

DOCTRINE OF GRACE GIVING

- I.** Introduction.
- A.** This doctrine has suffered at the hands of religious reversionists as much as any doctrine in the Word of God.
 - B.** Nevertheless, abuses by those who do not pursue Bible Doctrine are no excuse for us not to correctly articulate and apply the principles with regard to giving.
 - C.** Since this doctrine is clearly taught in the Scriptures, failure on the part of the P-T to honestly and openly deal with the issues robs believers of the truth.
 - D.** Beyond that, to neglect or ignore this doctrine impacts on a major area of Divine good production and the believer's SG₃.
 - E.** That the term "grace giving" is used, is taken from the Greek word "charis/grace" as applied to the references of the Jerusalem offerings. 1Cor.16:3, "...to carry your grace gift (*charis*) to Jerusalem"; Cp. 2Cor.8:1,4 (*favor/charis*),7 & 19 (*gracious work/charis*); 9:14
 - F.** All giving is to be based on the principle of grace.
 - G.** There is the spiritual gift of giving that excels in application beyond the norm (not necessarily in amount, but in ability and opportunity) that denotes in part the privacy to be given in this application. Rom12:6,8 cp. the analysis of the gifts to the different body parts of 1Cor.12:23b
- II.** Vocabulary.
- A.** Hebrew:
 - 1. **qz'** – chazaq; to sustain, support. Lev.25:35, where this context indicates that the responsibility of believers in Israel extended even to taking his needy brother into his home.
 - 2. **!t'n** – natan; to give. Deu.15:10, where the command is to generously give to the one in need.
 - 3. **by'** – tob; good, benefit, welfare. Pro.3:27, where giving is seen as not withholding benefit from those to whom it is due.
 - 4. **!ix'** – chanan; to show favor, to be gracious. Pro.14:31, where the one that shows graciousness to the needy honors God.
 - B.** Greek:
 - 1. **koinwnia** – koinonia; 2Cor.8:4 (*participation*); 9:13, (*contribution*) where the idea is that of sharing your living grace with another; cp. Rom.15:26
 - 2. **diakonia** – diakonia; 2Cor.8:4; 9:13 (*support or ministry*), where the idea being that grace giving is a ministry of support that each believer and the local church should apply.
 - 3. **adrothj** – adrotes (hapax); 2Cor.8:20 (*generous*), where the idea that the noblest giving is generous or beyond the actual need.

4. eulogia – eulogia; 2Cor.9:5 (*bountiful/blessed gift*), where this word emphasizes the blessedness of generous giving to all concerned.
5. leitourgia – leitourgia; 2Cor.9:12 (*ministry/duty of service*), where it is denoted that grace giving is a service that is expected due to one's station, but remains voluntary.
6. logeia – logeia; 1Cor.16:1,2 (*collection*), emphasizing that from time to time believers should give to support what the word authorizes.
7. sarkikoj – sarkikos; Rom.15:27 (*material things*), emphasizing that grace giving is to involve the physical and logistical support of the individual in need.
8. karpoj – karpos; Rom.15:28 (*fruit*), indicating that giving is part of Divine good production.

III. Definition and description.

- A. Giving is defined as willingly taking something that is your own, whether time, ability, finances or anything else to which you have access, and freely bestowing it on another, with no thought or expectation of return from the recipient of your application.
- B. The principle of grace attached to giving denotes that there is no mandatory law designating that a specific amount for giving is required.
- C. The amount or extent of giving is to be based on the living grace and prosperity that one has received from God. 1Cor.16:2
- D. The believer's giving is strictly voluntary and is to be initiated through the doctrine in one's soul and without any MA resentment and free of overt or external coercing. 2Cor.9:7
- E. Tithing is a violation of grace giving:
 1. Tithing was a system of taxation under the Mosaic Law in which 1/10th of the Jew's income was require for unbeliever and believer alike.
 2. Pre-Mosaic occurrences:
 - a. Abraham gave 1/10th to Mechizedek. Gen.14:20 cp. Heb.7:2,6
 - b. Jacob, after his vision at Bethel, consecrated 1/10th of his income to God (as a bribe) if he would get home safely. Gen.28:18-22
 3. The tithe was physical support for the Levitical tribe. Num.18:20,21,24; cp. Heb.7:5,9
 4. Every third year, the tithe was also distributed to the legitimate poor in Israel (orphans, widows and aliens). Deut.14:28-29
 5. Tithing is seen as part of the sacrifices and feasts. Deu.12:17-19
 6. Later a tax was also incorporated as support for the Monarchy and the national defense. 1Sam.8:10-18 (*Taxation rose to 20% with half to the government and half to the Levites.*)

