Overflowing toward the Future

"Overflow" Series, November 22 & 23, 2025 | 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

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Savvy people save for the future.

Squirrels are savvy; they save for the future.

While you're winterizing your lawn mower and hanging Christmas lights, squirrels are stashing nuts for winter. Squirrels can bury up to 3,000 nuts in a season. They scatter their hoards in multiple caches. Usually, they remember where they buried them so they can come back later.[1] That's important because winter is long, and they need the food to survive. Squirrels are savvy; they save for the future.

You may save for the future, too.

You may be squirreling away money in a 401k. You may be investing in stocks, land, or gold. You may enjoy the thrill of seeing your money grow. Then again, you may enjoy cutting costs to save money. You may be an extreme couponer who can get a bottle of salad dressing for free or a coach flight to London for less than the rest of us pay for a pair of pants!

Solomon says that saving is wise.

King Solomon was famed for his wisdom, and he wrote down some of it in the Old Testament book of Proverbs. It's full of practical warnings about destructive things to avoid and advice on helpful things to do. Like saving. For instance, **Proverbs 6:6-8** says,

> *Go to the ant … it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.*

Solomon tells us what squirrels and ants tell us—saving is wise!

But I let savvy turn into stingy the last time I went to Ace Hardware.

I needed a new fertilizer spreader. The checkout clerk rang up my order and asked if I would like to round up the total to the next dollar for a worthy cause like medical care for children. Without thinking, I said, "No." I never like cash register collections. Why isn't important. But it was like 43 cents. And I realized later that it looked like I couldn't and wouldn't spare 43 cents for kids with cancer. How stingy! Does saving ever get out of control? Like a squirrel who can never have enough acorns? Does it ever get in the way of doing something you know God wants you to do? It's important to ask because God's economy is different from the world's economy.

God's economy runs on overflow, not scarcity.

We have been studying 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. In those chapters, Paul was encouraging the disciples in Corinth to give generously to an offering he was collecting for the saints in Jerusalem. He gave them multiple reasons. He closes his argument in our Scripture reading today by telling them that this is how God's economy works! Our economies frequently work on scarcity—there is only so much,

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[1] https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/do-squirrels-remember-where-they-buried-their-nuts/

so we want to get what we can and save what we have. But God's economy, Paul says, works on overflowing. God overflows to us, we overflow to others, and there is always enough. How does that work? Let's find out.

God's economy overflows.

In 2 Corinthians 9:6 Paul says that whoever sows sparingly reaps sparingly.

Paul begins by telling us that this is what he wants us to remember. He writes, The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Imagine a farmer goes out to scatter seed. He scatters just a little bit of seed. Just a few plants come up, and there is just a small harvest at the end of the season. We see it in nature, but Jesus says that it is true in life. God fills us with good gifts. If we only pass on a little, we reap little—in finances and in life. That's the principle. Kind of. But there is more.

Then in 2 Corinthians 9:8 Paul implies that whoever sows bountifully trusts bountifully.

He writes, And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. Paul is saying that God meets all our needs. Paul's wording is that God makes all good gifts overflow to you. Why? So that we can overflow with every good work to others. Where then is the trust? If we trust that God will meet our needs bountifully, then we can give bountifully. Think about a farmer; he plants all his seed because he trusts that the rain is coming, that there will be a harvest, and that there will be something to plant next year. How we sow says something about how much we trust God. If we sow bountifully, we must trust bountifully.

Then in 2 Corinthians 9:12 we can conclude that whoever sows bountifully loves bountifully.

Bountiful love comes out in action. You can see the great love in the gift the Corinthians were being called to give in the response that the gift elicits. **2 Corinthians 9:12** says,

> *For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.*

Only an act of love can lead someone to respond with overflowing thanksgiving to God. Sowing bountifully rises out of bountiful love for God and others.

So, we come back to the bottom line but see it clearly: Whoever sows bountifully reaps bountifully.

