

Philippians 4:15–20

¹⁵ Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.

¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.

¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Two Dimensions of Giving Philippians 4:15-20

INTRO:

Usually, we think of Paul's joy in spite of people and circumstances in the Philippian letter. However, when we arrive here in chapter four, Paul expresses his joy because of the Philippians and their gift to the Lord and to him.

While we were missionaries, Kathy and I had to write many thank you notes for the things and money our supporters gave to the Lord by giving them to us. It was never easy to write these notes because we did not want our thankfulness to be a hint that more giving needed to come our way. Paul was wrestling with this same idea in Philippians 4. In his thanksgiving for their tangible ministry to him, he wrote about the two dimensions of our giving to God. He did this by first writing about the horizontal aspect of giving, and then about the vertical element.

I. The Horizontal Dimension (v.15-16, 18)

II. The Vertical Dimension (v.17-20)

I. The Horizontal Dimension (v.15-16, 18)

Philippians 4:15-16, 18

“Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Indeed, I have all abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus

the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”

A. We see the first dimension in giving in verses 15-16. Paul rehearsed the history of their concern for him and their sharing in his ministry when he planted a church in Thessalonica in the very beginning of his ministry for God. **(vs.15-16)**

Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.”

B. They gave continually and early in his ministry. We know from Acts that Paul left Philippi and immediately traveled to Thessalonica to begin a ministry there. Right away the fledgling church in Philippi began sending gifts to Paul to help him in the Lord’s ministry. Very quickly Paul recognized the spiritual nature of this giving. We read in **2 Corinthians 8:1-5;**

“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”

C. The supply for God’s ministry comes from God’s people. But there is more than a horizontal aspect to giving.

II. The Vertical Dimension (v. 17, 19-20)

Philippians 4:17, 19–20

“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

A. In the middle of his thankfulness to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul talked about the vertical aspect of giving. **(v.17)**

“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.”

When we give to God of our substance, of our time, and effort, the Lord blesses us for that gift to Him.

B. We have to be careful here. Some find in the rewards passages their whole motivation for serving Christ. We must seek the Lord for who He is and not just for what He does. However, it is important to remember as we serve Him our efforts are never empty or unrewarded. Do you remember Nehemiah’s frequent appeals to God? **(Nehemiah 13:31)**

“I arranged the supplying of the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times. Remember me, O my God, for good”

C. A great verse to remember is found at the end of the resurrection chapter in **1 Corinthians 15:58.**

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

D. We give ourselves and our gifts unreservedly to the Lord, first, because the Lord promised to always meet our needs. **(v.19)**

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

E. Second, we invest our lives and our substance in serving God because through our giving we can glorify God. **(v.20)**

“Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”