

When I was a little girl, I remember sitting at the dinner table. There was something on my plate that I absolutely did not want to eat. I remember my mother telling me “there are starving children in Ethiopia, eat your food!” In my child’s mind I thought “then why not give this food to them?”

Of course, my mother’s point was to be grateful that I had food, and I was very willing to be generous with something I didn’t want. If another is hungry, cannot wash their clothes, or lacks a place to sleep, should we help? If so, how much do we help? How do we decide if it is *us* who should do the helping?

Knowing that abundance is given by God, Paul gives us clear direction in 2 Corinthians 8:10-15. “For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.” Paul does not want our children to go hungry so we can feed others. He tells us our generosity is to be in proportion to what God has given us. Sacrificial giving must be responsible.

When we give to others, we give up something for ourselves. The most difficult question is “what does God want me to be willing to give up”. Rather than comparing our giving to others, Paul tells us “our willingness” is what we use to measure.

Lord, let my generosity reflect the abundance You have given me. Open my eyes to the abundance in my life, and give me a willing and generous heart to give freely and faithfully to bless others. Amen.

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