



Giving (Not Getting) Is What Life's All About!

People who "get" that *we are blessed by God to be a blessing to others* are the most blessed by God!

Acts 20:35, NLT
You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

It's better to be a CHANNEL than a CONTAINER of God's blessings!

2 Corinthians 8 and 9

The longest uninterrupted teaching in the New Testament on being GENEROUS with our material resources.

Paul is organizing a benevolent offering for the Christian community in Jerusalem.

His appeal to the Corinthian church people to contribute generously to this poverty relief fund takes up two whole chapters of his letter!

A Missing Excellence

It's not uncommon for Christians to make outstanding progress in many ways, while lagging behind in the area of generosity!

2 Corinthians 8:7, NIV

But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

“The Grace Of Giving”

We cannot manufacture generosity on our own!

We become generous givers only because God “graces” us with the desire and the ability to do so!

So, why doesn't every Christian excel in the grace of giving?

“The Grace Of Giving”

Even though excellent generosity is the product of God's grace, we must still “grow” in it, and “be strong” in it!

2 Peter 3:18 & 2 Timothy 2:1, NIV

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

We are responsible to “work out” the generosity that God is working in us!
(see Philipians 2:12-13)

Emulate Excellence!

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Paul begins his guidelines for grace-full generosity by citing an example of some excellent givers!

2 Corinthians 8:1, NIV

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

Generosity = Attitude—Not Amount!

Due to their adverse circumstances, these Macedonian Christians could not give a large gift.

2 Corinthians 8:2, NIV

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

They are excellent givers because of the size of their heart, not the size of their contribution!

Huge-Hearted Generosity

Excellent givers give with sacrificial self-denial!

2 Corinthians 8:3, NIV

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.

Luke 14:33, NLT

So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

Huge-Hearted Generosity

Excellent givers give with eager determination!

2 Corinthians 8:3-4, NIV

Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

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Mark 12:41-44, NLT

Jesus sat down near the collection box in the temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."

Huge-Hearted Generosity

Excellent givers give with total dedication!

2 Corinthians 8:5, NLT

They did even more that we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do.

Jesus is looking for disciples—not donors!

Guidelines For Grace-full Generosity

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Unacceptable Excuse: As soon as I have more, I will be generous!
- Generous people “live to give” because they don’t confuse standard of living with quality of life!
