

"GRACE GIVING"
2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-15

INTRO: What do you think of when you hear a preacher speak on **GIVING**? If you know in advance that he is going to speak on **GIVING** do you suddenly decide to go visit Aunt Sally? When you think of **GIVING** do you think of **AN OBLIGATION, A COMMAND, OR AN EXPECTATION? IF YOU DO, THEN YOU HAVE A MISUNDERSTANDING OF BIBLICAL GIVING TO THE LORD!** From **GOD'S POINT OF VIEW, WHICH SHOULD BE OUR POINT OF VIEW TOO, GIVING IS A GIFT OF GRACE THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO US!** Now you may say, I never thought of it like that. Well then, that means that you have NEVER REALLY STUDIED THE CONCEPT OF BIBLICAL GIVING. **Today we are going to be talking about GRACE GIVING which I pray will give each of us a completely new and different attitude toward giving, if we tend to have a bad attitude toward sermons on giving and the act of giving to the Lord.**

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BACKGROUND OF TEXT:

The Apostle Paul was encouraging the Corinthians to GIVE TO THE LORD'S WORK like the MACEDONIAN CHURCHES (Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica) did when they gave to the impoverished Christians at Jerusalem - Acts 11:27-30.

OBSERVATION OF TEXT:

- 1) Giving to the work of the Lord is **an act of God's Grace upon us - Vs. 1** As the Grace of God enables us to overcome sin, the Grace of God also allows us to give to His work. In this text, we see that God through His grace enabled the MACEDONIAN CHURCHES, that were paupers, to give to the poor Christians at Jerusalem.
- 2) Understanding that GIVING is an **act of God's Grace upon us should cause us to have a positive attitude toward giving.**
- 3) God DOES NOT NEED OUR GIVING to do His work. BUT, **through His Grace He gives us the opportunity to give so that WE MAY ABOUND TO EVERY GOOD WORK - Note: 2 Corinthians 9:8.** Cp. Psalm 50:12 (Give the illustration of a child giving a gift to an adult who does not need the gift).
- 4) 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 present the **most complete teaching on giving in the New Testament. All we need to know about giving is in these two chapters!**
- 5) NOTICE: This text is speaking of **FINANCIAL GIVING!** I have heard people say, **"I GIVE MY TIME AND TALENT TO GOD SO I DO NOT NEED TO GIVE FINANCIALLY."** Well, **PTL for those who give their time and talent, BUT giving to the Lord is to be done FINANCIALLY AS WELL!**

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GIVING FROM THE DIVINE PERSPECTIVE: THROUGH HIS GRACE, GOD GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE TO HIS WORK SO THAT HE CAN BLESS US ABUNDANTLY - MALACHI 3:10-12.

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MATTERS OF FOCUS

- 1) It is an act of God's GRACE for Him to allow us to give to His work and thus be co-laborers with Him.
- 2) It is an act of God's GRACE for Him to bless us when we give to His Work.

I. GRACE GIVING IS SACRIFICIAL - VSS. 1-3

A. The Condition of the Macedonian Churches - Vs. 2

1. They were in Great Affliction through persecution for their faith.
2. They had an Abundance of Joy through the opportunity to give.
3. They were in Deep Poverty in that they were paupers.
4. They had Riches of Liberality in that they gave excessively.

B. The Contribution of the Macedonian Churches

"THEY GAVE BEYOND THEIR POWER" Vs. 3

1. They sacrificed what they had to give to the work of the Lord because they appreciated the GRACE OF GOD IN SALVATION.
2. **When we appreciate the GRACE OF GOD in our lives, we will want to give to God and we will NOT use difficult circumstances as an excuse for NOT GIVING!**

ILLUSTRATION:

II. GRACE GIVING IS SELFLESS - VSS. 4,5

A. The Action of the Macedonian Churches - Vs. 4

1. They literally **BEGGED to be able to give!**
2. They wanted to give because they **appreciated the GRACE OF GOD!**

NOTE: GOD'S GRACE NOT ONLY FREES US FROM SIN, BUT IT FREES US FROM OURSELVES!

B. The Attitude of the Macedonian Churches - Vs. 5

-They gave themselves to God **FIRST and then to OTHERS.**

NOTE: **THE ATTITUDE OF GIVING OURSELVES TO GOD AND OTHERS WILL ALWAYS RESULT IN GIVING OUR SUBSTANCE TO GOD IN A SELFLESS WAY!**

ILLUSTRATION:

II. GRACE GIVING IS SPIRITUAL - VSS. 6,7

NOTE: **Titus had led the Corinthians a year earlier to give to the poor saints at Jerusalem and now he was being challenged by Paul to**

continue to lead them to give as the need remained.

- A. The Biblical Christian Life is a life of CONTINUED SPIRITUAL GROWTH in **faith, speech, knowledge, diligence and love.**
- B. The Biblical Christian Life recognizes the SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF GIVING. **And as we grow spiritually, we are to advance our giving as well!**

ILLUSTRATION:

IV. GRACE GIVING IS SINCERE - VSS. 8,9

NOTE: **Paul was not commanding the Corinthians to give. But was encouraging them to follow the example of the MACEDONIAN CHURCHES who had given. We should consider following the testimony of others who give to the Lord!**

- A. Giving to the Lord should NOT be the result of a **command, an obligation, a compulsion, a manipulation, or intimidation...but by FREE WILL!** -2 Corinthians 9:6,7; 1 Chronicles 29:9
- B. Giving to the Lord **reflects one's love for the Lord.**
- C. Giving to the Lord is following the **example of Christ giving to us - Vs. 9**

NOTE: **It is IMPOSSIBLE to love somebody without giving to them! When we love God, we will give to God. If we do not love God, We will not give to God.**

ILLUSTRATION:

V. GRACE GIVING IS STEDFAST - VSS. 10-12

NOTE: **The Corinthians had been challenged a year earlier to give to the poor Christians at Jerusalem...Now they were challenged to continue their giving.**

- A. Giving to God is to be Continual throughout Life
-In both GOOD AND BAD TIMES!
- B. Giving to God is to Increase each Year.
- C. Giving to God is based on a "READINESS" to give.
- D. Giving to God is to be conducted through the "PERFORMANCE" to give.
- E. Giving to God is to be out of "WHAT YOU HAVE," that is, **how God has prospered you.**
Cp. 1 Corinthians 16:2

ILLUSTRATION:

VI. GRACE GIVING IS SHARING - VSS. 13-15

- A. A Vital part of Giving to God is Giving to the need of others. In fact giving to others is the way God has designed to meet their needs. Cp. Luke 6:38
- B. When we give to others there is the matter of "**EQUALITY**" that Paul speaks of in the text. That is, **we help them in their need and they in turn help us in our need.**
- C. Paul gives the illustration of how God provided for Israel in the wilderness in verse 15. So, giving to others in need is:
 - 1. Doing the work of God in their lives
 - 2. Guarantees that if we are in need, God will work through others to meet that need.

ILLUSTRATION:

LESSON/APPLICATION:

God could fund His ministry and provide for His children apart from our giving. But He, through His Grace, has given us the opportunity to be used of Him and blessed by Him through our giving to Him. Our giving to Him proves our love to Him. What does **YOUR GIVING REVEAL ABOUT YOUR LOVE FOR GOD?** Evaluate your giving to the Lord now. Is it what God wants it to be? Ask Him to direct you in this evaluation and He will. Then act based upon what He reveals to you so that you will glorify Him in giving to His work.

