

**HAVE YOU GOT AN ATTITUDE?**  
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I remember seeing a cartoon in a horseman's magazine a few years ago. The setting was the bull riding event in a rodeo. During this event the rodeo clown is very active and very vital to the safety of the bull rider. The purpose of the clown during this event is not to entertain the audience, but rather to attract the mad bull's attention from a fallen rider to himself in order to lead the bull in another direction. In the cartoon things didn't work out as planned and the clown and the displaced rider were running side by side for dear life for the nearest fence to climb for safety with the bull right on their heels. Though both men were literally running for their lives, the clown had a smile painted on his face. The caption spoken by the rider to the clown read, "What's so funny?" When it comes to giving to God's cause, do we just have smiles painted on our faces or do we really enjoy giving. Putting it another way let me ask, Have cheerful and giving gotten a divorce?

Today we hear folks remark when referring to someone with a grumpy disposition, "That person has really got an attitude." Does it make any difference what our attitude is when it comes to giving? It is an interesting question because if God gets the money what difference does it make why we give it? Evidently, our attitude and/or motive in our financial relationship with God is in fact the bottom line. The reason is simple. God doesn't need the money! He wants our hearts. And He wants us to receive his promised blessings. The Word puts it this way: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:6,7.

It occurs to me that one of the greatest hindrances to cheerful giving is when the giver worries about what will happen to the money he has given. "What will `the brethren' do with it." But isn't this backward reasoning? For one to say, "I will give money to the church if you will do this and this with

it" is wrong motivation. Cheerful offerings are a response of love not a demand or an expectation. This is not to say that we should have no interest in what happens to the offering. I am only saying that it is easier to give with a cheerful spirit when we reflect on the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf and His continuing blessings to us on a daily basis.

Ellen White, when commenting on the gifts of the poor who are motivated to do something to help in God's cause, pointed out that the use of the money by those in charge is not always what the giver had in mind. God will hold them responsible - not the giver. She states, "I was shown that the recording angel makes a faithful record of every offering dedicated to God and put into the treasury, and also of the final result of the means thus bestowed. The eye of God takes cognizance of every farthing devoted to His cause, and of the willingness or reluctance of the giver. The motive in giving is also chronicled. Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works. Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied, so that it does not accomplish the object which the donor had in view, -- the glory of God and the salvation of souls, -- those who made the sacrifice in sincerity of soul, with an eye single to the glory of God, will not lose their reward." Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 518,519.

May I suggest two solid reasons for cheerful giving? They are our response to the great love of God and the thrill of seeing the work of God go forward. "What can I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" All the love that men and angels are capable of exercising, sinks into insignificance in comparison with the love of God toward the human family. Calls for offerings generally mean that the work is being maintained, expanded, and doors of opportunity are being entered. This sounds like a cause for rejoicing to me. Christ is anxious to return, the fields are white,

ready to harvest. Souls are looking to heaven waiting only to be gathered in. Let's exchange our painted smiles for expressions of genuine pleasure as we cheerfully respond to God's unfailing love and the opportunities He gives to bring our offerings to Him.