

2 Corinthians 9:7

CONTRIBUTION

You've heard it said before by the apostle Paul, "Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Please take a look at 2Cor 9:7. I once heard someone at Freed-Hardeman talk about the Greek meaning behind the word cheerful. I decided to study this verse for myself. I'd like to look at two words here as they are defined in Strong's Greek Dictionary.

Depending on your translation, the first word may appear as grudgingly or reluctantly. The Greek word here is *lupe* (loo'-pay) which means sadness. I've heard it said that if you cannot give cheerfully, then you should not give. I think this saying has merit. Paul does not want us to be sad because we give. Giving should not cause us to regret.

The second word may appear as out of necessity or under compulsion. The Greek word here is *anagke* (an-ang-kay') which means to be forced. It is derived from two words which carry the idea of twisting the arm. Paul is saying that our giving should never be forced. No one should force you into giving to God. And perhaps this is the reason why we are sad when we give: we feel like it is forced upon us. Paul says we should be willing to give. Giving is always voluntary.

The third word is love. I have read through this verse so many times and think to myself, "Yeah, of course God likes a cheerful giver. Why wouldn't God approve of someone who gave toward His kingdom." The word here is *agape*, the strongest and more powerful word for love. Yes, God has this kind of love for those who give cheerfully. Our giving is so very important to God. After all, He has asked us to test Him with our giving so that He will open the floodgates of heaven (Mal 3:10).

The fourth word is cheerful. The Greek word here is *hilaros* (hil-ar-os'). Of course, you should see a similarity between this Greek word and our English word, hilarious. *Hilaros* literally means hilarious and appears only once in the entire Bible, right here. The word can also mean to be willing. The idea that Paul is trying to make is that we ought to be willing to give, and we are to be so willing to give that it's hilarious!

After that speaker at Freed-Hardeman spoke about hilarious giving, the man who did the announcements, Roy Sharp, did something that I will always remember...

[Walk over to a collection plate, drop in your gift, and yell, "Woohoo!"]

I now would like to read 2Cor 9:7 once more. "Each should purpose as he has purposed in his heart, not from sadness or from force, for God loves a hilarious giver." Let's pray.