

Godly Giving is a Measure of Joy That Comes From God's Grace

1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 **Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing** (*perisseia: superabundant*) **joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich** (*perisseia: superabundant*) **generosity**. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 **And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.** 6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But just as you excel (*perisseia: superabundance*) in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel (*perisseia: superabundance*) in this grace of giving.

8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by **comparing it with the earnestness of others.** 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

10 And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12 **For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.**

13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14 At the present time your plenty (*perisseia: superabundance*) will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty (*perisseia: superabundance*) will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, 15 as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little." (*Ex 16:18*)

16 I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. 17 For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. 18 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. 19 What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. 21 **For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.**

22 In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. 24 **Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.**

Attitudes Toward Giving- A Checklist

UNDER LAW: "I give *in order to be* accepted." Of course, this is the way other religions operate (ISLAM: ALMS AS ONE OF 5 PILLARS). Many have been taught that Christianity teaches this as well, which is totally false.

UNDER LAW: "My giving is a *duty* that I *resent*." This is the natural consequence of a works mentality. This is the way most of us give to the IRS--we have to do it, but the whole thing is so impersonal and legalistic that it takes any joy out of it.

UNDER LAW: "I give the least I can to keep God/others *off my back*." Stinginess always flows from law-living.

OWNERS ask "How much of my money will I give to God?"

OWNERS ask "Do I want this?"

OWNERS say "My finances and giving are my private business."

"This is . . . the new mathematics, the arithmetic of heaven. God estimates our gifts not so much by their financial value, as by the sacrifice involved, the love that accompanies it, and the amount that is left. The supreme value of the widow's gift lay in the fact that she `out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on' - while the others gave `out of their surplus' (Mk. 12:44). Here is a searching test of our giving, but that incident should greatly encourage those who have only a little to give, but give it gladly."
-Oswald Sanders, *Enjoying Intimacy With God*

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving way too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them."
-C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*



UNDER GRACE: "I give because *I have been* accepted." When it comes home to you what you really deserve versus what God has given you--the result is to say "Thank you" to God by giving freely and sacrificially to others in all kinds of ways, including financially.

UNDER GRACE: "My giving is a *privilege* that I *enjoy*." See above.

UNDER GRACE: "I give as much as I can to express *my gratitude* for God's love." Grace promotes generous, voluntary giving like the Macedonians.

STEWARDS ask "How much of God's money will I keep for myself?"

STEWARDS ask "How will this affect my ability to advance God's purposes?"

STEWARDS say "I will seek wise counsel so I can be faithful with God's resources."

Mark 12:41-44

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."