



## Grace Giving: Right Motivation, Right Administration: Principles of Grace Giving: Definition; Principles from 2 Cor 8:1-12

### GRACE GIVING: Right Motivation, Right Administration

#### *Preface:*

Today we are taking a brief detour in our ongoing study in order to clarify two major policies of this church. The first is this church's biblically established policy of grace giving. The second is the policy of this church's Board of Deacons regarding the investment, management, and disbursement of funds received through the policy of grace giving.

The reason I feel that a review of these principles is necessary is because there is apparent misunderstanding among some in the congregation about the policies used by the Board of Deacons in managing the search for Our Own Place. I was warned in the beginning that nothing can destroy a church any faster than for it to seek a permanent place to teach the Word be it a new facility or a used one. This warning has had the effect of prophecy.

Nevertheless, the Board has always made its decisions under policies enumerated in Scripture. In addition, the policies it has instituted for the specific objective of pursuing a new facility are based on these with emphasis on the importance of grace giving plus the advice of experts in the fields of real estate, finance, and law.

First of all we will review principles of grace giving.

#### I. Principles of Grace Giving

##### A. Definition:

**Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Giving: Gimmick or Grace*. 3d ed. Edited by R. B. Thieme III. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1990), 39:**

The divine policy of grace is the precedent for the Christian way of living and giving. God supplies the apparatus for assimilating doctrine as the basis upon which believers live. God also provides the material resources from which believers give. The result is living and giving that reflects His plan. Grace orientation is the bona fide motivation and attitude for giving.

1. Grace orientation for Christian giving finds its origin in the sacrifice of Christ. The greatest gift of all was the Lord Jesus Christ given by the grace of God to the human race.
 

**John 3:16** - "For God demonstrated His unconditional and undiminished love to the world in the following manner: He gave His Son [ **undiminished deity** ], the uniquely born One [ **true humanity** ], for the purpose and with the result that anyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
2. God's gift to us sets up the qualifications for His policy of grace. A gift, according to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* is "something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation."
3. God gives us the means of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, and we owe Him nothing in order to receive this gracious gift.



4. Our free will decision to believe that Jesus is the Christ enables the Holy Spirit to save our souls and impute to us eternal life.
5. God's gift of salvation plus spiritual growth through a grace system of perception results in a disposition of reciprocity called personal love for God.
6. One of the expressions of personal love for God is the act of giving by which he expresses his understanding of grace and an appreciation for what God has done for him through grace.
7. It is not uncommon in a local church for the principles of giving to be misunderstood by pastor and parishioner alike. We find pastors making direct appeals to his flock for money, inventing a mandate to tithe, and manipulating people to give through guilt.
8. On the other hand, members of the congregation also misunderstand giving. Some give out of self-imposed feelings of guilt, some in search of divine approbation, and others out of a desire to control the pastor.
9. In order that the believer might have clear guidelines for grace giving, the Holy Spirit directed Paul to formulate a number of principles of giving in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.

#### B. Principles on Grace Giving from 2 Corinthians 8:

1. This passage has to do with Paul's gratitude toward the believers throughout Macedonia who, although impoverished, liberally sent offerings to assist the poor in the church at Jerusalem.
 

**2 Corinthians 8:1** - Now fellow believers, we continue to make known to you the grace of God which has been given by means of the churches of Macedonia [ **Berea, Philippi, & Thessalonica** ],

**v. 2** - that in the sphere of great testing their abundance of happiness and deep poverty overflowed in the riches of their generosity.
2. These believers had two things in abundance: true happiness and poverty. The former motivated them to ignore the latter and give from a mental attitude of reciprocity.
3. These believers did not coordinate with each other and decide on an amount to give. They each gave as they were led of the Lord. The Lord knows what is needed. The Holy Spirit motivates that amount.
4. **Principle:** Grace giving is based on the mental attitude of reciprocity in the soul of the giver, not the amount given.
 

