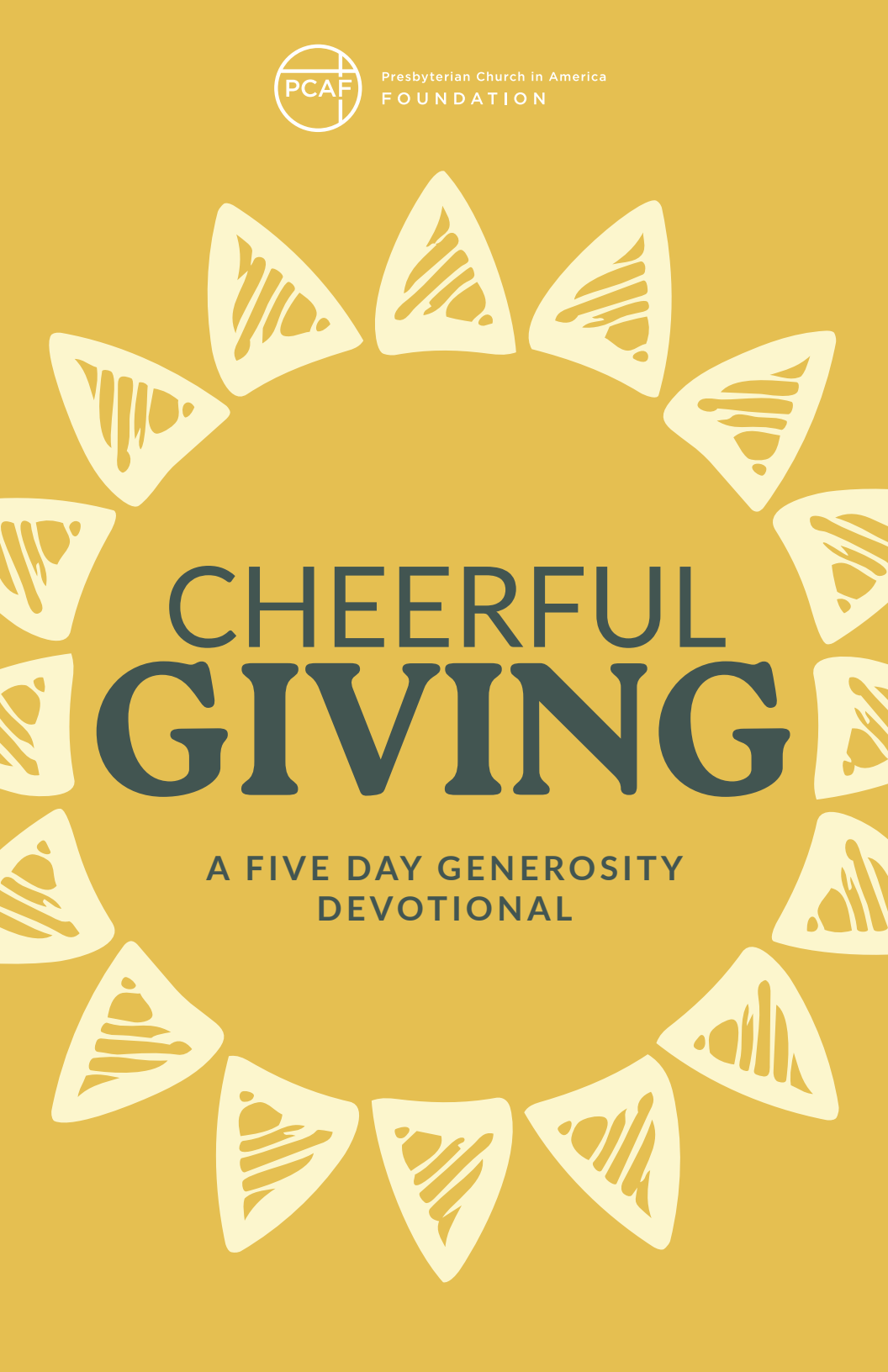




Presbyterian Church in America
FOUNDATION



CHEERFUL GIVING

A FIVE DAY GENEROSITY
DEVOTIONAL

The content of this devotional was created in cooperation with Covenant Theological Seminary, who equip pastors, counselors, and ministry leaders for a lifetime of faithful ministry. Learn more by visiting covenantseminary.edu.



