

# God's Cycle of Sufficiency

by Richard Siple

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*God's cycle of sufficiency is a cycle of giving and receiving, where God provides for our needs and we are able to give back to Him and others.*

**Duration:** 35:03

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 9:6

**Topics:** "Giving Back", "Gods Abundance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of giving and how it is connected to God's promise of abundance. He references Jesus' command to give and explains that when we give, God will give back to us in a generous measure. The preacher also highlights the example of God's love, stating that God gave His only Son for the world. He concludes by sharing the story of a man who experienced great blessings and prosperity as a result of his unselfish giving. The sermon encourages listeners to examine their own giving and position themselves in God's cycle of sufficiency.

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## Transcript

Please open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 9, verses 6 to 15, and then Luke 6.38. 2 Corinthians 9, 6 to 15, Luke 6.38. Remember this, whoever sows sparingly, pardon, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Verse 8 is really the text for this message, so look at it very carefully.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. How does that sound? I ought to read that again. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that's me and you.

Why? So that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written, he has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever. Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

You will be made rich in every way, so that you can be generous on every occasion. And through us, your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

Then the words of Jesus in Luke 6:38. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap.

For with a measure you use, it will be measured to you. Beginning this morning, we're going to be bringing a series of four messages on giving. And this morning, I want to talk about God's cycle of sufficiency.

God's cycle of sufficiency. John Bisagno, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, tells a remarkable story. He said, Recently there came to my attention a concept of giving in a sermon by Jack Taylor.

I was so fascinated and captivated about what I heard that I preached it word for word to our Sunday morning congregation. Our people through the years have been trained to give through the Sunday school. Our morning plate offering, therefore, is usually only about \$200.

On this particular Sunday morning, we received the usual Sunday morning offering at the end of the sermon. Maybe we should try that. The result, \$22,650 in the plate.

Phew. Plus the usual 20,000 through the Sunday school. I've been trying to think how we could work that.

What is this concept of Jack Taylor's that brought forth such a response from the congregation of Houston's First Baptist Church? It's a truth given by divine revelation through the apostle Paul in the scripture we've read together this morning. And verse eight contains the key. And he is able to make all grace abound toward you so that you always in all things may have all sufficiency to abound to every good work.

Now to help clarify this concept, I've made a diagram for you, which you will find in your bulletin. Please get that diagram at this time. It's a white sheet and it says at the top, God's cycle of sufficiency.

God's cycle of sufficiency. And across the top under that, you'll see God's law of adequate supply. Is there anything you need this morning? Is there anything you need spiritually? Is there anything you need physically? Is there anything you need emotionally? Is there anything you need financially? Here is God's law of adequate supply.

You'll notice God is at the top. God is able to make all grace abound. I like the word abound, don't you? That means just lots of it.

Abundance, more than you need. God is able to make all grace abound, give you more than you need, and it's toward you and me. So God wants his grace to abound toward you and me.

Do you see that? So what do you think about that this morning in your own heart and life? Do you have a sense that God's grace is actually abounding toward you, that God's grace is overflowing in your life, that God is aiming his abundant grace at you and filling you with his grace and his mercy and his supply and his adequacy for every need? I hope so, but if you don't have that sense this morning, you can have it because it's here as a promise of God's word. And why does he want to do that? He wants to do that so

that you may abound, so that you may abound to every good work, so that what he pours into your life may overflow and go out into someone else's life and thereby back to God who gave it. It's a wonderful circle.

It is a cycle of God's sufficiency. Now one of the most difficult things in being a pastor is to be aware of the sufferings among a congregation, the people. It's a tremendous source of pain and anguish inside to be aware that there are people who are struggling, people who are exceedingly ill physically, people who are struggling with their emotions, people who are being defeated spiritually, people who are having a struggle financially who can't seem to make it, all these kind of things that bring pain and anguish into a human life and into families.

Marriage struggles where people are struggling with each other and their marriage is in deep trouble. And just to know those things and so much, so much. My heart longs to be able to say in some way with power that will penetrate the heart, look, God, God is able to pour his grace into your life and to meet your need.

Whatever it is, he wants to do that. Now God's sufficiency. God is sufficient.

God is able. God has always been able. God was able to create the worlds just by his word.

He just spoke and brought them into existence. God was able to drown his wicked world in water and destroy civilization. God was able to deliver Noah and his family.

God was able to give Abraham a son when he was 100 and his wife, 90. Would any of you like to try that? We don't even have to get to there when we're glad that grandparents can visit the kids and then go home no matter how much we love them. Boy, I tell you that took some grace because he went on living after that.