The saints in Jerusalem will be blessed. They will turn around and thank God. Plus, they will pray for the saints in Corinth. Paul says that the Church—the fellowship they share with one another—will be strengthened. And Paul goes so far as to call the giving itself an act of worship to God. It's buried in the Greek in 2 Corinthians 9:12, but it's in there. And it shows that when we sow bountifully, we reap bountifully.

God wove these principles into the fabric of creation.

God gives all good gifts to us, and we pass those good gifts to others. We give our money. We give our time. We invest our energy. We pour out our lives for the benefit of others. Just as God has done with us. Overflowing generously is the foundation of God's economy. How can that kind of economics work in our lives? Let's look at two specifics now. First:

Investing in the next generation multiplies your returns.

The largest generational transfer of wealth in history is underway.

I don't want to freak you out but, statistically speaking, by midcentury, most Baby Boomers will have passed away. In this country alone, they will have transferred $124 trillion dollars in wealth to others. It is the largest generational transfer of wealth in history.[2] It leads to so many questions. Like to whom? And what will be the impact? But transferring that much financial wealth raises another question: what about spiritual wealth? We're transferring our material wealth to future generations, but are we transferring spiritual wealth?

Generations Z and Alpha are far better than you've heard!

I'm sure you've heard the bad statistics. Those aged roughly 30 and below usually get bad press. They are anxious, addicted to screens, anti-social, tough to employ, and living in dad's basement. There are causes for concern. However, if that's all you've heard, you aren't hearing the whole story or the most important part of the story. They are creative. They deal with their problems rather than denying or avoiding them. They are spiritually hungry, spiritually curious, spiritually seeking, and spiritually showing up![3]

Revival is stirring in the next generation.

In February of 2023, revival broke out on campus at Asbury University. It lasted for more than two weeks, and 50,000 people eventually came. Since then, similar things have been happening on other campuses. But it's not just colleges. Bible sales are up. Church attendance is up. Our own Young Adults group has doubled in the past year to nearly 50. Our children's ministry is growing with new children and new families. Student ministry is seeing new students. Something is happening! God is doing something! Not only do we want to be part of what God is doing, but we definitely don't want to miss it!

I regret that I didn't do more to transfer my own faith to my children.

When my children were growing up, I wish we had spent more time studying the Bible and praying together. I wish we had done more to protect them from some harmful influences. I wish we had given them electronic devices later. I wish I had captured more teachable moments to talk about faith. I wish we had lived a more "on-mission" life with them. Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that I have been a bad father. Nor am I saying that I didn't offer my faith to my children. Nor am I saying that we didn't talk about faith and encourage faith. But I am saying that there was more that I could have done. More that I wish I had done. Parents, don't let that be you! Valley, let's not let that be us! Let's not have any regrets about what we have left undone. There is still time left!

Let's invest our life and money in the next generation!

Paul is telling us that God has given us everything we need to overflow toward the next generation. Look at **2 Corinthians 9:11**,

> *You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way …*

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[2] https://fortune.com/2025/07/23/great-wealth-transfer-124-trillion-bigger-than-ever-millennials-gen-x/

[3] https://www.christianitytoday.com/2025/09/gen-z-is-more-than-anxious/

Paul is telling us that God gives good things specifically so that we can overflow! That means investing our money and our lives—our whole selves—to offer faith to the next generation. Ministry to the next generation has always been an asset of this church. And it will be going forward. Second:

Investing in disciples yields exponential returns.

Investing in disciples is like raising spiritual children.

When you raise children, you pass along who you are, what you know, your values, and how you live out those values. You come to see your own image in your children. Investing in disciples is like that in many ways. It's a process of taking the life of Jesus Christ that is in you and sharing it with someone else. You pass along who you are, what you know, your values, and how you live out those values. In the end, you come out with someone who is connected to you and like you. And they are able to share what you have shared with them with a whole new generation. It's really like raising spiritual children!

If you're concerned about marriages, families, or our culture, then making disciples makes the difference you're hoping for!

