

**Intro** 'For God loves a cheerful giver' is a phrase found in the Bible (2Cor.9:7) to establish a contrast between givers who donate reluctantly or because they feel they have to and someone who is giving from their heart in response to God's generous love. Think about it, God is aware and involved with the offering.

The Apostle Paul in 4:10-20 of his letter to the Philippian church thanks them for their financial support of him and his ministry. We are finding in this note of recognition and instruction 4 truths about giving and receiving in the church that should shape our approach to the offering. Let's read and review the passage from God's word before we complete our study of these 4 life changing, offering enjoying truths.

**Read/comment** Phil. 4:10-20

Note in verses 10, 11 and 17 how the Apostle seems to feel like he has to explain himself so he is not misunderstood. These verses record the receiver of the gifts recognizing the donations while teaching the donors about giving from God's perspective. The tension that sometimes exists in talking about or teaching about money in church can be seen or described in these ways:

- The awkwardness of a spiritual leader, supported by the offerings, expressing appreciation while having responsibility to teach truth about money and giving.
- Maintaining proper focus or perspective while being accused or misunderstood regarding giving and money. 2Cor. 12:11-21 *'I was crafty you say, and got the better of you by deceit.'*v.16  
1Thess 2:9; 2Thess.3:7-10
- The desire of the spiritual leader to separate ministry motive and money. 1Cor. 9:1-18  
*'What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge.'*
- The need for clear consistent warnings and example concerning greed in its many manifestations knowing that greed is a problem for both church members and leaders.  
Lk. 12:15; 1Peter 5:2 – *'not greedy for money but eager to serve.'*

Giving with joy and cheerfulness to advance the gospel is built on these four truths. You can move, grow from being a non giver, cautious giver, cheerless giver, obligated giver, expect a blessing giver, or a buying God's blessing giver by hearing and obeying God's words in this study. The 4 truths that you celebrate with every offering are:

1. You communicate your contentment in Christ.
2. You renew your partnership in the Gospel.
3. You make your investment in the Kingdom.
4. You express your worship to God.

Let's review quickly the first two truths that we studied last week . . .

**The 4 truths that you celebrate with every offering are:**

**1. You communicate your contentment in Christ. 11-13**

He was not thankful simply because he had his needs met. He issues a disclaimer that joy does not come simply from a need being met. As important as the donation from his partners is, the source of joy in Paul's life came from a preexisting condition called contentment. The joy proceeded out of a satisfied heart that was not dependent on external circumstances and this satisfaction in Christ was shared by both Paul and his donor base!

Joy is found in contentment. Contentment can be better understood by answering these simple questions:

- a. What is contentment? Detachment attachment
- b. How do you become content? 11-13 A learning process – experience Christ strength

You give generously, make sacrificial lifestyle decisions and set your budget/plan carefully because of the overwhelming satisfaction found in depending on and being attached to Christ. That's the statement you make every time the plate is passed and you participate.

**2. You renew your partnership in the Gospel. 14-16**

The gift was seen as evidence that the donor had identified with Paul in his ministry and was an ongoing participation in advancing the gospel through his life and work.

Joy is found in advancing the gospel in partnerships. Gospel partnerships have two primary components:

- a. Partnership is built on genuine care and concern. 10, 14, 16 person gospel
- b. Partnership is built on generous commitment. 10, 16, 18 perseverance generosity

Enjoy the offering because you are renewing and celebrating the advance of the gospel in partnerships!

**3. You make your investment in the Kingdom. 17**

Note that Paul in verse 17 again issues a disclaimer to clarify beyond any doubt **what his heart was set on**. There could be some misunderstanding that as the receiver of these gifts of financial support he could be thanking them, expressing contentment, rejoicing in God's provision but really doing it with a wink and a nod. In other words what his heart is really set on (not that I seek . . . but I seek) is receiving more gifts, larger gifts and insuring that he receives gifts in the future. The strong adversative 'but' in verse 17 turns our attention sharply in a 'not this, but this' manner to what Paul is really excited about. It is not the accumulation, the size or the frequency of the offerings that he seeks. Rather in contrast his excitement is and our excitement should be on the returns of gospel focused investment.

Literally the phrase at the conclusion of verse 17 tells us that our hearts should be set on the interest that accrues to our account. The truth is stated in the language of commerce, banking, and financial investments. 'Fruit' implies profit, advantage gained in a business transaction. The truth about the offering is that interest/profit is continuing to multiply and accumulate to the givers account. How does this work? What does it mean? What are the limitations if any?