7. Tithing, as with all taxation, was compulsory and as with any tax evasion carried with it stiff penalties for Israel straight from God Himself. Deu.12:19 cp. Mal.3:8-11
 8. Since grace giving is voluntary and never associated in the NT with a percentage, tithing is not authorized. 2Cor.8:3,8
 9. Grace/free will giving apart from compulsory taxes, existed under the Law. Exo.25:2 cp. Deu.12:17
- IV. The axiom/self-evident truth regarding grace giving is found in Act.20:35, where Jesus Christ Himself said, “...*It is more blessed to give than to receive*”.
- A. Both giving and receiving are part of the Christian way of life. Phi.4:15
 - B. Giving is “*more blessed*” because the giver reaps both SG₂ (Pro.11:24-25; Luk.6:38) and SG₃ (Luk.12:32-34).
- V. God is our perfect standard and example of grace giving.
- A. The example of the Father:
 1. God the Father is observed to be the source of all true giving and every worthwhile gift. Jam.1:17
 2. He has demonstrated His desire and willingness to give to the human race through the creation:
 - a. Air. Gen.1:7
 - b. Light. Gen.1:17
 - c. Food. Gen.1:29; 9:3
 3. He gave man a helper. Gen.2:18,22ff
 4. He gives sexual prosperity. Gen.1:28; 1Chr.25:5
 5. He is the source of temporal needs as well as luxuries. Gen.27:28
 6. He gives peace. 2Chr.20:30
 7. He is the source of wealth and prosperity. Ecc.5:19
 8. At the fall of man, He freely provided salvation to all of mankind. Gen.3:15,21; Joh.3:16; Eph.2:8
 9. He provides all spiritual necessities, including BD and all that it provides. 2Pet.1:3-4; Eph.1:17
 10. He gave us the H.S. as a down payment on our eternal future. 2Cor.1:22; 5:5
 - B. The example of the Son:
 1. The second Person of the Godhead demonstrated giving to the maximum during the Incarnation.
 2. Paul cites the kenosis as the prime example of gracious giving. 2Cor.8:9
 - a. He demonstrated the right MA of grace. Phi.2:5
 - b. “*Though He was rich*” refers to the wealth of glory that He possessed from eternity past. Joh.17:5 cp. Phi.2:6a
 - c. It also refers to the attributes of Deity and their free and independent expression.
 - d. “*He became poor*” is a reference to His humanity during the incarnation.

- e. The plan of God for Messiah was to have access to all the attributes of Deity, yet never using them independently apart from the Father's will. Joh.5:30 cp. Phi.2:6b-7
 - f. Examples of His poverty include: living in the peasant class, physical privation, ignorance of certain information and physical death.
 - g. Apart from His application in the A/C, we could never have been delivered from our spiritual poverty.
 - h. Through His work on our behalf, we have the potential to share in His glory via SG₃. 1Pet.5:1,4
3. The ultimate act of giving occurred when He gave Himself up to spiritual death and secured the potential for all men to be saved. Joh.6:51; 10:11,15,18
 4. Through His work on the cross, He is free to give eternal life and all that it offers to whom He chooses. Joh.10:28-30

VI. The check list for grace giving.

- A. The right object(s):
 1. The Word of God sets forth the legitimate objects of giving for the adjusted believer.
 2. Through GAP, we do not have to guess or surmise what God desires for us to support.
 3. First and foremost on the list for the local church is the support of the Pastor-Teacher:
 - a. The P-T has the very unglamorous job that is likened to an ox. 1Cor.9:9
 - b. Like the farmer, whose well being and prosperity depended on his ox, the believer is dependent upon the P-T for sound doctrine. 1Tim.5:17-18
 - c. As the P-T consistently goes about his job and faithfully teaches the truth, like any employee, he is worth his pay. 1Tim.5:18
 - d. Therefore, the first priority of any local church is financially and otherwise to support the P-T where he can devote maximum time and energy to the Word of God. Act.6:1ff
 - e. Each believer is commanded to make this a priority on an individual basis. 1Cor.9:11-14; Gal.6:6
 4. Second in priority are other believers in the local congregation that come under tests of living grace. Eph.4:28 cp. Gal.6:10
 5. The principle is that we are first to take care of our own "house" and then if opportunity and means are available to apply "outside the house". 1Tim.5:8
 6. Believers in other geographic locales that are similarly pursuing Bible doctrine and fall under living grace testing are to be aided. Rom.15:26; 2Cor.8:1ff

