

Understanding Giving By God's Grace (Part 2)

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Scripture References

Galatians 1:8, 9	Acts 20:34, 35
1 Corinthians 16:2	Philippians 4:11-13, <i>AMPC</i>
2 Corinthians 9:7, 10, <i>NLT</i>	1 Timothy 6:6
2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 10, 11	Hebrews 13:5, <i>AMPC</i>
Ephesians 4:28	

Summary

As New-Testament believers, it is vitally important that we understand how God's grace affects our finances. We are no longer under the law but under grace; however, many of us operate in our financial giving as if we were still under the law. What was once true under the law is no longer true under grace; this applies to how we view money. From Paul, we learn the crucial difference in mindset about giving. Paul taught that when we give joyfully with the motivation to help others, we see blessings in our own lives. The finished works of Jesus Christ brought radical changes in this area; we can now give out of gratitude and thankfulness for what He did instead of out of fear that God will not bless us if we do not give, first. Giving with the right attitude prevents lack and insufficiency, and brings not just enough to meet our needs, but overflowing abundance. Giving according to Paul's principles, with the intent to honor God, brings amazing results in our lives, and in the lives of others.

A. We give according to what we have been blessed with. Money is a tool to bless others.

1. Paul, the apostle of grace, warned the church not to accept any other doctrine except the one he preached. He taught some important lessons about money; we must therefore examine what and how he taught on finances, giving, and success.
 - a. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8, 9).
2. Paul taught the concept of proportional giving according to how God had already blessed the people; this is the opposite of the mindset of law-based giving.
 - a. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (1 Corinthians 16:2).
3. Paul taught that money should be viewed as bread, something to be consumed, and as seed, something to be given. He pointed out that we should see it first as seed before it becomes bread. Multiplication results not from what we consume but from what we give.
 - a. For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you (2 Corinthians 9:10, *NLT*).
 - b. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness (2 Corinthians 9:10).

B. Our job enables us to be a blessing to others. Our attitude toward financial giving matters.

1. Paul taught that giving is one of the primary reasons for which we have a job; leaders in the church should set the example in this area for their flocks. Giving blesses both the receiver *and* the giver.
 - a. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth (Ephesians 4:28).
 - b. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:34, 35).
2. Paul taught on the importance of our attitude toward giving; our attitude matters more to God than the gift itself. Giving from the heart allows the Holy Spirit to get involved. There is a return harvest when we give properly; we receive not just sufficiency to meet our needs but also abundance to be a blessing.
 - a. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully" (2 Corinthians 9:7, *NLT*).
 - b. But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

C. Financial generosity points others toward God. It is okay for believers to be wealthy.

1. Paul taught that our generous giving into things that affect others creates rejoicing and thanksgiving to God by those who get blessed.
 - a. Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God (2 Corinthians 9:11).
2. Paul taught that we are not to trust in money but in God. Sometimes things happen specifically so that we can learn to be content. It is okay to be rich as long as money is not our central focus.
 - a. Not that I am implying that I was in any personal want, for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am. I know how to be abased *and* live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty *and* live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency *and* enough to spare or going without *and* being in want. I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency] (Philippians 4:11-13, *AMPC*).
 - b. But godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Timothy 6:6).
 - c. Let your character *or* moral disposition be free from love of money [including greed, avarice, lust, and craving for earthly possessions] and be satisfied with your present [circumstances and with what you have]; for He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you *nor* give you up *nor* leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless *nor* forsake *nor* let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!] (Hebrews 13:5, *AMPC*).

Category: finances/prosperity

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