

Gratitude: Spiritual Gifts: Giving; Tithes are Taxes; Sacrificial Giving, 2 Corinthians 9:6-12

The word for “*cheerfulness*” in the Greek is *hilarotes*. It is the word from which comes the English word “*hilarious*.”

The one who shows mercy has a way of entering the life of the stressed fellow believer and helping him to lighten up.

There is a cheerful, effervescent, and even humorous approach to the difficulty. It takes off a lot of the pressure by helping the believer to put things into a biblical perspective.

But this approach is undergirded by very obvious caring, kindness, and compassion.

In times of national discipline, this gift becomes very effective in the assistance of political refugees, political fugitives, and victims of religious persecution.

D. Giving

This gift is also a part of Romans 12:8 and references those believers both rich and poor who are motivated to provide the needs of fellow believers.

The poor person is able to give through his knowledge, expertise, and labor. The rich person is able to contribute financially to the overhead of a person or organization.

This gift can assist other believers, Christian institutions, e.g., the local church, missions, Christian service organizations, seminaries, and the destitute, the needy or otherwise financially helpless people.

There is a notion that any giving that is not channeled through the local church is not true spiritual giving. This is a fallacy. True spiritual giving is a service to the church first and then to the outside community. But the believer may choose to assist a person or organization in a manner that does not involve the local church.

Direct gifts are legitimate, spiritual, and are a means of fulfilling this gift. If you want a tax break then it must be channeled through the church, however this presents problems under our system of government. If you receive a tax benefit, while your recipient does not incur a tax burden, then you are guilty of laundering money. To make it legal, there must be a benevolence fund established in the local church. Any who so choose may contribute to that fund but without stipulations as to how it is to be disbursed.

Disbursements occur under the supervision of the Board of Deacons who examine formal requests for financial aid. If the Board sees a need, it may then vote to help alleviate that need through financial assistance.

You cannot give money to the church and ask that it be designated for the assistance of Fred Jones. You may give money to the church's benevolence fund where it falls under the fiduciary supervision of the Board. The Board and the Board alone decides whether or not to disburse funds. You may bring a case before the Board for its consideration but it is not bound to honor it. This keeps everyone free of wrongdoing and makes sure that no money laundering occurs.

It should be noted that Grace Doctrine Church does not have a benevolence fund. However, you may give to anyone you want, any amount you want up to \$10,000 with no questions asked and neither the church nor the IRS need be informed or involved.

It should be kept in mind that the spiritual gift of giving is motivated by the content of doctrine in the soul, plus the filling of the Holy Spirit. Under these conditions the issue is assistance to someone or some organization in need not whether or not a tax deduction is involved.

Please realize that there is nothing wrong with getting a tax deduction for your gifts. But you must conform to tax law when seeking such deductions. Any gift given to a 501c. 3 non-profit corporation is tax deductible. Such gifts may be designated toward any of the church's needs. But the Deacons may or may not decide to expend the money in requested area.

Simply put, the Deacons control the purse strings of the local church. You may designate your gifts, if in doing so tax laws are not violated. Deacons will obviously honor your request whenever possible, but they are not bound to do so.

Remember that giving is the obligation of all believers. Each is led by both doctrine and the Holy Spirit to lend financial or other support to any person or organization he so chooses. The Bible mentions no percentage figure regarding the proper or minimum level of spiritual giving.

Tithing is an Old Testament system of taxation and both the believer and unbeliever in Israel was affected. Tithing included a 10% annual tax for support of the priesthood and another 10% annual tax for the support of the Client Nation—a total of 20% per year.

In addition, another 10% tax was imposed every third year for a national benevolence fund. The three average around 23% per year. Tell that to a mainline churchgoer and watch him squirm. The difference between spiritual giving, which is mandated to all, and the gift of giving which is a spiritual gift is that the latter gives sacrificially.

Here's what is meant by the term sacrificial giving:

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "sacrifice":

The surrender of something valued for the sake of something having a higher or a more pressing claim; the loss entailed by devotion to some other interest. To surrender or give up something for the attainment of some higher advantage or dearer object.

The manner in which the one with the gift of sacrificial giving does his giving is, according to Romans 12:8, "*with liberality.*"

The word "*liberality*" is the Greek word *haplotes* and means "*with generosity.*"

2 Corinthians 9:6 - Now I say this, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.

2 Corinthians 9:7 - Let each one do just as he has purposed in his own stream of consciousness; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a gracious giver.

2 Corinthians 9:8 - And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every divine good production.

2 Corinthians 9:9 - As it is written (**in Psalm 122:9**), "He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, his righteousness abides forever.

2 Corinthians 9:10 - Now God, who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

2 Corinthians 9:11 - You will be enriched in everything for all generosity of soul, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

2 Corinthians 9:12 - For the ministry of this giving is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but it is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.

This passage defines Grace Doctrine Church's policy towards giving: Whether spiritual or sacrificial, whatever you give to this church is entirely between you and the Lord. In either case, legitimate giving is inspired by the Holy Spirit and motivated by doctrine. There is no biblically mandated percentage for giving nor is one even suggested. No one from this church will ever ask you for money. The deacons may from time to time consult the congregation on the manner in which it wishes the church's money to be disbursed or invested. The Board may advise members as to the best or most efficient system their contributions may be submitted. But these have to do with process and procedure of how to best manage the gifts you have already been motivated to contribute. On no occasion will anyone approach you for a contribution. On no occasion will anyone ever ask you for money. If they do, report them to me. Otherwise, we pass the bags on Sundays and that's it.

Finally, it should be noted that every believer is mandated to be involved in spiritual giving. A few are commissioned by the Holy Spirit to become involved in sacrificial giving. The gift of giving may be granted to both men and women.