COVENANT
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The PCA Foundation hereby grants permission for this book to be reproduced in any form so long as it is reproduced in its entirety, without modification and with attribution to the PCA Foundation. Moreover, reproductions must be distributed at no cost to recipients. The content of this devotional is also available at www.pcafoundation.com/devotional. You can contact our office for free copies to use with your church or small group.



Presbyterian Church in America
FOUNDATION

Most people aren't happy when they watch money leave their bank account. Yet, I serve people every day who voluntarily want their money to leave their bank account. They even seem eager for it to happen. Of course, I'm referring to generous Christians.

Christians are strange. They are new creations in Christ, givers by nature. They fund churches, missionaries, bible translations, poverty alleviation efforts, campus ministries, and more. At the PCA Foundation, we exist to help Christians donate cash and non-cash assets to advance and manifest God's kingdom.

The Bible reminds us that God loves a cheerful giver! He isn't interested in making us do things against our will. Rather, by his Spirit, he changes and persuades us to look at life differently. It is natural to look at money with a self-serving mindset, gaining it and keeping it by any means necessary. It is very unnatural to sacrificially and happily give it away. It takes an act of God!

I am thankful to my friends at Covenant Theological Seminary for partnering with us this year by providing the content for this year's generosity devotional. I'm grateful for their work equipping ministry leaders to serve Christ's church.

I hope that as you read through this devotional, you will discover a heightened joy in God's gift of a new generous spirit. Please keep the PCA Foundation in mind if we can ever help you cheerfully give!



Tim Townsend
President, PCA Foundation

Table of Contents

Day 1: The Grace of Giving

Day 2: Every Good Work

Day 3: The Eager Giver

Day 4: The Generosity Struggle

Day 5: Delightful Generosity





The Grace of Giving

Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough
Professor of New Testament
Covenant Theological Seminary

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-9

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ 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. ⁹ As it is written,

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

The apostle Paul urged each member of the Corinthian church to “give as he has decided in his heart” (2 Cor. 9:7). What a joy to be part of God’s saving work in this world through our gifts, given from the heart. The result can be surprising.

A single woman known to historians only as Miss de Broen felt called to care for war refugees in France following Napoleon’s defeat in 1871. She had no money but prayed to God for help. In Paris she met two Englishmen who had arrived with funds from Quakers to assist war victims. They handed their money to Miss de Broen. She rented rooms and invited war widows to work at sewing for nominal payment. The outreach quickly grew.

Miss de Broen taught them the Scriptures as they sewed. Their numbers multiplied. A historian notes: “In a few months the sullenness and moroseness of these poor, illiterate forsaken women began to be replaced with the peace and love of Christ.”¹ The work expanded to a night school, medical care, and gospel services.

After some years, Miss de Broen’s annual report for 1888 reported 30,000 receiving medical care, 2,214 attending sewing classes, nearly 30,000 total present at various gospel meetings, and thousands more enrolled in Sunday schools and week-day schools.

Humanly speaking, Miss de Broen and two Englishmen deserve credit. So do the unknown Quakers in England who pooled their money.

But most of all, behind the scenes, we know God was at work, multiplying resources and giving growth. And not some impersonal benevolence but the Father who displayed his own generosity in Jesus. “It is from his fullness that we have all received, grace upon grace” (John 1:16).

Because of that “fullness,” ours is the grace—the gift—of giving.

History is full of stories like that of Miss de Broen’s above. Generous

¹ Diana Lynn Severance, *Her-Story: 366 Devotions from 21 Centuries of the Christian Church* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 259.

Because of that “fullness,” ours is the grace—the gift—of giving.

giving plays out all around us. I teach at a seminary. Students pay tuition, but much of their expense is borne by seminary donors. These donors exercise the grace of giving. They have benefited from God’s abundance. God moves them to share that benefit to further his purposes in the lives of seminarians, to the benefit of the church and by extension the whole world.

