

**Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Principles Unit 4**

**Challenges and Opportunities of Spiritual Growth
Week 5: Biblical Principles of Financial Giving (2 Cor. 8:1-9:15)**

Introduction

1. Giving is motivated by grace (2 Cor. 8:1-4,9; 9:15).

(2 Cor. 8:1-4,9) 8:1 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints... **9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

(2 Cor. 9:15) Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Why does grace motivate giving?

(Rom. 12:1) I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

(Phil. 4:18) But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Attitudes Toward Giving Under Grace vs. Under Law

- Acceptance before God

Under Law:

Under Grace:

- Duty vs. Privilege

Under Law:

Under Grace:

- Amount Given

Under Law:

Under Grace:

Qualification: Many Christians misinterpret 2 Cor. 9:7 Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

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2. Christians are stewards (8:5).

(2 Cor. 8:5)- and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

Stewardship is "the use of God-given resources for the accomplishment of God-given goals." (Ron Blue, *Master Your Money* (New York; Thomas Nelson), p. 23.)

Biblical Implications of Stewardship

- Everything we have is God's and not ours.
(Psa. 24:1) The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.
(1 Cor. 4:7) For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

- We should manage God's money to advance his kingdom.

(**Luke 14:33**) So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

(**Luke 16:9-11**) And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon (money) of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. 10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon (money), who will entrust the true riches to you?

- We will give an account to God for how we spent his money.

(**Mat. 25:19, 21**) Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them...21 "His master said to him, `Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master

(**1 Cor. 3:13**) ...each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work

(**Rom. 14:12**) So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Attitudes toward giving as an owner vs. as a steward

1. Owners ask, "How much of my money will I give to God?"

> **Stewards** ask, "How much of God's money will I keep for myself?"

2. Owners ask when purchasing "things", "Will I enjoy this?" and (sometimes) "Can I afford it?"

> **Stewards** ask, "How will this affect my ability to advance God's purposes?"

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When we live with a grace-motivated attitude and a steward mentality, we are able to enjoy our giving and the possessions and pleasures God grants to us.

(1 Chr. 29:6-22) Then the rulers of the fathers' households, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, with the overseers over the king's work, **offered willingly**; (7) and for the service for the house of God they gave 5,000 talents and 10,000 darics of gold, and 10,000 talents of silver, and 18,000 talents of brass, and 100,000 talents of iron. (8) And whoever possessed precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD, in care of Jehiel the Gershonite. (9) **Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the LORD with a whole heart**, and King David also rejoiced greatly. (10) So David blessed the LORD in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed art Thou, O LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever . . . (12) **Both riches and honor come from Thee**, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone . . . (14) **For all things come from Thee**, and from Thy hand we have given Thee . . . (16) and **all is Thine** . . . (20) And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed low and did homage to the LORD and to the king. (21) And on the next day they made sacrifices to the LORD and offered burnt offerings to the LORD, 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams and 1,000 lambs, with their libations and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. (22) **So they ate and drank that day before the LORD with great gladness** . . .

3. **Owners** say "My finances and giving are my private business."

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

3. Our financial giving is an index of our spiritual vitality and maturity (2 Cor. 8:7).

(2 Cor. 8:7) But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

(Luke 12:34) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(Ron Blue) "Your checkbook reveals all that you really believe about stewardship . . . A person who has been a Christian for even a short while can fake prayer, Bible study, evangelism, going to church, but he can't fake what his checkbook reveals. Maybe that is why so many of us are so secretive about our personal finances." (Ron Blue, *Master Your Money*, p. 20)

Applications:

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(1 Tim. 3:3,8) [Elders must be] . . . free from the love of money . . . (8) Deacons likewise must be men of dignity...

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GIFT Ministry (Generous Investment in Future Treasures)

4. Give according to what you have (2 Cor. 8:12).

(2 Cor. 8:12) For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have.

(Mark 12:41-44) And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the multitude were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. (42) And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. (43) And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; (44) for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

(Oswald Sanders) "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* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1980], p. 155.)

Applications:

1. Start giving now.
2. Choose an amount which affects your lifestyle.

(Mal. 1:6-14) "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, 'How have we despised Thy name?' (7) You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled Thee?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.' (8) But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. (9) "But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. (10) "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you. (11) For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts. (12) "But you are profaning it, in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.' (13) You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the LORD of hosts, "and you bring what was taken by robbery, and

what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the LORD. (14) "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock, and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

3. Incorporate your giving as a definite part of your budget.

(Prov. 3:9) Honor the LORD from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce . . .

(1 Cor. 16:2) On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.

Pledge Program:

"What about windfalls (bonuses; gifts; inheritances)?"

"What about faith giving?"

5. The needs of others should have a moral bearing on our finances (2 Cor. 8:13-15).

(2CO 8:13-15) For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality-- 14 at this present time your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, that there may be equality; 15 as it is written, "HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

(Eph. 4:28) Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

(Gal. 6:10) So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

(Prov 14:31) He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.

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Qualification: We should not let lazy Christians abuse this principle.

(2 Thess. 3:6-12) Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. (7) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, (8) nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; (9) not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example. (10) For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat. (11) For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. (12) Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

(1 Tim. 5:8,16) But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever . . . (16) If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

Applications:

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Qualification:

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3.

6. God abundantly blesses the gracious giver (2 Cor. 9:6,8-14).

(2 Cor. 9: 6ff, 8-14) Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully... {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 good deed; {9} as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ABIDES FOREVER." {10} Now He 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; {11} you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. {12} For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. {13} Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, {14} while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.

Not "Health & Wealth"

What will we reap?

A. We may reap increased financial resources to enable us to give more (vs 10a).

B. We will reap increased effectiveness for God (vs 10b).

(Luke 16:9-11) And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. (10) He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. (11) If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?

(Acts 4:32-34) And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them. (33) And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. (34) **For** there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales,

C. We will reap the privilege of seeing others affected for Christ (vs 11b-13).

D. We will reap increased friends who love us and pray for us (vs 14).

E. We will reap increased eternal reward (1 Tim. 6:19).

(1 Tim. 6:17-19)** Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. (18) Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, (19) storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

7. Our first responsibility is to support our local church.

(Gal. 6:6) And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.

(1 Tim. 5:17,18) Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. (18) For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

Applications:

1. Pledge program & Fiscal Support Team
2. Building program
3. Missions

Memory Verses

2 Cor. 8:7* - Consistent, sacrificial giving is a non-optional component of spiritual vitality and maturity. We cannot be true disciples of Christ without this.

2 Cor. 9:6-11** - God blesses bountiful financial giving in a variety of ways.

1 Cor. 16:2* - Our financial giving should be regular and consistent.

Assignment

1. Complete the assignment: *Ministry to the Poor*.
2. Read Missions articles; write a one paragraph response.