

GENEROUS GRACE

OPEN HEART | LIVING IN CHRIST WITH NOTHING TO HIDE
2 CORINTHIANS 8-9

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WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIPS LIKE...WITH MONEY?

HOW WE RELATE WITH MONEY IS CENTRAL TO OUR DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS

- 15% of Christ's recorded words deal with money
- 66% of his parables deal with riches and possessions
- In the gospels, 1 in every 10 verses addresses a financial issue
- In the Bible as a whole, financial matters are covered in 2,350 verses (more than the topics of faith and love combined!)

4 PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP

1. The Principle of OWNERSHIP

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. GENESIS 1:1

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. PSALM 24:1

2. The Principle of RESPONSIBILITY

The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. GENESIS 2:15

3. The Principle of ACCOUNTABILITY

Jesus said, "...When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required. - LUKE 12:28b

Parable of the Talents - MATTHEW 25:14-30

4. The Principle of REWARD

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. - COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

The master was full of praise. "Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together - MATTHEW 25:21

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2 Big Themes in These Two Chapters...

1. **RENEWED STEWARDSHIP:** They deal with the churches need to renew their devotion to give in response to the Lord's generous grace.
 - How might the Lord want to renew your stewardship in 2016?
2. **TESTING:** A person's claim is tested and approved (if they pass the test) or disproved (if they fail the test). – see 2 Corinthians 8:2, 8, 24; 9:13
 - The extent of our generosity tests whether or not we know the grace of Christ. How are we doing?

MOTIVATED BY THE GRACE OF GOD | 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5

- Macedonians had “a severe test of affliction” ESV (v.2)
 - God's grace came down (v.1)
 - Abundant joy welled up (v.2)
 - Huge generosity flowed forth (v.2)
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- People are motivated to give for all kinds of reasons - tax write offs, reputation, even afraid of death and want to earn “brownie points.”

THE MACEDONIAN EXAMPLE | 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5

- They gave according to their ability (v.3)
- They gave beyond their ability (v.3)
- They gave willingly and freely (v.3)
- They “begged” to give! (v.4)
- They first, gave themselves to the Lord (v.5)

PROVING IF OUR LOVE IS GENUINE | 2 CORINTHIANS 8:7-8

NO GUILT TRIPS “I am not commanding you to do this.” v.8

“His argument is this, ‘The Macedonians gave because their love was genuine. They were moved by the grace of God. If you give on that basis, you too can demonstrate that your love is as genuine as theirs.’”

Ray Stedman, Guidelines on Giving | RayStedman.Org

CAN WE TRULY LOVE WITHOUT GIVING?

“Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions”

1 JOHN 3:18 (see 3:17-19)

Jesus said, “Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.” MATTHEW 6:21

IS COMPARISON ALWAYS BAD?

Paul simply uses the Macedonians (who gave even amidst poverty) as an example of giving. Jesus did the same with the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4)

6 PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

1. GIVE ACCORDING TO PLAN

“Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving.” - 2 CORINTHIANS 8:11a

“...You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. 2 On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned.” - 1 CORINTHIANS. 16:1b-2a

2. GIVE PROPORTIONATELY

Give in proportion to what you have.” - 2 CORINTHIANS 8:11b

- Proportionate giving is by no means equal giving.
- The beauty of NT giving is that the believer, as He senses God’s direction, can increase the proportion of his giving as God blesses him financially or as he learns to trust Him more.

3. GIVE SACRIFICIALLY

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus said, ‘this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. 4 For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has.’”

LUKE 21:3-4

HOW DO WE GIVE SACRIFICIALLY?

Three levels of generosity...(where do you find yourself?)

- A. Less than our ability
- B. According to our ability
- C. Beyond our ability

- Sacrificial giving is releasing what we’d rather keep
- Sacrificial giving appears to be unreasonable
- Sacrificial giving means to give the best
- Sacrificial giving means living with the faith of the poor widow

4. GIVE GENEROUSLY

“Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.” - 2 Cor. 9:6 (see also, Prov. 3:9, 10; Luke 6:38)

Mark 14:3-9: Mary Magdalene anointed Jesus with costly perfume

Exodus 36:3, 7: The people were restrained from bringing more because what they already had was more than enough!

5. GIVE CHEERFULLY & FROM THE HEART

“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.’ 8 And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8

6. GIVE IN RESPONSE TO THE GRACE OF CHRIST

Grace is the great motivator of the Christian life!

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” - ROMANS 12:1a

“For God so loved the world that He gave...” - JOHN 3:16a

Motivated by God’s Extravagant Grace! “You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.”
2 CORINTHIANS 8:9