The apostle Paul wrote, “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7). Our answer to the question would be very short, for all good things come from God.

What we receive from God, however, is a long list. Here are just seven items the Lord grants to those who place their trust in Christ: (1) grace and righteousness (Rom 5:17), (2) the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15), (3) mercy (Rom. 11:31), (4) a reward (1 Cor. 3:14), (5) commendation from God (1 Cor. 4:5), (6) the grace of God (2 Cor. 6:1), and (7) the inheritance (Col. 3:24).

An online posting recently carried this title: “My Friends Always Say I Give the Best Gifts—Here’s My Secret.”² Many of us may not be very skilled at coming up with good gift ideas.

But our God is a master of this skill. He offers the best gift ever: eternal life through faith in Christ. Having received this, as we grow in our walk with him and service for him, we celebrate the privilege of learning to become his agents in gifting others.

² <https://www.realsimple.com/how-to-come-up-with-good-gift-ideas-8752818>



Every Good Work

Dr. Robbie Griggs

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology,
Covenant Theological Seminary

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Why is the Bible full of farming metaphors? In 1800 about 80% of Americans worked on farms, and, prior to the industrial revolution, most people worked in farming of some kind. God speaks to us in ways we can understand. Since he placed Adam and Eve in that paradisaal garden, he has taught us through the language of the farm. Sowing and reaping, planting and harvest—these good things help us understand who God is and what he is doing with us in the world.

Paul says here that his whole point can be found in the truth of sowing. I'm planning to reclaim a little plot of barren ground near our driveway. I've cleared the lingering weeds, and in the next week or two, safely beyond the last frost, I'll start sowing seeds for Missouri wildflowers. Sowing by hand is a work of messy extravagance. You mix the seed with sand to produce a more even distribution. But if you want the spot to be crammed with flowers—and I do because I'm hoping for many bees and butterflies this summer—you sow from north to south *and then* you cover over what you've *just done* from east to west. An exercise in the targeted planting of each seed and the precise calculation of return on each sowing investment *this is not*.

Paul says, you scatter the seed, and the more you sow, the more you reap. His point appears sharper when we consider the sowing he has in mind for the Corinthians. They are preparing a gift of money for the relief of impoverished Christians in Jerusalem. How can a generous sowing with those who have nothing expect an abundant reaping? Paul encourages the Corinthians to *believe* what the farmer knows. Like the farmer, faith adopts a volume sowing strategy. Why?

The most practical reason is that we, like the farmer, don't know which seeds will grow. And we must *wait* before the fruit of our efforts appears. The Bible often uses farming metaphors to help us do what is right when our work seems futile. Elsewhere, Paul uses reaping language to make just this point,

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal 6:9, 10).

Faith looks for as many opportunities to be generous as possible,

trusting that God is generous and that he will give the growth (1 Cor 3:6, 7). And faith adopts this volume strategy in hope. We have the seeds, the gifts and resources that come from God. The crops are in *his* hands. So, we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7) in our giving, trusting that God will multiply our efforts.

Of course, Paul is not just interested in money. His view is much broader. Money is simply the expression of the Corinthians' "confession of the gospel of Christ" in their giving of themselves in love to their brothers and sisters. The gift is a part of their abundance in "every good work" (2 Cor 9:8). It is a way that God is increasing the "harvest of [their] righteousness" (2 Cor 9:10). And, ultimately, all of this bounty of goodness overflows in joy—"in many thanksgivings to God" (2 Cor 9:12).

Paul's point for us is simple but profound. A full life is not secured by calculated relational investment. Abundant life arises like seeds scattered generously in trust and hope in the God who gives the growth. By faith, the more love we spread the more that love, in God's economy of grace, will return to us. And as the circle of God's grace includes and amplifies our generosity, we have the privilege of joining Paul in magnifying God's "inexpressible gift" (2 Cor 9:15)—our Lord Jesus Christ, who himself is our salvation.

