

*How to Get the Most Out of Life*  
*II Corinthians 9:1-12*

**INTRODUCTION**

Life is not equal. Some people just get more out of life than do others. Some people just enjoy life more and have more fun along the way. Since we only go this way once, we want to get the most out of life as we go. This should be a special concern to you High School Seniors.

Our text for the morning is a part of the Apostle's discussion of giving. He is still seeking to motivate the Corinthian Christians to have a generous part in the offering for the poor saints of Jerusalem. As he does this, he brings before us three very vital things for any who are concerned about getting the most out of life. First, he states a principle. He applies the principle with a plan and then gives encouragement to follow the plan with a promise. This principle, plan and promise must become a part of your life, if you are to know God's best. Let us consider them separately. They apply in broad general ways to all of life and specifically to the questions of giving.

**I. OBSERVE THE PRINCIPLE OF INVESTMENT**

I have chosen the term 'investment' because it is the more contemporary term. The figure used by Paul is actually more agricultural. "Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." Every farmer knows the natural truth of this statement. No farmer ever expects to reap where he has not sown. He does not sow two hundred acres with an expectation of reaping six hundred acres. He knows that if you sow little, you reap little; but if you sow much, you will reap much.

This principle has broad applications. It can be applied to the student. The student who sows little study, will reap sparingly when the grades are announced. The student who sows generously, will reap generously when the grades are harvested. About this time in the semester, students begin to be aware of how they have sown. Those of you planning to go on to college will find this principle still very valid in college.

Every man in the world of business knows the truth of this principle. It is the salesman who sows generously who reaps generously. There is just a law at work in the world of business that governs this point. You reap as you sow.

Paul is stating it as a principle to govern our giving. He wants the Corinthians to know that they should keep the harvest in mind as they give. If they give sparingly, they will have little in return from their giving. If they give generously, with a view to blessing, then it will return to them as they have given. We need to keep this principle in mind as we make our plans to give on next Lord's day. After we have determined our ability to give, then we should determine just how big a blessing we desire from the Lord. Then let our offering reflect the size of the offering that we desire. There is a direct relationship.

But let me urge upon you, young people, the importance of this principle. Where are some people who seek to get the most out of life by being takers. They are always desirous of being on the receiving end. They never think about giving. They ignore the principle of investment. They reserve all of their time, talent and money for themselves. Then they wonder why so little of life's excitement ever comes their way. The people who follow this principle of investment are constantly looking for opportunities to give themselves. They invest their time, their talents and their money in that which brings good to others and glory to God. They are often surprised at how their investments return to them a hundred fold as the years go by. They learn that to get the most out of life you must observe the principle of investment.

## ***II. FOLLOW THE PLAN OF EXHILARATION***

The Apostle supports the statement of the principle with a plan to follow. While it speaks directly to the situation relating to the offering in Corinth, it lends itself to a much broader application. "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Let's look at the details of this plan. First, it is personal. Literally, the Apostle said, "each one as he choose in his heart". A man must assume responsibility for his own actions and responses. When it comes to giving, we should not allow someone else to determine what we are going to give. It should be a personal matter, decided in the inner recesses of your own heart. The same is true with the investment of your life and its influence. God's plan is for you to personally make the decisions that relate to your own life.

God's plan is for it not to be reluctantly. Literally the word means 'out of sorrow'. If a man is going to give, how will he do it? Will he do it with inner regrets and reluctance? This is not the way to get the most of your giving. Too often, we have talked about giving until it hurts, but Paul suggest that we give as we feel good about giving. Not reluctantly! This principle can be applied to all of life.

How will you approach your college education, your new job, Your vocation in life? Will you approach it reluctantly, out of sorrow? So many people do! They never get the most out of life. They want to get, but they are reluctant to give. Life reserves its best for those who give themselves to whatever they are doing out of a full heart. They do it with joy --- not sorrow.