**What it does not mean.** We cannot buy/earn righteousness of Christ. 3:3-11

**What it does mean.**

a. Everyone is an investor. Matt. 6:19-21 (811)

- Our identity and joy is in ‘treasures on earth.’
- Our identity and joy is in ‘treasures in heaven.’

b. Positive return on gospel investment requires shrewdness. Luke 16:8-9 (875)

c. Eternal return on gospel investment is a God honoring desire. Luke 12:15, 21, 33-34

d. Continual return on investment brings joy now and later.

Now - fix hope; real life 1Tim. 6:17-19 later – P 1:10-11; 2:16

Illus. missions crosswalk grace fund

Participation in the offering is one of the ways God’s people store up treasures in heaven. You can enjoy the offering because it is God’s way of increasing your eternal joy and reward. Generous investment in the gospel draws your heart to enjoy eternal rewards over earthly treasures.

#### **4. You express your worship to God. 18**

Note that as Paul is describing the generosity of the Philippians in verse 18, he again draws our attention to the truths of giving. He teaches us through another contrast. He describes the gifts sent as more than enough to meet his needs. He has been abundantly supplied . . . he has more than enough as a result of the gifts brought to him by Epaphroditus. Our attention is drawn away from the appearance of abundance **to a perspective of the gifts from God’s point of view.** While abundant to the human eye, these gifts are pleasing to God in every way. Paul is looking at the gifts and thinking ‘wow’ . . . God is looking at the gifts and thinking the same.

God’s word uses three separate phrases to teach us how our offerings impact God. What our generous, sacrificial offerings invested in the advance of the gospel do is bring to God great pleasure. He is pleased. The language changes from investment to worship.

a fragrant offering an odor of a sweet smell Noah sac Gen 8:21 Eph. 5:2

an acceptable sacrifice accepted by God; it reflects/matches his values 2:17

pleasing to God brings pleasure to God Romans 12:1

The offering is an expression of worship. Does giving God pleasure give you pleasure?

Put it together . . .

- a. You are a participating priest not a consumer. 1Peter 2:5, 9  
praise/t-giving Heb.13:15      do good/share Heb. 13:16      broken spirit Psa 51:17
- b. You are an offering before you are a giver. Romans 12:1-2; 2Cor. 8:5  
pleasing God is primary
- c. Your financial support of the gospel pleases God. 4:18  
2Cor. 8:8-9, 24 prove your love      2Cor. 9:12 overflowing tgivings to God

Illus. w/response . . . cause/effect of promise of 4:19 and conclusion of 4:20      1Chron 29:9-13 offering

Participation in the offering expresses to God your love for him and delight in him. Enjoy the offering because God is most glorified when we show our satisfaction in him.

**The 4 truths that you celebrate with every offering are:**

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**Conclusion**      The only power, powerful enough to root out and replace the love of money in your heart is the power of the gospel. The message of God's love in Christ to deliver us from the power and penalty of our sin is a life transforming message. It is the basis for our contentment, partnerships, investments and worship. Turn from your ways, repent and place the control of your life in Jesus today.

The offering will never be fun, always be a drag if Christ and his gospel are secondary issues in your life. Cry out to God for mercy, ask him to reveal to you the hardness of your heart and don't stop seeking, knocking and asking until God answers Psalm 86:11 in your life.

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.  
To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Study questions**

1. How has your thinking, assumptions or behavior been challenged from this study of enjoying the offering from Phil. 4:10-20? What has given you hope or joy in this study?
2. Read Phil. 4:10-20. Have group members share observations, questions or impressions from the reading. If you have time you may want to include reading Matt.6:19-24.
3. Explain the point of point #3.
4. What are some things that church offering givers may have their hearts set on? What are some things that group members have their hearts set on in giving?

5. What does the concept of accruing, compounding interest teach in verse 17 about your offering? Is it wrong to be motivated by reward? Why or why not?
6. Do you think that the average church member understands that they cannot buy or give their way into a right relationship with God? How about you, could you stop giving and still be confident that God loves you and has forgiven you in Christ alone?
7. Explain the point of point #4.
8. What kind of terms would you use to describe your offering from God's perspective? How does Eph.5:2 help you understand the terms used in Phil. 4:18?
9. Review the three sub-points (a-c) of point 4 and read the passages listed. How should these truths shape your participation in the offering in the future?
10. What do you want to do, use or remember from today's study?