

The Grace of Giving

2Corinthians 8:1-9

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“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. But as you abound in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us--see that you abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

Grace at Work: The Grace of God

Eph. 2:4-9 - “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

Grace at Work: The Grace of God

- Grace sustains and supplies us with all that we need.
 - 2Cor. 9:8 - “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”
- This grace is conditional.
 - Matt. 16:24 - “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’”

Grace at Work: The Grace of God

- It is not irresistible grace.
 - Gal. 2:21 - “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”
 - Gal. 5:4 - “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”

Grace at Work: The Grace of God

- We know grace as unmerited favor in salvation; God giving us what we cannot earn and do not deserve.
 - Acts 11:18 - “When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’”
- This is not the only meaning of grace.

Grace at Work: The Grace of God

- Grace can be certain favor or showing special favor by virtue of who one is.
 - Heb. 6:13-14, 17-18 - “For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, ‘Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’... 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.”
 - James 4:6 - “He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”

Grace at Work: The Grace of Christians

- Freely offered favor or freewill offerings.
 - 2Cor. 8:7, 19 - “But as you abound in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us--see that you abound in this grace also... 19 not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind.”

Grace at Work: The Grace of Christians

- Spiritual exercises -- prayer, singing, communing, teaching -- all are commanded, but are open ended or without limits for the giver, who is at liberty to make the offering as large and as extended as he wishes.
 - Gal. 5:22-23 - “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”
- What we offer beyond what is commanded, within the boundaries of scripture, is a free will offering; it is a Christian grace.

Grace at Work: The Grace of Christians

- Let's not make a mistake at this point; this is not for God's benefit.
 - Acts 17:24-28 - "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being..."
- Rather it is for our benefit, a test of our faith, sincerity, and devotion, an opportunity to rise and grow.

Joy At Work

- 2Cor. 8:2 - “That in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.”
- Affliction + joy + poverty = rich liberality
- 2Cor. 9:7 - “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”
- Some of them were slaves; some were financially broke because of abandoning former sinful lifestyles. Was God expecting them to sacrifice cheerfully?

Joy At Work

1Chron. 29:1-9 - "Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: 'My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced; and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the LORD God. Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver: three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; the gold for things of gold and the silver for things of silver, and for all kinds of work to be done by the hands of craftsmen. Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?' Then the leaders of the fathers' houses, leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly. They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD, into the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly."

Joy At Work

- 190 tons of gold; 375 tons of silver; 675 tons of bronze; and 3750 tons of iron; or 13.6 billion in gold, 300 million in silver, 53 million in bronze, and 74 million in iron.
- Equaling about 14 billion dollars, or \$2,800 which is the equivalent of seven years of wages from every man, woman, and child in Israel.

Joy At Work

Ex. 36:2-7 - “Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work. 3 And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. 4 Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, 5 and they spoke to Moses, saying, ‘The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded us to do.’ 6 So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, ‘Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.’ And the people were restrained from bringing, 7 for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done--indeed too much.”

Joy At Work

- Matt. 13:44-46 - “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

Liberality At Work

- 2Cor. 8:2 - “In a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.”
- 2Cor. 9:13 - “Through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men.”
- Rom. 12:6-8 - “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Liberality At Work

- 2Cor. 8:8, 10-12 - “I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others... 10 And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; 11 but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. 12 For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.”

Liberality At Work

- Liberality depends on the individual's will to give graciously, not on God's need for the offering; He needs nothing; for our benefit, not His.
 - Psalm 50:10-15 - "For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High. 15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

Liberality At Work

1Chron. 29:10-14 - “Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: ‘Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. 12 Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. 13 Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. 14 But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.’”

Liberality At Work

- He wants our heart first, not our offering; our offering is a manifestation of what is in our hearts.
 - Mal. 1:10-13 - “Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, Says the LORD of hosts, Nor will I accept an offering from your hands. 11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations, Says the LORD of hosts. 12 But you profane it, In that you say, ‘The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.’ 13 You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at it, Says the LORD of hosts. And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand? Says the LORD.”
 - James 4:8 - “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

Fellowship At Work

- 2Cor. 8:4 - “Imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”
- 2Cor. 8:12 - “For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.”
- 2Cor. 9:7 - “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”
- 1Cor. 16:1-2 - “...as he may prosper.”
- Acts 11:29 - “Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.”
- The offering is an expression of fellowship.

How Much Should I Give?

- 2Cor. 8:5 - “They first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”
- This should answer the question.
- Matt. 19:27 - “See, we have left all and followed You.”

How Much Should I Give?

- Haggai 1:3-8 - “Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins? 5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways! 6 You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes. 7 Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways! 8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,’ says the LORD.”
- Haggai needed money to build the temple, but throwing money at it did not build the temple; work did.

How Much Should I Give?

- Giving, not only our money into the contribution, but of our service God.
- Do we believe we have done our part in spreading the Gospel if all we have done is give to support the preaching of the word? It is institutional thinking to believe that giving money is the same as personal, hands on involvement.
- That's how much we should give.

How Much Should I Give?

- “Should I give 10 percent?”
 - The Jews’ yearly tithes totaled 19.5 - 22%.
- No; in Christ, we are permitted to give more.
 - 2Cor. 9:5-7 - “Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. 6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

How Much Should I Give?

- “Let the wealthy members give more!”
- Everyone thinks others are wealthier than they are.

How Can I Give So Much?

- Mal. 3:8-10 - “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this, Says the LORD of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.”
- Just give and see what happens.

How Can I Give So Much?

- 2Cor. 9:8-11 - “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written: ‘He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.’ 10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.”
- Luke 6:38 - “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

What If I Say No?

- What do the scriptures say about a person who is miserly or covetous?
- Paul said to withdraw from them.
 - 1Cor. 5:9-11
- The covetous will be lost.
 - 2Tim. 3:2-5

The Grace of Giving

- Giving is a grace, a privilege, a communion or fellowship. Sacrifice with a joyful, single heart.
- Be more like Christ.
 - 2Cor. 8:9 - “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”