

GIVING BECAUSE OF GRACE

Giving because of the grace of God should be done cheerfully because this is what God requires of us.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ The word “money” is mentioned 140 times in the King James Version of the Bible. If we include words like gold and silver, riches, debt and poverty or other related topics, it turns out that the Bible gives a great deal of attention to financial matters.
- ❖ Why is this the case? Jesus says in Matthew 6:21, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”
- ❖ He is telling us that money/finance is a heart issue. It should not hurt when we give to God, but giving *will* hurt if our heart is not towards Him.
- ❖ The Old Testament, from Genesis 4 and forward, revolves around a system of sacrificial offerings, which was a way for mankind to rebuild relationship with God. The first time the Bible mentioned offerings that were given to God was from Cain and Abel.
- ❖ Genesis 4:2 tells us that Cain was a tiller of the ground (a farmer) and Abel was a keeper of sheep (a herdsman). There is no indication as to what kind of offering they were supposed to bring, or if Adam ever offered sacrifices or taught his sons to sacrifice, but we can assume something was communicated verbally between God, Adam, Cain and Abel.
- ❖ Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord, while Abel brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. Abel’s offering was accepted, while Cain’s was not. The Bible does not explain why.
- ❖ Maybe it was because he did not bring the best of his crop before the Lord, or maybe it had something to do with his attitude, with the way he presented his offering. What we do see is the end result in Genesis 4:8, where Cain’s attitude of pride, arrogance and anger led him to kill his brother.
- ❖ In Genesis 7, Noah was instructed to bring 7 pairs of clean animals and birds into the ark and a pair of unclean animals and birds (vv. 2-3).
- ❖ Forty days after the flood, Noah exited the ark and offered burnt offerings to God of every clean animal and every clean bird (Gen. 8:20). This was an offering of worship and thanksgiving to God, one that Noah did with the right attitude, and it was accepted by God.
- ❖ If we are going to bring an offering to God, we must come with the right attitude—one of devotion to God.
- ❖ In Genesis 14, Abraham and his men went to war in order to rescue Lot. After Abraham returned from battle, the Bible tells us he was met by the King of Sodom in Shaveh, the king’s valley. Note that the king and priest of Salem, Melchizedek, was also present.
- ❖ Melchizedek brought bread and wine and blessed God, saying to Abraham, “Praise be the God Most High who delivered your enemies into your hand” (vv. 19-20).
- ❖ After this was said, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of the battle spoils. Why? Abraham saw the hand of God in battle and in order to give thanks to God, he blessed the priest of God.

KEY SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

- ❖ Further in scripture we see where the Israelites had to pay tithe. There are three different types of tithes mentioned: the Levitical, or sacred tithe (Numbers 18:21, 24); the tithe of the feasts (festival tithe, Deuteronomy 14:22-27); and the tithe for the poor given every three years (Deut. 14:28, 29).
- ❖ With all these tithes and offerings, every year the Israelites would give more than ten percent of what God blessed them with. Some may have thought these were too much or not have given diligently during Malachi’s time, so God sent Malachi to prophecy.
- ❖ God said that the people should return to Him. How should they do so? By not robbing Him with their tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:6-10).
- ❖ In the Old Testament, we see that giving was an essential part of worship to God. In the New Testament Jesus mentions money often, with many of His parables including riches or money (e.g. the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16).
- ❖ He does so because when we truly understand our roles as stewards, money is a tool we can invest into His growing Kingdom.
- ❖ Stewardship isn’t just an aspect of the Christian life; it is the Christian life. Therefore, you must be a giver—a cheerful giver.
- ❖ When the New Testament church started in the book of Acts, it mentions that the people had all things common. They sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need. They chose to give from their hearts cheerfully.
- ❖ Giving to God is not just about money; it is beyond that. Giving to God involves everything we are or have...100%.
- ❖ We don’t give under compulsion or reluctance, or because we saw someone else giving. We give because we want to. We give because of our love for God.
- ❖ Giving because of the grace of God should be done cheerfully. This is what God requires of each one of us.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. The pandemic has made life a little difficult, to say the least. Financially, has it affected you?
2. Has this in turn affected your tithes/offerings? (Do you give more/less, or promise God an “I.O.U.”?)
3. Read Malachi 3:6-10. When you are unable to give, how does that make you feel?

PRAYER TIME

Lord, help me to be a cheerful giver, not a begrudging one. In Jesus’ name.

Start-up: Have you noticed supermarket shelves being stocked differently than from before the pandemic? Is there anything you can't get and miss?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2020

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

- ✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🤔 (Think about)
- ⚡ (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔️ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE
WORD