

The Grace of Giving

Abound in this grace also

2 Corinthians 8:7

LESSON 2 – THE APOSTLES INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

In Lesson 1, we saw that God required the Jews living under the Old Testament law to tithe (give 10%) of their financial and material resources. One tithe (10% each year) was given to support the men and their families who worked in the temple (priests and Levites). Another tithe (10% each year) was used for a festival in which the people joined together to rejoice in God's goodness. Another tithe (10% every third year) provided for temple workers and for the poor. The Jewish people also gave freewill offerings to show thankfulness and devotion to God and to pay for constructing the temple.

We also looked at what Jesus had to say about giving. He emphasized that it is essential to be in a right relationship with God and with others in order for your gifts to truly honor God. He strongly warned and rebuked people who tithed meticulously but had ungodly hearts and lived sinful lives. Giving doesn't make up for an ungodly heart or life. Congratulating yourself for giving is evidence of pride. Jesus said a lot about giving, but very little about tithing (giving 10%).

We also observed from the book of Acts that the new Christians in the very first church gatherings gave generously of their financial and material resources. Some characteristics of their giving include: responding to people's needs, channeling their giving through the church, confronting hypocrisy and pride, giving voluntarily according to ability, and administration of gifts by the church leadership.

Today we will look at the most extensive passage of New Testament scripture that instructs Christians about giving, 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. The key word in the New Testament that is associated with financial and material giving is **grace**. The apostles, especially Paul, instructed New Testament believers to practice The Grace of Giving. We will see some Principles of Grace Giving. In the following lessons, we will talk about The Practice of Grace Giving.

Principles of Grace Giving

1. People who have _____ grace are likely to _____ it. (8:9)
2. God is the supreme _____. (8:9; 9:15; Romans 8:32)
3. Your first gift is _____. (8:5)

4. The primary channel of giving is the _____. (8:1)

Targets of New Testament Grace Giving

- The work of and ministers in the local church (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18)
- People spreading the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14; Philippians 4:10-20)
- Christians and others in need (2 Corinthians 8:13-14; Romans 12:13; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12)

5. The motivation for giving is not obligation or manipulation, but a _____.
_____. (8:3, 12, 19, 24; 9:2-3, 7)

6. The measure of giving is not the least you can get by with, but the _____ you can come up with.

- Whether you have little or much (8:2, 14)
- According to your ability (8:3, 12; Acts 11:27-30)
- Sometimes to the point of discomfort and sacrifice (8:3)
- As generously and abundantly as possible (8:7, 14, 20; 9:5, 6, 8, 10-11)

Prayerfully respond to the following questions to help you grow in the grace of giving:

Have you received God's gift of salvation made possible by the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ?

How would you rate the level of appreciation you have for God's grace in your life?

I hardly ever think about it.

I say thank you sometimes, and I feel grateful when something prompts me to think about how good God is to me.

Every day I am amazed that God loves me, has saved me, and blesses me. I know I could never attain who I am and what I have by myself. I am filled with gratitude. I want to continually give my whole self to God in return for what He has done for me.

Would you honestly say you have a willing heart or an unwilling heart when you think about giving of your financial and material resources to the Lord?

Would you honestly say that you "abound" in the grace of giving to the level that you are able (2 Corinthians 8:7)?

Take a few minutes and meditate on 2 Corinthians 8:9. Thank God for His amazing grace. Ask Him to guide you in growing in the grace of giving.