul had in fact not run the race in vain (2:15-16)!*

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**Reflection.** As Christ’s ambassadors and royal priests, we are called to help deliver His message of reconciliation to the world (2 Corinthians 5:20). For those who are evangelists and missionaries this call is to spread the Good News. While you may lack the spiritual gifting and call to be on the front lines of evangelism this in no way exempts you from the call to be a partner in willing souls to Christ! “What we do with our resources is a window into our souls. The question is, what does

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<sup>36</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 193.

<sup>37</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 193.

<sup>38</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 191.

<sup>39</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon](#), vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 366.

<sup>40</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [Philippians](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 158–159.

<sup>41</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 190.

God see when He looks in?”<sup>42</sup> Does He see a loving, kind, servant’s heart who is willing to provide for the missionaries of this world or does He see a “ninja who appears on Sunday but then vanishes” the rest of the week? Since the resources we have come from the hand of God then how could it be right to not share when He asks us to do so? What other partnership yields as high of return as soul winning?

## Giftng is Storing Eternal Treasures

To be certain no one misconstrued his teaching on the “privilege and responsibility of giving” was nothing more than seeking more financial aid like a patron,<sup>43</sup> Paul made the following bold statement, “Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account” (4:17). Both giving and receiving have “spiritual and eternal significance.”<sup>44</sup> When Epaphroditus showed up with their financial support Paul was overwhelmed with joy for their generosity because it was

not only a reflection of their spiritual walk in the Lord<sup>45</sup> but was also an investment in the kingdom of God that would produce much fruit. Paul treated the Greek word for fruit, Karpos, as a commerce term<sup>46</sup> “in the sense of interest accruing”<sup>47</sup> to the faithful giver. Those who give their tokens of heavenly grace to



support kingdom work will “be filled with the fruit of righteousness (1:11).”<sup>48</sup> “Every act of love increased their capacity to love more”<sup>49</sup> and reflect the servant attitude of Christ. Paul desired to remain with the Philippians for “their progress and joy in the faith” (1:25). Giving back that

which is God’s honors Him for it displays not only gratitude but also an utter dependence on He who is sovereign over all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16). Giving also demonstrates that the believer has come to realize that the “only money one

<sup>42</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 190.

<sup>43</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 321.

<sup>44</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 194.

<sup>45</sup> Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 237.

<sup>46</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 186.

<sup>47</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 186.

<sup>48</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 194.

<sup>49</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 322.

will ever see again is the money one gives away!”<sup>50</sup> As Christ taught, “do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up your treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). Apostle Paul was overwhelmed with joy for his yearning to know Christ he was now seeing in the lives of the Philippians. Giving generously is an indicator of spiritual maturity because such a believer does not seek the necessities of life that the Lord promises to provide but instead remains focused on pressing on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called one heavenward in Christ Jesus (3:14)!

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*Submission to the Lord in all areas of our lives, especially our giving, not only “yield daily profits”<sup>51</sup> but upon the Lord’s return gives a return on one’s investment in heaven that far outweighs the costs!*

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<sup>50</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 192.

<sup>51</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 321.

Like Paul, however, our motivation to give is not to be for the return but instead the opportunity to participate in kingdom work for the honor and glory of God the Father in heaven!

**Reflection.** When the Lord asks you to give what do you say to Him? Do you immediately say YES to Him, or do you count the costs of going without? When you see others in need do also see the glorious opportunity to give with your money the same comfort that you have received from the Good Shepherd? Where are your riches stored?

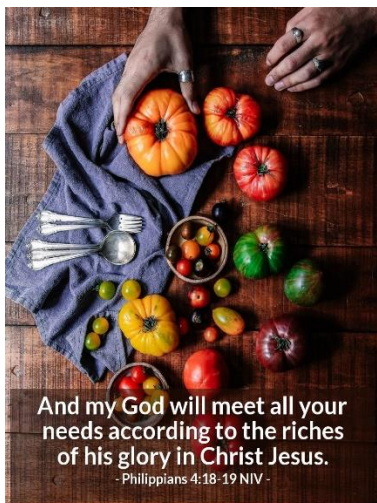
## Gifts are a Fragrant Offering to God

To make sure the Philippians did not view his prior comments as “thankless thanks”<sup>52</sup> Paul continued using his financial imagery in business terms<sup>53</sup> and stated the following, “I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent” (4:18). Not only was the gift Epaphroditus brought to Paul considered a gift that would produce for the Philippians much fruit, but it was also considered a “fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (4:18). Money is a great tool to provide for others but can never be seen

<sup>52</sup> Ralph P. Martin, [Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 187.