Then Paul adds, "or under compulsion". The King James translates it more literally, "It out of necessity". This means to do it under pressure. This reminds me of the story of the farmer and his cow. Someone asked him, "How Much milk does your cow give?" The farmer replied, "If you mean how much does she give after I hem her up in a corner, tie her tail down and shackle her feet so she can't kick, the bucket over, then she gives about three, quarts". That is "of necessity". That is precisely the way some people approach life. As a student they will study when the necessity is upon them. As an employee, they will work hard when the necessity is upon them. As a citizen, they will get involved when necessity is

upon them. As a member of the church, they will give when necessity is upon them. To get anything out of them, you have got to get them cornered. But they never get the most out of life. They miss out on God's best for them.

What is the alternative? "For God loveth a cheerful giver." This is God's plan. It is one of exhilaration. This word 'cheerful' can be translated, 'hilarious'. The word is placed first in the clause to give emphasis to it. But what does this mean? This means that you approach the giving or the task with excitement and joy. It means that you come to it with a readiness of mind, a readiness to do whatever may need to be done.

This approach to life is so obvious. You see it in the student who is excited about the opportunity to get an education. They approach their studies with joy. They are ready to give their best. You see it in a man's approach to his vocation. You can just tell by the way they do what they are doing that they would rather be doing what they are doing than anything else in the world. It is refreshing just to watch them go about their assignment. They are giving themselves and their skills joyfully. I have already seen some of this in our offering. A couple came by my office on Thursday of last week with a nice gift toward the offering. They were leaving town, but they wanted to be a part of our great victory. No one had asked them to do it. They were not doing it out of a Sense of duty. Their faces were shining from ear to ear with a beautiful smile. It was obvious that they were presenting a sizeable gift with real joy. This is God's plan. His plan to do what you do with exhilaration, real joy in Your heart to the Lord. Those who go about it in this way will end up getting the most out of life. They will give more when everything is calculated and will receive the great return from their investment of life, talent and money.

### ***III. KNOW THE PROMISE OF ENRICHMENT***

This brings us to one of the greatest promises in all of the Holy Scriptures. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

The basis of this promise is the ability of God. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you." 'Grace' here is the means of being generous. In the context, the Apostle is encouraging giving. As we give, the ability of God to provide 'all grace' is experienced. It is more than just grace, it is 'all grace'. Nothing will be missing. As it will 'abound' toward you. You just cannot outgive God.

The extent of the promise is "that ye, always having all sufficiency in al I things." Notice the two "all's" in the statement. First, there is the all of time. This promise is timeless. When you get in on what God is doing in the world, His grace never ceases its flow toward your life. The other is the 'all things'. It means just that to you. It means that God is committed to provide everything that you need for the accomplishment of His will. Everything physical, mental, spiritual and in any other realm.. God will see to it that you have all sufficiency.

The purpose of the promise is "you will abound in every good work". The more you give of yourself, the more you will have to give. A miracle takes place and it is the miracle of multiplication.

The Galilean lad learned the truth of this promise. When he saw the hungry crowd attending the ministry of Jesus, he had two choices, he could hold onto his lunch and take care of himself or he could give his lunch to Jesus for His use. The boy chose the latter course and presented all that he had to the Lord. The result was that five thousand hungry men were fed and the Lord Jesus was glorified and he went home with more than he took. There were twelve baskets filled with food left over. This is the promise that we have.

Those who get the most out of life will be those who know this promise. They will live day by day out of God's abundant resources. They will know the miracle of divine provision daily in their lives. What an exiting way to live!

***Conclusion:***

Senior, you can know God's best. Observe the principle of investment, follow the plan of exhilaration and know the promise of enrichment. You cannot miss if you go God's way.

Church, the same opportunity is before us. This week will decide whether we will sit down and eat our lunch, look out for ourselves or whether we will invest it in the work of the Lord. This is the way to get the most out of life for all of us.