I hear many people worrying about the state of marriage in our culture. Worrying that the nuclear family is breaking down. And worrying that our culture is becoming less Christian. There are good reasons to be concerned! But the real question is, "Then what are we to do?" We can't pass enough laws to make people good! We can't force people to follow and obey Jesus! That doesn't work. Neither does worrying. But discipling someone can make a real, lasting impact. When we disciple someone, we are helping them to get the life of God inside of them, shaping their character into the image of Christ, and equipping them to make more disciples just like them. That changes them in fundamental ways! It makes them fit for marriage. Fit for family. Fit for living godly lives in every way. If you want to do something productive about all your worries, disciple someone!

Making multiplying disciples is my life's mission.

I've been working with a mentor on discipleship for 25 years now. At first, he was really discipling me. But then we started to work together on discipling people. Over ten years ago now, I came to a point of clarity. When I was fighting cancer, I realized that no matter how long my life lasted, I would spend the rest of it making multiplying disciples of Jesus. Five years ago, my mentor and I were praying about what God wanted us to do. It was then that we came to a goal—to make 1,000 multiplying disciples in our lifetime. That's now my life's mission—1,000 people with the life of God inside them, with the character of Christ, and who are making disciples themselves. That doesn't mean that he or I will make all 1,000 of those disciples personally. I pray that the disciples I make will make disciples who make disciples who make disciples. That's true discipleship. There is nothing more important for me to invest my life in.

Let's invest our life and money in multiplying disciples!

It takes time and money and effort to make disciples who multiply. It requires time together, eating together, playing together, learning together, and studying together. You may not know how to do that exactly right now, but we can help you figure it out! Talk with someone who has done it, join a community group where they are multiplying, or take *Real Life Discipleship* when it is offered the next time to get started. That's investing in the future. That's investing in something that is going to pay exponential dividends! That is changing the world! Nothing could make a bigger difference in the world.

“Overflow” is the final word on God’s economy.

2 Corinthians 9:15 names the driver in God’s economy.

Paul writes, Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! What is the inexpressible gift? It’s Jesus! God has given us Jesus, a gift so unique, so amazing, and so wonderful that we can’t quite find the right words to describe it! But we know the results. We are forgiven. Adopted as children of God. Reconciled to one another. Given new lives. Included in God’s mission. Filled with God’s Spirit. Shaped into Jesus’ image. Set free from sin. Destined for eternal life with God. And overflowing with every good gift now!

In gratitude for God’s inexpressible gift of Jesus, how can we do anything but overflow?

How can we not open our hearts and our wallets? How can we not give our time and use the gifts that God has given us for His glory? How can we not pour out our lives? How can we not overflow toward God, toward people, toward God’s mission, and toward the future?

Justin, Aaron, and Drew did that when they invested their lives and money in my sons.

They were youth-group volunteers when my sons were teenagers. They wanted to help disciple the next generation, and they wanted it to be fun and serious—all at the same time. One winter, they led “Fire and Ice Bowling” on a frozen lake. They plowed bowling lanes and found a way to light them on fire. I got calls from parents after that night. One time, one of my sons ended up saran wrapped to a basketball goal. I still don’t know why. But when one of my sons came home from a retreat, he got into the car, I asked him how it went, and he said to me, “Dad, did you know that you can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?” “You can?” I said. “I should give that a try!” But he got the point. And to this day, my sons call those guys when they need an adult. I am so grateful for that.

The future is calling us to overflow.

What does that mean for you? It could be building a relationship with two or three people who are still growing in their faith and helping them to become mature spiritual adults who are filled with the life of Jesus, have the character of Jesus, and able to make disciples themselves. It could be discipling the children, students, and young adults in your own family. It could mean investing your life in our ministries to the next generation. It could be giving money to make sure that ministry happens. The future is calling to us, calling for us to overflow.

Really, God is calling us to overflow.

We have a next generation to reach in Jesus’ name, and that will mean investing our money and our lives. We have disciples to make, and that, too, will cost us! But God is out there on mission, calling us to join Him!