**2 Corinthians 8:3** - I confirm that based on their ability, and beyond their ability to give, they did so willingly from their own free will.
4. This verse indicates they were not coerced to give but did so from a soul at harmony with God. When grace orientation is combined with the leadership of the Holy Spirit the resultant gift is properly motivated.
5. **Principle:** The motivation to give must be grace and the act of giving must be voluntary.
 

**2 Corinthians 8:4** - they kept on begging us, imploring the grace favor of participating in the support of the ministry of the saints.
6. Recognizing the impact the ministries of the gospel would have on others the Macedonian churches were adamant about participating in the cause of helping others who were in need.



7. The churches in Macedonia were in poverty in two ways: they had little money and they had no permanent pastors to teach them.
8. The Jerusalem church had both poverty and riches: it had no money but it did have a number of men who if given the opportunity to train in Jerusalem could then go out to places such as Macedonia and teach them the treasures of the Word.
9. **Principle:** Giving is a privilege associated with grace.

**2 Corinthians 8:5 - And this, not as we anticipated, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.**

10. Note the order of priorities. The Macedonians first gave themselves to the Lord. This emphasizes spiritual growth from which an inventory that counsels spiritual giving emerges.
11. Giving is a demonstration of grace orientation based on motivation from doctrine and thus emphasizes the mental attitude rather than the gift.
12. A believer who simply gives money without having consideration for the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit through doctrine is doing something any unbeliever can do.
13. The Macedonian believers' giving was divine good because they were filled with the Holy Spirit while resident doctrine motivated the gift.
14. Paul has already identified in his first epistle to the Corinthian church that their works were performed from the energy of the flesh and therefore will burn at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ.
15. **Principle:** Grace giving is a function of the soul that results from spiritual growth. It never emphasizes the gift or the giver and always seeks consultation of divine guidance before making the gift. Thus the amount they are motivated to give is the directive will of God.
16. Paul now switches subjects and turns his attention away from the Macedonians and toward the Corinthians:

**2 Corinthians 8:6 - Consequently we urged Titus that he, even as he had begun on a previous occasion, so also he would complete in you this grace also.**

17. Whereas the giving of the Macedonians was grace oriented, that of the Corinthians was not. Theirs involved false motivations that resulted in the failure to give at all. Paul wanted Timothy to convey principles of grace giving to the Corinthians but they ignored him. As a result Paul sent in Titus. A summary of these efforts is provided by:

**Thieme, R. B., Jr., *Giving: Gimmick or Grace?* 13-14:**

Timothy was sent to Corinth to encourage grace orientation, but the Corinthians intimidated him. They drove him right out of town. So Paul sent his troubleshooter—Titus. Titus was direct and uncompromising, and the Corinthians responded favorably.

Under Titus the Corinthians had begun an offering to support the believers in Jerusalem. When Titus departed, the Corinthians again fell into reversionism, and the offering was discontinued. With his return and the resumption of doctrinal inculcation and spiritual advance, the offering could be continued.

18. **Principle:** The believer must disassociate money from the principle of giving. The motivation is in the soul. What is given is determined by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



19. **Principle:** No pastor may rightly seek to tap into the wealth of any believer or kowtow to him because of his potential “giving power.” The power to give whatever is given finds its source in spiritual growth. The money needed to continue the operation of a grace oriented church will be provided by God.

**2 Corinthians 8:7** - Moreover, just as you abound in everything: (1) in faith [that which is comprehended through GAP], and (2) in the Word [the content of what is communicated], and (3) in knowledge [gnōsis: doctrine understood academically], and (4) in diligence [spoudē: application of doctrine believed], and (5) in love [the mental attitude motivation of the advanced believer] in you to us, see to it that you also abound in grace giving.

20. Those things in which the Corinthians abounded are expressed in the indicative mood which denotes reality. The concept of abounding in grace giving is put in the subjunctive mood since true giving is the result of spiritual growth and thus a potentiality for the Corinthians instead of a reality.

