

SOHL
WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS



"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"

Because of who you are

June 19, 2017

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 NKJV – (7) *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

During the Christmas holidays I receive numerous gifts from many people, including some from customers at my job. I remember a company head giving me a gift and then telling me that he was doing it because of who I was (my Christianity). The gift (a financial one) was a surprise because it was unexpected. What really captured my attention was what he said about my presentation to everyday people during my work hours. I will always remember the compliment...a gift in and of itself.

The principle from this is clear - we harvest in proportion to our planting, or to use a contemporary maxim, "we get as good as we give." This also applies to charitable giving, so much so that Paul takes eight verses to spell this out (**9:8-15**). But before doing so, in verse 7 he offers the Corinthians three guidelines for giving beyond what he already listed in **8:11-15**.

Paul writes that first, giving is to be an individual matter that is settled in the privacy of one's own heart. "Each", Paul writes, "should give what he has decided in his heart to give". Each is placed first for emphasis. "How much?" is a question that each person must answer for themselves, and not determined by how much "the Joneses" are contributing.

Second, giving requires resolution. It is a well-known fact that telethons that play on people's emotions to solicit contributions often end up with donors who pledge impulsively but not deliberately enough to follow through on their pledge. Paul says that giving should be based on a calculated decision and not as a matter to settle lightly or impulsively.

Third, giving is a private and not a public decision. It is decided in the *heart*. It is an unfortunate reality that some Christians only give if there is some form of public acclaim or recognition. The financial gift given to me was eventually given to someone else in need. Why did I do that? "Because of who we are."

SCRIPTURE READING
PROVERBS 18:16

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

You can always give without loving, but you can never love without giving.