

Principles and Practices for Abounding in the Grace of Giving

Key Passages

Matthew 6:19-33

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9

Philippians 4:10-20

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Basic Principles

- People who have experienced grace are likely to practice it. (2 Corinthians 8:1-9)
- Biblical giving is motivated by grace, modeled after grace, and measured by grace. (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- Your first gift is yourself. (2 Corinthians 8:5)
- Giving is not a response to pressure, manipulation, guilt, requirement, or promises of prosperity. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- A survey of your financial practices will reveal what treasure you are storing, what master you are serving, and what kingdom you are seeking. (Matthew 6:19-33).
- Old Testament giving included sacrifices for sin, tithing, and freewill offerings. In the New Testament age, Christ has made the one sacrifice for sin forever, tithing is not prescribed, and freewill offerings are expressed through grace giving.
- Grace giving is generous. (2 Corinthians 8:2-3, 7, 9; 9:6-8)

Biblical Truths

Characteristics of Grace Giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

- Breathtaking in generosity.
- The best investment ever.
- Totally a personal decision.
- Shows what you think of what God has given you.
- Makes everyone who is touched by it appreciate the One who really gave.

The New Testament Church's Example of Grace Giving

They gave:

- Freely and generously (Acts 2:40-47)
- In response to needs (Acts 2:44-45)
- Through the church, administered by church leadership (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-7; 11:27-30)
- Voluntarily according to their ability (Acts 11:29)

Three Targets of New Testament Giving

- The spread of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14; Philippians 4:10-20)
- Oversight of the church and ministry of the Word (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18)
- People (especially Christians) in need (Romans 12:13; 2 Corinthians 8-9; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16-17)

The Joy of Giving to God's Work (Philippians 4:10-20)

Giving to generously to God's work is a joyful experience and way to live because:

- You are thinking of others rather than just yourself.
- You are sharing with others what God has given you.
- You are meeting someone's need.
- You are making a wise investment.
- You are presenting an offering to God.
- You are positioning yourself to receive from God everything you need.
- You are glorifying God.

The Practice of Grace Giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-4)

- Make giving a part of your rhythm of life.
- Direct your giving for a specific Biblical purpose.
- Be proactive by setting aside an amount to give before you spend it.
- Give in proportion to your income and resources. (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:3, 12; 9:6-11)
 - When you have plenty. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
 - When you have little. (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)
- Give where there is careful handling and distribution. (1 Corinthians 16:3)

Practical Steps for Grace Giving

Ask yourself two key questions:

1. What do I/we have?

Divide into two categories: NEED and DECIDE

NEED – What you need to live

- Prayerfully determine this; be honest, humble, Spirit-led
- You decide this for yourself, not someone else
- Be willing to make adjustments

DECIDE – The rest

- Make a list
- Prioritize
- Include giving

2. What can I/we give?

Getting started

- Read over key passages and take notes.
- Pray for God's leading and grace.
- Discuss with anyone who shares your spiritual and financial decisions.
- Choose a start date.
- Plan ahead (yearly plan, special events, providential opportunities)
- Every pay period or income event:
 - Pray for direction
 - Consider Biblical giving targets

Ask the two key questions: What do I have? What can I give?

Set aside your gift

Offer it to the Lord (in your heart; with your hand)

Look for additional needs and opportunities

- Rejoice!

Special Considerations

- Stages and phases of life
- Decreased income – decrease your giving or your living?
- Increased income - increase your living or your giving?
- Giving while in debt

Psalm 37:21 The wicked borrows and does not repay, but the righteous shows mercy and gives.

- Have a plan and a time period for eliminating debt.
 - When determining the “need” portion of your resources, include aggressive debt elimination payments (not minimum payments, not maintenance of debt lifestyle)
 - Keep (or start) giving, determining yearly and monthly the amount you will give from your “Decide” amount.
 - Evaluate status each month.
 - Change your lifestyle from “debt living” to “grace giving.” (Ephesians 4:28)
- People who prosper more than you
 - Recognize and rejoice in the gift of giving. (Romans 12:8),
 - Recognize the varying distribution of talents. (Matthew 25:14-30)
 - Do not envy. (1 Corinthians 3:3; 13:4)
 - Do not judge. (Romans 14:4, 10-13)

Abound in this grace also.

2 Corinthians 8:7