It wasn't the last thing he ever did. God was able to open the Red Sea and deliver his people and drown the entire army of Pharaoh. God was able to feed 3 million people in a wilderness, keep their clothes from wearing out, including their shoes, and provide water for them and their herds in the desert for 40 years.

Can he give you clothes and food and what you need? Wow, think what he was able to do. God was able to part the waters of the Jordan River, bring down the walls of Jericho and destroy the giants of Canaan before his people, a people who really were not warriors. God was able to make the sun stand still for Moses, to make it go back 10 degrees for Hezekiah, to give Samson super strength, to give Solomon super wisdom, and to wipe out the entire army of Sennacherib in one night, 180,000 soldiers.

God is able. God was able to become a man in Christ without ceasing to be God. God was able through Jesus Christ to turn water into wine, still the tempest on Galilee, feed 15,000 people with five loaves and two fishes, heal the sick, save the sinful, cast out demons, and even raise the dead.

God was able in Jesus Christ to lay down his life for sinners, descend into hell, conquer sin and death, defeat all the powers of darkness, rise again, ascend to heaven, sit on God's throne, and send the Holy Spirit to indwell his people. Anybody getting excited? Wow. God was able through his servants to heal the lame man at the beautiful gate, to convert 3,000 sinners in one service, to raise Dorcas from death, to deliver the demon-possessed girl, and break open the prison in Philippi with an earthquake.

God was able through the church to raise up a missionary movement to preach Christ around the world. God was able through those who believe to conquer kingdoms, administer justice, fulfill his promises, shut

the mouths of lions, quench the fury of the flames, deliver from the sword, turn weakness into strength, and defeat whole armies. God was able to give those who believe him strength to endure torture, jeers, flogging, chains, imprisonment, stoning, and death by the sword.

God was able to keep his own while they wandered around in animal skins, destitute, persecuted, and mistreated. They wandered in deserts and mountains and lived in caves and dens in the earth, yet God was able, even more than able, to keep them, bless them, and save them for time and eternity. Your faith should have been going up a few degrees.

God is able. He is able for his grace to abound toward you. There's no lack in what he's able to do.

You remember the three Hebrew slaves in Babylon? Nebuchadnezzar built a great image, and he said, at the sound of the music, everyone is to bow down and worship this image which I have set up, and if they don't, they'll be cast alive into the burning fiery furnace. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, no way. And they were in the government, so when the trumpet sounded, they were sitting up there, you know, on the government platform.

They were really obvious, and everybody went down except them. Daniel must have been out of the country. He was prime minister, and so the king said, what? And brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful man on earth, and he said, now I don't really want to kill you guys, you know, just between you and me, why don't we have a private worship service here, and you just bow down.

Everything will be all right. And they said, no, we're not even, we don't have to think about what we're going to answer, because our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But being on unto you, whether he does or not, we will not bow down and serve your God.

Then the king was furious that anybody would dare to take that stance, and high up in his government. And so he heated the furnace seven times hotter than it had normally been. They were bound, and they were, it took the strongest men in the kingdom to take them and throw them into the furnace, and it was so hot that it killed the men that threw them into the furnace.

And they landed down in the furnace all bound, but the king went and where he could look down into the furnace, and Nebuchadnezzar said, what's happened here? Did we not put three men bound in the furnace, and there's four men in there walking around unbound, and the fourth looks like the son of God. Of course, he looks like the son of God. That's who he is.

They said, our God is able, and he is able. Oh, I wish we could believe it. And then God's abundance, not only God's sufficiency, but God's abundance.

Do you remember the much told story about the Mercedes automobile salesman, who was asked by a prospective customer about the horsepower of the automobile? Salesman did not know. An attorney asked the manager who himself did not know the answer. Since the answer seemed important to the horsepower conscious customer, a telegram was sent to the manufacturer in England with the question.

In a short time, the reply came. There was one word in the telegram, adequate. We may say the same thing of our position in Christ with our lives linked to him.

Nobody has ever measured the amount of God's ability, his sufficiency, his grace, nor could it ever be measured. If you want to know the answer is adequate. Abundance.

He is able to make his abundance available. See, that's why this is just thrown in here. It's not part of the sermon, but that's why when a church makes up a budget, it should never make up a budget by the amount of money that came in the year before.

The church should always decide what God wants it to do for the next year, make up a budget that fits that, and then trust God for the money. You can't get back at me because I don't need your money. God's abundance, abundance, adequate, adequate.

