



*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:7

My youngest daughter has had an innate streak of generosity since she was tiny. Anything she got, she wanted to give away to a sibling or a friend. So much so that we sometimes had to suggest that she needed to hang on to some things that she needed for herself. More than once, she offered her food to someone else, and we had to remind her that she needed to eat as well!

Her generosity may have come with the idea that she could get people on her side more easily by being generous to them. However, I think that might be a bit cynical. I believe that she simply enjoys making other people happy and being generous is the easiest way she could think of to achieve this.

For myself, I am so often aware that being generous can entail real sacrifice – of time as well as of money. In that respect, I have often not been a cheerful giver, parting with my gift out of dutiful reluctance rather than joy.

Yet, when I have been spontaneously generous, it has not ended up feeling like a sacrifice. I remember well the old man begging outside of London Bridge station one cold and dreary December morning. I walked past him because I had no change to give, but I did have the means to cross the road, go into a coffee shop and come back with a hot tea and a hot mince pie to warm him. It was a sacrifice of ten minutes on a busy morning and a small sum of money, but it made a difference to him, and it made me happy.

Giving is part of worship, bringing joy to our heavenly Father – Paul makes this clear in 2 Corinthians 9. It is also an act that gives joy and blessing both to the receiver and the giver of the gift. It is not how much we give but why and how we give that matters – does it come from our heart wanting to bless others and rejoice in their joy, or is it out of a sense of duty?

As NCFI Treasurer, one of my duties is to oversee the giving of sponsorships to those coming to the World Congress every four years. While these are only part of the expenses that delegates face, the joy of seeing people able to come and participate in Congress is such a huge blessing to me. It is also a huge blessing to give thanks back to individuals and fellowships who give to the work of NCFI each year.

Generosity in giving is such a source of joy, and one we so easily miss if we see it just as a duty.

Steven Fouch,

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*The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. And we are confident about you in the Lord that you are both doing—and will do—what we are commanding. Now may the Lord direct your hearts toward the love of God and the endurance of Christ. (2 Thessalonians 3:3-5)*