<sup>53</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Php 4:18.

as the means of purchasing one's salvation.<sup>54</sup> We are to worship God with our money, but never are we to worship money!<sup>55</sup>



While the love of “money is the root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10), when it is given in faith and obedience to the will of God it becomes an act of worship! When the Philippians gave to Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, they were in essence giving unto the Lord Himself.<sup>56</sup>

“Dropping the financial metaphor Paul moves to Old Testament imagery of sacrificial service.”<sup>57</sup> In the OT the “burnt

offering in which the sacrifice was consumed” it would give out a “sumptuous roast-like aroma”<sup>58</sup> up to God and it would please Him! While He who gives everyone life and breath and everything else does not need our gifts (Acts 17:25), it pleases God when one of His own trusts Him so deeply to provide for

their needs that he/she is willing to sacrificially give whatever the Father's hand has provided when asked!

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*We give because Christ first gave His life as a ransom for all. We give because what we have is not our own but the Lord's. Giving then, for a believer is not to be seen as a burden or a risk of going without but instead a privilege to be asked to worship in this manner.<sup>59</sup>*

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The monetary gift the Philippians gave Paul “was no longer to be measured simply in terms of financial or social value. God's pleasure in their gifts reframed them with spiritual, divine significance!<sup>60</sup> Not only was the Lord smiling when Epaphroditus in faith risked his life to give to Paul the money gift from Philippi, but God also credited to them righteousness and eternal riches in heaven! The Philippians did this out of

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<sup>54</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 196.

<sup>55</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 196.

<sup>56</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [Philippians](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 159.

<sup>57</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 195.

<sup>58</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 192.

<sup>59</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 196.

<sup>60</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 324.



obedience, love, and faith in the Lord and this is why Paul said their selfless act was a sweet aroma unto God!

**Reflection.** If you knew the Lord was going to appear in His new body at your church next Sunday and would give every member inside the church the opportunity to give to further His kingdom what offering would you bring? If Christ asked you to invest in His kingdom, would you not reach deep into your bank account and sell your possessions for such a wonderful opportunity? Since Christ is indivisibly present everywhere how would you respond if He is asking you today to give generously?

## Giving without the Fear of Going Without

“We have a young couple in our congregation who served in youth ministry prior to moving to seminary. They tell a story that I think even George Mueller would find impressive! The couple was living on a meager salary. On one night, they were down to 13 cents in their bank account. They were getting paid the next day, but they were out of lots of supplies, including toilet paper! After a period of frustration, they decided to pray for God to provide. They took Philippians 4:6–7 seriously: Don’t worry about anything but pray about

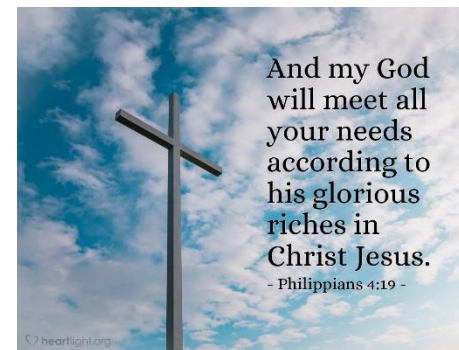
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<sup>61</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 197.

<sup>62</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Php 4:19–20.

*everything*. That night their youth group did what many youth groups do—they “rolled” their home. That means they threw toilet paper all over their house, yard, and trees. But this group didn’t really know what they were doing, so they only used one roll. They left the rest of the package on the doorstep, knocked on the door, and ran off. When the young couple opened the door, they found that their prayer was answered!”<sup>61</sup>

Paul finished this section of the letter with great humility that while from prison he certainly could never pay back the Philippian church he told them,<sup>62</sup> “my God will meet your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus” (4:9). The



Macedonian churches were known for giving generously out of their poverty (2 Corinthians 8:2).<sup>63</sup> Similar to the widow in Luke 21:1-3 with faith that the Good Shepherd would provide the Philippians gave out of the funds they had to

live on. “Just as the Philippians had kept Paul “well supplied” (v. 18), so now God will most certainly “supply every need” of theirs.<sup>64</sup> Like the Philippians regardless of our level of wealth

<sup>63</sup> Paul Barnett, *Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord*, ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 123.

<sup>64</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 193.

we are called to give to others in the name of the Lord. When God asks us to do so we are to rejoice for it is not from the one we gave to that our repayment will come but from the God of the universe who repays us out of His infinite resources!<sup>65</sup> This does not mean that Paul is promoting some kind of wealth gospel which falsely states if you give money to others God will give you more back. The return on investment of putting the interests of others first by giving them one's time and financial aid comes from a loving God who provides not only every spiritual blessing needed to live for Christ<sup>66</sup> but also eternal riches in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy! So, let us not be anxious about anything, grumble about trials and persecution, or be fearful about the future which we cannot control but instead let us be generous towards one another with peace and faith in our hearts that giving unto others is giving to the One who promises to uphold, sustain, and bless us beyond all measure!

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<sup>65</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 196.

<sup>66</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 193.