Now God's direction. I'm so glad about God's direction. God is able to make all grace abound toward who? Yeah, I'm glad somebody said us and not just you.

Me? Yes. You? Yes. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you.

God is always looking at you. He's always aiming his abundance at his people. Always.

He's always aiming his abundance at his people. Do you feel it coming at you? Look up into the face of God. You'll see it coming at you.

Stop looking around at your circumstances and look into the face of God and you'll see it coming at you. God's abundance. God is willing to allow you to have.

You say, how much will God let me have? God is willing to allow you to have as much as you will determine to use to glorify his name and extend his kingdom. Now let's go over to the side of the giver, the one that God is aiming at, the one that God is wanting to pour out his grace on and his blessings upon. Let's go over to that side.

The giver's abundance. It comes by the key give. The giver's abundance.

There is a law written within the context of the whole system of the created universe, a law that God has established in the creation. When that law is broken or disregarded, the whole system of reality seems to lock up around us. You know, my heart aches for people who just seem to be all the time locked up and can't seem to get out of the situation they're in or see God do anything, but there is a key and it is this key of giving.

If you're to be part of this benevolent cycle of the universe, you must give or the cycle will be broken with you. The place to begin your giving is in that place where you are now experiencing your greatest present need. So Jesus said it very, very clearly.

And let me read that one verse again. Luke 6 38. Jesus said, give and it will be given to you.

Do you believe that? How many of you believe that? Well, that's pretty good. Give and it will be given to you, said Jesus, a good measure, not stingy, a good measure, pressed down, shaken together. God says give and he'll give back to you not, you know, a little, but actually a big measure then pressed down, packed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap for with a measure you use, it will be measured to you.

So there's three components to that promise. First, there's a command give. Jesus said give and it will be given.

John D. Rockefeller probably is one of the, was one of the richest men who ever lived. He was dying at age 55. He was living on crackers and milk and could scarcely enjoy the results of his untold wealth.

He spent most of his time in bed, but at his own word and not enjoyed one uninterrupted hour of sleep in five years. He was hungry, but could not eat miserable with no apparent recourse, but to slowly give into death. He was weakened by a blood disease and racked with pain from an ulcerated stomach.

His pastor, a Baptist pastor came to see him. He said, John, you are cursed with a curse. Thank God for some preachers have some nerve, huh? Say that to the richest man in your congregation and one of the richest on earth said, John, you're cursed with a curse because you're stingy and you haven't learned how to give.

It's time for you to start giving or you're going to die. Then answer to God. Good stuff.

I like that. He's supposed to, since he's going to die, might enjoy doing something that he had not done before. So among the things he did was the one activity, which he credited with much of his miraculous healing.

He lived after that 30 more years to be 85. And what was the one thing he learned to give? Within 12 months after he began the exciting adventure of giving, he was virtually well and spent the rest of his days in good health. Oh, come on.

You say you're not telling us this morning that giving might even help us get healing. It might. If you don't, you might get an ulcer or you worry so much about your money.

You'll get rheumatoid arthritis. Oh, that's right. It can give you, it sure can do it.

Now, if some of you ever got a hold of this, you'd have so much fun. You're not really having much fun as a Christian. Some of you really look like Christianity has given you a bad time and you would have so much fun.

Then there's a promise, not a give, and the promise is it shall be given unto you. And of course, that's it. God says it.

It's true. It's been proved a million times. A principle, a principle, and this is a good one.

The same measure you use will be used with you. A minister was approached by a lad who stated the desire to have the power of God in his life. The minister asked him what he was now doing that made a demand on the power of God.

He was made to see that he was engaging in nothing that was making a demand on the resources of God's power. God's not going to just give you his power if you're not already in need of it. God abhors a vacuum, you know.

So if you give, then God will fill, and you give, and he'll fill, and you give, and he'll fill, and you keep the cycle going. And that's true of everything, not just money. In 2 Kings 4 and 1 to 7, there's a wonderful story, and I'm just going to read you quickly seven verses out of 2 Kings 4. The wife of a man from the

company of the prophets, that's one of the preachers of that day, cried out to Elisha, Your servant, my husband, is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord.

But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves. Elisha replied to her, How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house? Your servant has nothing there at all, she said, except a little oil. Well, if you're Christian, you have a little oil.

The Holy Spirit is there. Would you like to see what he could do if you just turned him loose? Well, that's all she had. Elisha said, Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars.