21. Grace giving is the product of spiritual growth and is emphasized by:

**Thieme, Giving, 17-18:**

The Corinthians already abound in spiritual wealth. But the extension of their spiritual wealth to grace giving is only potential at this point. It depends on their decisions. They have been consistent to a point, but as yet they have not followed through with grace giving. They must give of their own free will, apart from human good, human ability, human viewpoint, human gimmicks, or coercion.

22. **Principle:** Grace giving is the result of one’s consistent use of the three spiritual skills: the filling of the Holy Spirit, Bible study, and spiritual growth.

**2 Corinthians 8:8** - I continue to speak not according to a commandment but to illustrate through the diligent application of others in order to test the genuineness of your love.

23. Note that giving is not commanded. Giving is a form of worship. Worship in all its phases must come from free will motivation.
24. Giving must therefore be the result of divine viewpoint thinking from the filling of the Holy Spirit, motivated by personal love for God, and guided by one’s knowledge of doctrines regarding the grace policy that underwrites His perfect plan.
25. **Principle:** Grace giving is never forced, coerced, or commanded. Giving is determined in the soul of the believer based on divine viewpoint under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Giving is not based on economic formulas, the giving habits of others, or officious concern about how it will be administered.

**2 Corinthians 8:9** - Now you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He, being wealthy [pre-hypostatic status of undiminished deity], for your sake became poor [the judgments on the cross in true humanity] in order that by means of this poverty you might become rich [eternal salvation].

26. The ultimate example of giving is demonstrated by the love of God which gave His Son to die in our place without concern for what we would do with the gift once provided. Jesus Christ willingly took on the imputation and judgment of our sins without ever being distracted about whether we would ever appropriate this grace gift through faith.



27. **Principle:** Grace giving is a form of worship that recognizes through reciprocity the ultimate gift of divine love through Christ. Thus giving is directed to God, not to men, churches, or organizations. Therefore, how much you give is a decision between you and Lord and is a matter of personal judgment.
- 2 Corinthians 8:10** - In this I give my doctrinal opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also a desire to do it.
28. Paul offers a biblically based opinion, again emphasizing that grace giving is volitional. The Corinthians' motivation must come from their souls. They must make their own application of doctrine.
29. When demands are made to give, giving is no longer grace. Grace exists only when it is freely given.
30. Many in the Corinthian church had given to the project the year before from proper motivation. Now the proper motivation is missing and thus there is no giving.
31. **Principle:** The desire to give must motivate the act itself. A pledge, a promise, an assurance, or one's word of honor is not the act of giving. Giving is an act, not a declaration.
- 2 Corinthians 8:11** - Now finish doing what you started; in order that just as there was the desire to give, so also there may be the completion of it according to your ability.
32. Last year the Corinthians started a giving program as motivated by the Holy Spirit. The proper desire was there. Paul now urges them to complete what they started.
33. The ability to give is not based on one's *material* prosperity but on one's *spiritual* prosperity. Your motivation to give is the issue. What you give is between you and the Lord.
34. **Principle:** The act of giving is based on how God has prospered you. You can't give what you don't have. You can't lose what you never had.
- 2 Corinthians 8:12** - For if the readiness to give is there, it is acceptable according to the standard of what a man has, not according to what he does not have.
35. Note the primary emphasis for spiritual giving is on the giver's mental attitude not what he possess or what he gives.
36. Secondly, the standard for giving is based on what a man has, not what he does not have.
37. Those who have can give and when they do so from proper motivation it is classified as grace giving.
38. Those who do not have may have a desire to give but cannot give what they do not have. Nevertheless, their desire to give is an act of grace giving and is pleasing to the Lord.
39. **Principle:** The desire to give by those who have nothing is acceptable to God because the mental attitude is grace oriented. The act of giving by those who have material blessings but without the proper desire is not acceptable to God. The former is divine good and rewardable while the latter is human good and results in loss of reward.
40. The remainder of the chapter has to do with details about how the contributions to the Jerusalem church were administered. We will address this subject later, but now we must develop applications of what we have learned to this local church.