

The Grace of Giving
2 Cor. 8

"Here then is the activity of heaven, desiring to bring to all that which is good, that which is wonderful, that which is glorious in place of all that is unpleasant and unsavory and unhappy...Once you see the matter of giving is centered in this lovely word grace, it lifts the whole act away from mechanics, from pressure and duty, from obligation and mere legalism. It lifts us up into the most lovely atmosphere of an activity which seeks by giving to convey to others what is lovely, all that is beautiful, all that is good, and all that is glorious." Redpath

- I. We know from Scripture that we have a responsibility before the Lord and His church to give a certain portion of our income back to him. The principle of giving back to the Lord was first introduced to us in the Old Testament through the historical account of Cain and Abel. The concept of a tithe is introduced in Leviticus, and the seriousness of giving is emphasized in Malachi. In the New Testament, the principle of giving back to the Lord is further emphasized in the gospels as well as in the epistles, with a strong emphasis on having a right attitude of the heart in doing so.

Gen. 4:2-5

Lev. 27:30

Malachi 3:8ff

Matt. 6:1-4

Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."*

- II. God uses our giving back to him in both time and money as an extension of his grace to those in need. The biblical usage of the word *charis* (*charity, grace*) means more than unmerited favor. It also means that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness, good will, loving-kindness, or favor. By grace God gave us his most cherished treasure, his Son, so that we might become rich. That fact alone should be incentive enough for us to express his grace to others to bless them.

2 Cor. 8:1-15
1 Cor. 16:1-4
Rom. 15:30-31
Acts 24:17
Exodus 16:15-18

- III. The Lord has entrusted us with the grace of giving to others what he has given us, which is a very precious commodity that we are to be good stewards of. When we administer his grace responsibly, we are building treasure in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal (Matt. 6:19-21).

2 Cor. 8:16-24

Psalm 24:1 *The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord.*

Stewardship defines our practical obedience in the administration of everything under our control, everything entrusted to us. It is the consecration of one's self and possessions to God's service. Stewardship acknowledges in practice that we do not have the right of control over ourselves or our property—God has that control. It means as stewards of God we are managers of that which belongs to God, and we are under His constant authority as we administer His affairs. Faithful stewardship means that we fully acknowledge we are not our own but belong to Christ, the Lord, who gave Himself for us.

The ultimate question, then, is this: Am I the lord of my life, or is Christ the Lord of my life? In essence, stewardship expresses our total obedience to God and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. gotquestions.org