**Abundant life arises like seeds
scattered generously in trust
and hope in the God who gives
the growth.**



The Eager Giver

Dr. Mark Pfuetze
Associate Professor of Counseling,
Covenant Theological Seminary

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

As I was reflecting on 2 Corinthians 9:6–9, I was reminded of a conversation with a friend. He shared that he regularly received emails and letters from his alma mater requesting donations. Over time, he began to feel a quiet but persistent guilt. His experience at the school had been good, but not remarkable, and yet each request made him feel like he *should* give. Eventually, he did, though not out of joy, but to quiet the nagging sense of obligation.

Many of us know that experience. We are surrounded by real needs, both in the world and in the church. And with those needs can come a subtle pressure: *Shouldn't I be giving or doing more? Am I being selfish?*

Into that space, the apostle Paul speaks a freeing word: “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

Paul's concern is not simply that we give, but *how* we give. He invites us into a kind of freedom.

Giving is not meant to flow from guilt, pressure, or a sense of obligation. Instead, it should come from a settled conviction, something prayerfully considered and decided before the Lord. In his earlier letter, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to intentionally set aside a sum of money in relation to their income “on the first day of the week” (1 Cor. 16:1-3), rather than do so reactively. Their giving was to be thoughtful and intentional, not driven by impulse or pressure (cf. 2 Cor. 9:7).

Giving is not meant to flow from guilt...it should come from a settled conviction, something prayerfully considered and decided before the Lord.

Paul also speaks to the posture of our hearts. Giving should not be done reluctantly or under compulsion, but cheerfully. This indicates that our attitude toward giving should not be driven by reluctance or

pressure, but rather done with a willing and joyful heart. The word “cheerful,” in the original Greek, does not refer to mere emotional happiness, but to someone with a willing heart who desires to give out of inner freedom and joy. It reflects eagerness to gladly participate, rather than feeling forced or guilty to give.

That kind of giving grows out of trust.

Cheerful giving flows from trusting in a good and gracious God who has consistently shown his faithfulness to his people. Because he is sovereign, good, and faithful to his promises, we can rely on him to care for us and our families. As we grow more deeply in understanding the grace of Jesus toward us, generosity begins to flow more naturally from our hearts.

In this way, giving becomes an act of worship. A cheerful giver is someone whose giving flows from trust in the Lord—free from compulsion, and rooted in the grace of a faithful and generous God.



The Generosity Struggle

Dr. Bradley J. Matthews

Associate Professor New Testament, Vice President of Academics
Covenant Theological Seminary

2 CORINTHIANS 9:8

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.

I have yet to meet a fellow Christian who believes generosity is unimportant and unnecessary. All can affirm the biblical teaching that it is “more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Testimony after testimony of believers who demonstrated generosity throughout the centuries confirm that truth. There are even now numerous studies that conclude the health benefits of being a generous person. Most people, and believers especially, value generosity and want to be a generous person. But many of us struggle to follow through.

What discourages and prevents us from being generous? Some of us are more easily tempted by greed and the desire for more. Some of us have life experiences that make it difficult to give things away to others. But almost all of us have lived or are living in circumstances where we believe we have limited resources. It's a common problem.

Soldiers who realize they will be on the battlefield for an extended time conserve ammunition and rations. Local authorities impose restrictions on water usage in times of drought. Students and workers with impending deadlines are less willing to attend to the needs of others because they “don't have enough time” for anyone else. In the initial weeks of the recent pandemic, many people stocked up household supplies for fear that there would not be enough.

We can struggle to be generous when it feels like there is not enough, or just barely enough, for ourselves.

After encouraging bountiful sowing (9:6) that comes from a self-determined, cheerful heart (9:7), Paul reminds us of the abundance of resources at our disposal for generosity. Out of twenty-one words in the original Greek of 2 Corinthians 9:8, the words “all” and “always” occur five times along with the verb “abound” twice. That amounts to one-third of this sentence emphasizing the abundance of what God has done for us and through us. The Lord has acted with extravagance towards his people.

