

# HILARIOUS GENEROSITY

## STUDY FOUR

### The Charming Joy of Grace Giving

*2 Corinthians 9:6–15*

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*Giving follows when grace flows within us. Let the grace of God go to work within you and you'll see the difference it makes.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**L**ISTEN to the lyrics of the beloved hymn, “Amazing Grace,” and you’ll hear its author, John Newton, singing his life story.

John’s mother was a godly woman who taught her son the Scriptures. When John was seven years old, however, his mother died, and he was reared in the home of relatives. Rebellious as a youth, he eventually left to join the British navy—only to desert and flee to Africa where, in Newton’s own words, “I might sin my fill.”

He fell in with a Portuguese slave trader but suffered humiliating abuses. He was treated like an animal, forced to grovel for his food. Emaciated and broken, he managed to escape and to board a passing ship headed to England.

Nearing the coast of Scotland, the ship encountered a violent storm. The howling wind battered the ship for days, while Newton pumped out seawater below deck. He was exhausted, sick, and certain he would die. There was nowhere to go. No one to help. Finally, this prodigal came to the end of his running.

In this wretched condition, the 23-year-old remembered the Scriptures of his childhood, and he cried out to God for mercy. Immediately, God welcomed him into His arms of love and forgave him. The ship made it to harbor, but Newton was never the same. He dedicated his life to serving the Lord and advocating against the slave trade. God’s amazing grace transformed John Newton, and it transforms us as well when we truly receive it.<sup>1</sup>



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## PREPARE YOUR HEART

Come in prayer to the Lord who showers His forgiveness and love over you. Invite Him to reveal to you the wonders of His grace through this study and to inspire you with a spirit of grace in your giving.



## TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

“God loves a cheerful giver” is the theme of our *Searching the Scriptures* studies on generosity (2 Corinthians 9:7 NASB). As we learned, the word *cheerful* comes from the Greek word, *hilaros*. The word connotes deep-down joy that flows out of us when we are *content* with what we have, *confident* that God will provide for our needs, and *delighted* to share with others what God has given us.

The opposite of cheerful givers are reluctant givers—discontent, uncertain, and tight-fisted. They give grudgingly and only because someone pries their fingers open. How does a reluctant giver become a cheerful giver? By experiencing God’s amazing grace—a truth woven through the context of Paul’s instructions in 2 Corinthians 9.



## Observation: Grace Giving

Read [2 Corinthians 9:6–15](#) carefully and slowly. Note Paul’s agricultural references to “seeds,” “crop,” “farmer,” and “harvest.” Look for commands and promises. Find key words, such as, “share,” “give,” “generosity,” and, especially, “grace.” After reading the verses, answer the observation questions below which are grouped into four subjects.

### Bountiful Sowing—2 Corinthians 9:6

What general principle about planting and harvesting did Paul give in [2 Corinthians 9:6](#)?

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## Cheerful Giving—2 Corinthians 9:7

In [2 Corinthians 9:7](#), Paul addressed the subject of giving. *How much* did Paul say we should give? *How* should we give?

*Until you experience grace within you—clearly and sufficiently—you won't give cheerfully. You'll give because you feel guilty or because someone is talking about the need. You must decide in your own heart. That suggests careful planning.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

## Liberal Providing—2 Corinthians 9:8–11

A cheerful giver is one who rests in God's promises. In [2 Corinthians 9:8](#), what assurance did Paul give?

What additional assurance do you find in [9:9](#)? Check your Bible's footnotes for the reference of the verse Paul partially quoted. What does this complete verse say?

In [9:10–11](#), Paul returned to a farming metaphor to prove his point. What *promise* did Paul make about God's provision? For what *purpose* does God provide? What are the *positive results*?

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## Joyful Response—2 Corinthians 9:12–15

But there are more! List the additional positive results you find in [2 Corinthians 9:12–14](#).

All of God’s good gifts spill out of His “overflowing grace” (9:14). What praise did Paul lift up in [9:15](#) in response to God’s grace—and all the blessings that come through that gift?

*Generosity is a process. It isn’t an event in which you are suddenly a generous person. You learn by trusting God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### **Interpretation: Experiencing “Overflowing Grace”**

The apostle Paul was never at a loss for words . . . except when describing God’s grace. Grace, he wrote, is a gift “too wonderful for words” (2 Corinthians 9:15). It is “indescribable” (9:15 NASB). “No language can praise it enough!” (9:15 MSG).

How would you define *grace*? For help, consult your Bible dictionary or the online [Dictionary of the Bible](#). The Amplified Bible inserts a simple definition in [2 Corinthians 9:14](#).

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We can define what grace is, but what does grace do? First, *grace stoops to where we are and lifts us up to God*. Grace “stooped” to lift John Newton out of his pit of sin. How did Paul describe God stooping to him in *1 Timothy 1:13–15*?

Second, *grace replaces the harsh demands of the law and offers mercy in its place*. The law would have pointed a finger of shame at John Newton, but grace offered a hand of mercy. How did grace offer mercy toward Paul in *1:16–17*?

Third, *grace guides us in responding to God and to others*. The grace that flows into us overflows through us in the form of generosity. What did “overflowing grace” mean in Paul’s farming metaphor in *2 Corinthians 9:10–11*?

Through His grace, God saves us, covers us with mercy, and transforms us into grace givers. Let’s explore this theme further in one more passage.

*My hope is that we really let God’s grace sink into our lives so that our living is not only marked by grace but also our giving. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

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## Correlation: The Gracious Act of Giving

*Correlation* deepens our understanding through comparison of one passage to another. What did Paul call giving in 2 *Corinthians* 8:6–7?

Giving and grace are related virtues, twins in the family of God. Sum up in your own words what Paul meant by associating giving with grace.

*When grace makes itself known in our giving, we excel in joy and generosity.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



## Application: Expressing Grace through Giving

When John Newton finally broke the dam of his defiance and rebellion against God, grace flooded every area of his life. When we put our faith in Christ, grace floods our lives, too, producing bountiful abundance wherever it flows.

What harvest of blessing has God's grace produced in your life? How has it changed the way you relate to God? Or the way you think about yourself? Or the way you interact with others?

What abundance does grace produce in your soul when it expresses itself in your generosity?

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The gift of grace that Paul said was “too wonderful for words” is none other than Jesus Christ. Humanity consists of innumerable John Newtons. When God saw His loved ones in desperate need, He sent His Son to rescue humanity from sin’s sinking ship. There’s no greater joy than living under the blessing of God’s grace . . . except when we share it with others.



## A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, Your Son is grace personified, the One who comes to us when we cry out to You for mercy. He stoops into the pit of our sin where we have nowhere to turn and there is no one to help, and He lifts us up. Redeemed. Forgiven. Set free. May others see Your Son’s face in my generosity to them. And may I never cease to worship You for Your amazing grace. In Christ’s name, amen.*

## ENDNOTE

1. See Donald Grey Barnhouse, *God’s Grace, God’s Freedom, God’s Heirs*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959, 1961, 1963, reprint, 1973), 127–29.

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2015, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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