Don't ask for just a few, so don't get stingy. Let your faith grow. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons.

Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side. She left him, and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her, and she kept pouring.

When all the jars were full, she said to her son, Bring me another one. But he replied, There is not a jar left, and this next statement is really a dilly. Then the oil stopped flowing.

That make sense? She went and told the man of God, and he said, Go sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left. She said, I don't have anything God can bless.

Yes, you do. Said, I just have a little bit of oil, just a little. I just have this very small faith.

I know I'm born again. I know the Spirit of God lives in me, but, you know, I don't have much. Just what? Just let him loose.

Just surrender your life to the Holy Spirit of God, and let him have his way. Let him fill you, and let him use you. We set the amount of our own blessing by the size of the preparations we make to receive it.

Obedying God brings into play a different set of rules or laws. Finally, the giver's direction, every good work. And he is able to make all grace abound toward you, so that you always, at all times, having all sufficiency, may abound to every good work.

God doesn't pour his blessing and grace into our lives just for us. He wants us as a channel, and as he pours it in, he wants us to pour it out. Give of that commodity which you seem to have the least of, where you are experiencing your greatest need.

Listen carefully. If you lack love, seek to give more love away, and there will be love bestowed upon you in abundance. If you lack time, try giving more time away to God and man.

God's gift to you will be released time to do what you ought to do. If others seem unconcerned for you, give away concern, lavish concern on with no view to what they can do for you. The result is guaranteed.

Jesus promises that you will receive. Here's a closing word of warning. Though we can give, knowing of the promise of Jesus that we shall receive, that receiving is never the motive for our giving.

We give to give more. Thus what we are to get because we have given is to be given, and the cycle is to go on and on and on. We are to give, to get, to give, to get, to give, to get, to give ad infinitum.

So the conclusion is give, give, give, give. God so loved the world that he what? That he gave. That's agape love.

That's divine love. God so loved that he gave. What did he give? He gave his only begotten son, who is God himself.

He gave himself. He gave himself totally, utterly, completely, and for eternity. And so his word to us is that we're to give.

Where am I in God's cycle of sufficiency? In closing, I want to share with you about three men who invested what they had. You have read about these men, but you'll have to really think as I give it to you to decide who they are. Once there was a man who had been quite successful financially during his middle years, but was now worried about his retiral years.

He decided to invest all his material assets in gilt-edged securities, blue-chip stocks, and valuable real estate so that he would be sure to have a reliable income in his old age. In all his plans, he made no provision for the kingdom of God. After these arrangements were completed, he was going over his accounts one night when he suffered a massive and fatal coronary.

Some distant nephews and nieces quickly spent his money while he stood before God trying to give an account of his stewardship. There was another man who had always been lonely because he came from a despised race and felt inferior and rejected. One day he stumbled on another human being who was a victim of crime and was far worse off than he had ever imagined possible.

Moved with compassion, he forgot himself and reached out to this desperate man. As he shared time, material possessions, and love with a stranger, he became deeply involved in the lives of other people and wondered why he had ever allowed himself to be lonely. Story of Jesus.

There was a third man who loved the Lord but whose life was quite ordinary. One day, however, a serious emergency arose in relation to the work of God in God's house. This man was confronted with the opportunity to share himself, his family, and his possessions unselfishly in helping to meet this emergency.

As he gave freely to the work of God, a channel was opened through his life for the flow of God's power. The Lord blessed his home, business, and family and caused everything he had to prosper far beyond his wildest imagination. The change in his life and circumstances became so great that even the government of that time and place took note of it and acted quickly to obey God so that the nation might share in such unusual material blessings.

Who was the first man? It's in Luke 12. He was the rich old man to whom God said, You fool, tonight your soul will be required of you. Then whose will those things be which you have prepared? The second one, of course, is in Luke 10.

It's the story of the Good Samaritan. The third one you may not be as familiar with. The man's name is Obed-Edom.

It was the place where David left the ark of God when God had struck one of the men dead who touched it to keep from falling off the cart. Of course, the problem was they weren't supposed to have it on a cart, and so they left it in the home of Obed-Edom. It was there three months, and by the time the three months was up, everything he had had exploded, and so David finally repented and obeyed God.

So what do I need? God wants to meet my need. That is why he wants me to become a giver. He longs for me to make room in my life so he can pour through me his blessings.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you. Thank you, O Lord.

We just bow before you, stunned and amazed at your grace. O Lord, enable us to let go of our fears and experience your grace. We pray in Jesus' holy name.

Amen.

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