In case we feel the temptation to think Paul is manipulating us here, it is important to remember he speaks of God's extravagance regularly. In Ephesians, he tells us the Lord has blessed us in Christ with “every spiritual blessing” and has “lavished” upon us

the “riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:3, 7–8; cf. 2:7). His letter to the Romans includes a warning not to presume upon the “riches of his [i.e., God’s] kindness and forbearance and patience” (Rom. 2:4). He exhorted the Colossians toward unity that fosters the “riches of full assurance” (Col. 2:2) that comes to us in Christ. He counseled Timothy to remind others that God “richly provides us with everything we enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17). And Paul encouraged Titus with the knowledge that the Lord “richly poured out upon us” the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ (Tit. 3:5–6). God gives abundant riches to his people prior to any exhortation towards generosity.

The nature of God’s extravagant provision addresses our temptation to harbor resources for ourselves. Paul does not say that the Lord gives us an abundance of material goods so that we can distribute them freely. The Lord gives an abundance of grace so that we will have “all sufficiency in all things at all times.” When the Bible talks about being sufficient, it means having the competence and contentment to do what is needed. In other words, the Lord’s grace makes us people who are fitted for all good works! When we are tempted to think we need more stuff or time, the Bible consistently recenters our attention on our relationship with the Lord of all.

The nature of God’s extravagant provision addresses our temptation to harbor resources for ourselves.

The simple fact is we can believe that having resources will make us generous. But such things are inconsistent, unreliable, and ultimately ineffective when it comes to our real need. Our good works are rooted in God’s grace, which makes us participants in the resurrection life of Christ. And he gives that grace abundantly.

The resource of God’s abundant grace enables all our good works, including that of bountiful generosity.



Delightful Generosity

Dr. Aaron Goldstein
Associate Professor of Old Testament,
Covenant Theological Seminary

2 CORINTHIANS 9:9

“As it is written, ‘He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.’”

The apostle Paul rounds out this section of his letter by quoting a line from a psalm—Psalm 112:9. We can imagine Paul, as an Israelite living in the first century, having sung this psalm during his life in the context of gathered worship. Since this one verse is part of a larger composition, it is worth knowing something about the psalm as a whole. Psalm 112 is an acrostic poem, each line beginning with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet. In terms of its content, the psalm spells out certain characteristics of a man faithfully following God, one who “fears the Lord” and “greatly delights in his commandments” (v. 1). Highlighted among these characteristics in the psalm is the man’s generosity—he “deals generously and lends” (v. 5a) and (as Paul cites in his letter) “he has distributed freely; he has given to the poor” (v. 9a).

One of the interesting features of this psalm is that it seems clearly connected to the one that comes before it, such that the two are meant to be taken together, perhaps used in tandem “as sequential parts of the same liturgy.”¹ While Psalm 112 is about a person who fears the Lord, Psalm 111 is about the great deeds of the Lord himself. Both feature the same acrostic format, and Psalm 112 appears to begin where Psalm 111 ends, with “the fear of the Lord” featuring prominently in both places (Ps 111:10; 112:1).

Most notable, though, are the connections between the godly man of Psalm 112 and God himself in Psalm 111, such that “[t]here are moments when the two portraits coincide completely.”² For example, in Ps 111:3, we are told of the Lord that “his righteousness endures forever.” The exact same thing is then said twice of the godly man in Psalm 112 (vv. 3, 9). Both are described as being “gracious” and “merciful” (Ps. 111:4; 112:4; cf. Exod. 34:6), and while the works of the Lord’s hands “are faithful and just” (Ps. 111:7), the godly man “conducts his affairs with justice” (Ps. 112:5).

What should we make of these similarities? Put simply, this man’s fear of the Lord and delight in his commandments have produced aspects of God’s own character in his life. For when we follow after

¹ C. John Collins, “Psalms,” in *Psalms—Song of Solomon*, ed. James M. Hamilton Jr., Iain M. Duguid, and Jay Sklar (Wheaton: Crossway, 2022), 560.

² Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 433.

God, we naturally walk in his steps. Throughout the Scriptures, imitation of the Lord is at the core of what it means to be a believer (e.g., Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48; Eph. 5:1; 1 John 2:6), and the people of God are to be a community in which such imitation flourishes, where the Lord's character is tangibly on display.

We can see, then, why the Psalm 112 man is so keen in his generosity. It is because God himself is generous. God has provided for him in abundance (v. 3), and now he seizes the opportunity to treat others the same way that God has treated him.

