

The Bible and Giving: Christian Responsibility in Light of God's Amazing Grace

Giving in response to God's amazing grace is a vital and essential aspect of true and genuine Christian Discipleship. The manner in which one gives, both in attitude and amount, will be a reflection of the condition of the heart.

When Jesus spoke to this issue, He encouraged His disciples to do more than what was required under the Old Testament with what was called the tithe (Matt 23:23; Luke 11:42). It is clear that our Lord was concerned not only with what we give but how we give. In other words, issues of the heart are at the heart of giving.

The most expensive section on giving in all of Scripture is found in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Here Paul lays down basic principles of New Testament giving. Again, as did the Lord, Paul makes it clear that giving as we ought is a matter, not so much of obligation, as it is of gratitude, of grace.

Throughout my 30 years in ministry I have instructed the students under my watch-care in what I call "Grace Giving." Quickly walking through this classic passage in 2 Corinthians, what are some basic questions we should follow as we express our gratitude to God for what He has done for us through His Son Jesus? I note 12 things:

- 1) Outward circumstances and personal difficulties should not prevent generosity in our giving (8:1-4).
- 2) All financial giving should be preceded first by the giving of oneself to the Lord (8:5).
- 3) Those who follow Jesus should excel in the grace of giving (8:6-7).
- 4) Generous giving is an expression of the love one has for Jesus (8:8-9, 24).
- 5) There is an intimate connection between the "Grace of God" and the "Grace of Giving." The former naturally leads to the latter (8:8-9).
- 6) A willingness to be generous in giving is more important than the amount given (8:12).
- 7) We should give to churches and ministries that handle God's money judiciously and responsibly (8:16-21).
- 8) Generous giving out of gratitude to God will encourage others to do the same (9:1-2).
- 9) The attitude in which we give is important to God. He loves willing and cheerful givers (9:5-7).
- 10) Generosity in giving moves God to supply more and meet our genuine needs (9:8-11).
- 11) Grace giving will result in praise and thanksgiving to God (9:11-14).
- 12) Generous giving is the natural response to God's gracious gift of Jesus (9:15).

Paul understood how important Christian stewardship was to true and genuine Christian discipleship. He knew that giving cannot help but reveal the spiritual life of those who call Jesus Lord. He knew that how we give is a commentary on our love for Christ, His Church, and the lost.

Second Corinthians 9:15 says, “thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.” So, look to the cross, consider what God has done for you in Christ, and give. You will find it impossible to be anything but generous in your response.

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