

Grace Giving

Grace can hardly be more practical in the Christian life than when it touches our finances, especially our giving. Giving under the law was compulsory requiring various tithes (tenths) and offerings. Under Old Testament law believers gave in order to be blessed; under New Testament grace believers give because they are blessed. Jesus Christ freed us from the requirements of the law so that we can respond to His wonderful gift of eternal life. While legalistic giving focuses on the outward act and amount, grace giving focuses on the inner motive.

The major biblical teaching on grace-motivated giving is in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Those chapters contain many principles about the motivations, amounts, effects, and rewards of grace giving.

Inner motives of grace giving

The Apostle Paul commended the attitude and motivation of those in Macedonia who gave so generously. Their giving serves as a good example for us.

- 1) We should be freely willing to give. 8:3; 9:2
- 2) We should give ourselves to God first. 8:5
- 3) We should devote ourselves to helping others. 8:4-5
- 4) We should be motivated by love for others. 8:7
- 5) We should give what we purpose in our hearts. 9:7
- 6) We should give cheerfully. 9:5,7

Amounts of grace giving

Rather than a fixed percentage such as a tithe, grace-motivated giving is the giver's response of gratitude to God for the many blessings received.

- 1) We can give no matter how little money we have. 8:2-3
- 2) We can give generously and sacrificially. 8:3; 9:5-6,11,13
- 3) We should give proportionate to how God has blessed us. 8:12 (cf. 1 Cor. 16:2)

Effects of grace giving

Often when gifts are given, we never see or realize the full impact they have. Paul pointed out the effects of the Macedonians' generosity and shows how gifts given in response to God's grace have a chain-reaction effect.

- 1) We meet the needs of other people. 8:14; 9:12
- 2) We stir up the faith, love, and worship of recipients by our example. 9:2,13
- 3) We increase in fruits of righteous. 9:10
- 4) We motivate the recipients to thank God. 9:12
- 5) We bring glory to God. 9:13
- 6) We strengthen our bond of prayer and love with the recipients. 9:14

Rewards of grace-giving

Though we do not give to gain, the Bible clearly teaches that generous giving lays up treasures in heaven which bring dividends, or rewards to the giver.

- 1) We will reap an abundance of God's blessings. 9:6
- 2) We will have a special experience of God's love and grace. 9:7-8
- 3) We will always have an abundance to use for future good works. 9:8-11

Conclusion

To be sure, there are many more principles about giving in the Bible. These chapters form a compact unit that shows what it means to be motivated by God's grace to give generously. Grace giving is one way that we can thank God for His "indefinable gift" (9:15).