The Psalms are often spoken of as an inspired hymnbook for God's people. What would it be like to sing Psalms 111 and 112 as a congregation? We would first rejoice in the works of the Lord — what great things he has done for us! But then, in singing Psalm 112, we could reflect on what it might be like to imitate the Lord's character, including his generosity. How might each of us imitate the Lord's character, including his generosity, giving of ourselves to others, perhaps especially to those who are most in need?

How might each of us imitate the Lord's character, including his generosity, giving of ourselves to others, perhaps especially to those who are most in need?

In 2 Corinthians, Paul is eager for the Corinthian church to be the sort of community in which God's generosity is reflected through their cheerful giving. In like fashion, we should strive to see our own churches be communities of generosity. God has given us much—inexpressibly much, as Paul will go on to say in 2 Corinthians 9:15. May we be those who have “distributed freely,” giving joyfully from the remarkable abundance that we have received.



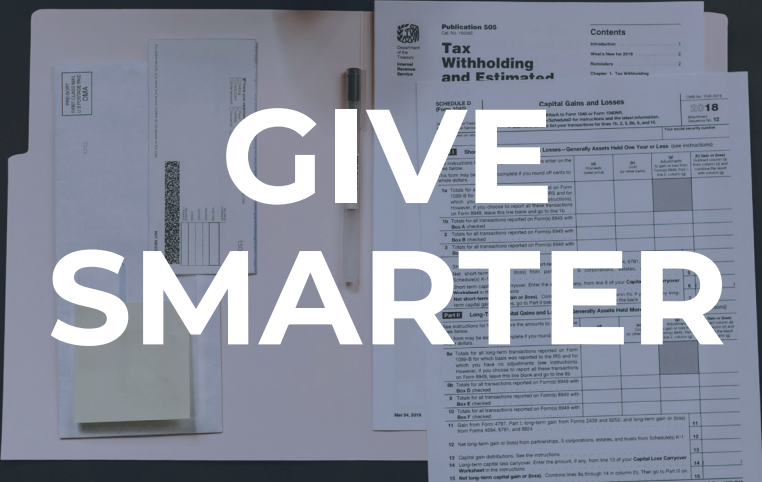
FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION



As the denominational seminary of the PCA, Covenant Theological Seminary exists under the church and for the church—preparing pastors and leaders whose learning is brought to bear in the ordinary, faithful work of ministry.



Scan to watch Simon Stokes (MDiv, MAC '13) and MDiv student Isaac Jones tell the story of how this cycle of formation strengthens the church across generations.



GIVE SMARTER

Reduce Your Taxes, Simplify Your Giving, Advance God's Kingdom.

INCREASE THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING WITH A DONOR-ADVISED FUND

We are committed to furthering the Kingdom of God through the facilitation of Christian giving. A DAF allows you to maximize the impact of your giving, while also saving on taxes, minimizing administrative overhead. Our DAF's are transparent, competitive, and tailored for generosity, prioritizing Christian values in every fund.

To learn more about opening a donor-advised fund, visit pcafoundation.com/donors.



Presbyterian Church in America
FOUNDATION





Presbyterian Church in America
FOUNDATION



Giving that Goes Beyond the Offering Plate

For many donors, the greatest source of their wealth isn't in a checkbook. It's in a business, a property, or an investment built over a lifetime. The PCA Foundation can help you plan, and then to give, manage, and liquidate these non-cash gifts, often with greater tax advantages than a simple cash gift. From real estate to privately-held businesses to cryptocurrency, we're equipped to receive, manage, and steward nearly any complex gift. *Just call us when you start thinking about selling an asset.*

Reduce your Taxes. Advance God's Kingdom.

Visit pcafoundation.com/non-cash-gifts to learn more.



Presbyterian Church in America
FOUNDATION

This devotional is a free resource provided by the PCA Foundation in partnership with Covenant Theological Seminary. If you would like to download a digital copy or order physical copies for your congregation, friends, or family, scan the QR code or visit pcafoundation.com/devotionals.

