

Day Eighteen

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

2 Corinthians 9:11-12

Generosity and gratitude, gratitude and generosity, these words somehow are nearly inseparable. Can one really exist without the other? Stewardship stories told during campaigns often include the sharing of what people plan to give but, more importantly, why they give. In nearly every instance one of the words that jumps to the fore is gratitude. A husband and wife standing in front of their church family, tears streaming down their cheeks as they speak of the love, support and strength given by God through their church when they experienced the tragic loss of their child. Such gratitude inevitably leads to generosity.

A young man whose entrepreneurial skills have led to considerable wealth at a relatively young age, speaks movingly of gratitude to God. He knows that everything he has and everything he has accomplished is a gift -- a gift from God. He tells his church family that their faith in him gave him the courage and faith to do more than he could have dared dream. Gratitude and generosity.

In our culture we are continually told to “pull ourselves up by our bootstraps.” We are told we have to “make it on our own.” Do any of us really make it on our own? I think not. God, parents, friends, teachers, youth leaders, pastors, Sunday school members, all have a part in our development. The only true response can be gratitude followed by generosity.

Questions to consider

How has God blessed me?
Have I been truly thankful?
Have I responded to God's blessings with gratitude and generosity?
Does my gift adequately reflect the ways God has blessed me?

Prayer

Forgive me, Lord, for sometimes thinking I am somehow self-made. Forgive me for not always being aware of how truly fortunate I have been. Help me, Lord, to have a heart overflowing with gratitude and hands reaching out with generosity. Help me make a gift that reflects all of the blessings that You have so richly poured out on me. In Christ's name, Amen.