7. It is appropriate to help the legitimate poor on occasion. Pro.14:31; 19:17
 8. With our priorities intact, anytime we encounter a genuine need and it is within our power to help, we should help. Pro.3:27-28
- B.** The right mental attitude:
1. The first thing that must be kept in mind about correct giving is that it is a free will operation. 2Cor.9:7
 - a. Each believer must make his or her own decisions.
 - b. Each believer must do what he or she believes is correct.
 - c. Knowing this, there is no place for judging other believers in terms of their giving.
 - d. This also allows for the principle of privacy.
 2. There should be a readiness or zeal to apply in this area, just as one would have in any other area of application. 2Cor.8:11
 3. An attitude of +H or cheerfulness is associated with our MA. 2Cor.9:7
 - a. This comes as a result of being in FHS and knowing the doctrines related to giving and the rewards.
 - b. It is not characteristic of STA rulership.
 - c. On the negative side, one's mental attitude that should not be present is that of reluctance.
 - d. Giving should always be done with "no strings attached" or the application is not based on the principle of grace.
 - e. God is not pleased when His children do things grudgingly, with MA reservations. Cp. Ti.2:14; 1Tim.6:18-19
 4. Liberality is characteristic of the correct MA:
 - a. Jesus encouraged a liberal mental attitude. Mat.10:8
 - b. The Macedonians demonstrated a liberal and generous spirit even though they themselves were not at all prosperous. 2Cor.8:1-4
 - c. In fact, they had to actually beg Paul to let them take up a collection for the saints of Jerusalem.
 - d. This points out that commands for giving are not expected from those that are poor.
 - e. Mary is an example of a believer that demonstrated mastery over the details in life and gave exceedingly in her anointing of Jesus. Joh.12:1-5 (*300 denarii is equal to around \$10,000 on today's market.*)
 - f. In fact, coupled with the parallel passages of Mat.26:6-13 and Mar.14:3-9, denote that altruistic utilitarian concepts for giving are not sanctified, but evil concepts generated by men for their own sordid gain.
- C.** The right amount/application for giving is determined:
1. By the need of the object. Exo.25:2-8 cp. Mat.10:42
 2. As lead by the H.S. and BD. 2Cor.9:7
 3. As we are prospered by God. 1Cor.16:2

- D. Giving is to be applied systematically. 1Cor.16:2
- VII.** The law of sowing and reaping governs grace giving. 2Cor.9:6
- A. This law says that the more you sow (give) the more blessing you reap.
 - B. This law governs all human activity. Gal.6:7-10
 - C. This law explains, at least in part, why some believers prosper and others do not.
 - D. This law is taught in the OT. Pro.11:24-25
 - E. Many modern preachers, so-called faith healers and evangelists distort this law since they are often motivated by greed and utilize some form of coercing such as emotionalism, merchandizing/peddling/selling the Word of God, outright huckstering, etc.
 - F. God has promised to supply each believer with the means to apply in this area and to multiply that seed over the years for those that sow. 2Cor.9:10
 - G. For the believer that is faithful in this area, God promises to increase your harvest of blessings. 2Cor.9:11
 - H. This law is directly applicable to the believer for their blessings in time (SG₂) and eternity (SG₃).
- VIII.** The Jerusalem offering is the pattern for Biblical grace giving. 2Cor.8,9
- A. This offering came about as the apostles made known the financial need that existed among these persecuted believers.
 - B. The leadership of the church encouraged and exhorted believers to excel in this area of application. 8:6-7
 - C. Paul used the example of other believers that were applying in this area to stimulate the Corinthians. 8:1-5
 - D. Just as he had used the example of the Corinthians to stimulate others. 9:2
 - E. Even so, this remained a free will application. 8:8; 9:7
 - F. The method of giving to this offering is seen in 1Cor.16:1-3.
 - 1. The time: "*first day*".
 - 2. The systematic regularity: "*every week*".
 - 3. The participants: "*each one of you*".
 - 4. The equality: "*as he may prosper*".
 - G. The leadership was entrusted with these funds to use as deemed necessary. 8:16-24
- IX.** Enemies to giving.
- A. The obvious primary enemy for all believers in failing to apply appropriately in this area is the indwelling STA that is the enemy of all BD. Rom.7:18a; 8:7
 - B. The STA when in the position of rulership, can cause believers to be maladjusted in any area of BD. Rom.7:14-17
 - C. Some specific areas of STA activity that can directly impact giving producing failure of application include:
 - 1. Selfishness and self-gratification. Jam.4:3
 - 2. Fear. Mat.6:25ff

3. Stinginess/not affected by covetousness. 2Cor.9:5-7
 4. Approbation of men (promises to give, to look good, and then not kept). Act.5:1ff
 5. Procrastination. Pro.3:28
 6. Soul fainting and loss of confidence in BD. Gal.6:9
 7. Love of money. Mat.6:24
 8. Letting your STA rationalize with such thoughts as:
 - a. Not my responsibility.
 - b. Not my gift.
 - c. The P-T is being self-serving by teaching this doctrine.
 - d. People are trying to pressure me when it is really the doctrine being expounded upon.
 - e. I can't pursue all the other details in life I want and get them "NOW".
 - f. Giving with strings are indicated by such comments as, "Who pays the P-T?", "After all I have already done!", "I give a lot and thus should have more to say in matters."
 - g. Attempting to apply pressure on leadership of the church by withdrawing monetary support.
- D.** A lack of concern for others, characteristic of the self-centered person, leads to failure. 1Joh.3:17-18
- E.** Failure to believe the doctrine and the promises associated with giving will hamstring your applications.
- F.** Excessive debt from over indulgence and financial irresponsibility can cheat the believer in this area.
- G.** Improper motivation on the part of the P-T in dealing with this area is to be guarded against. 1Pet.5:2
- X.** The policy of grace giving and the local church as to be applied at Lake Erie Bible Church.
- A.** It is legitimate to let the "needs" of others be made known as seen in the example of the Jerusalem relief fund.
 - B.** The church is to avoid all forms of coercion like gimmicks, legalism, emotionalism, embarrassment, competition or approbation.
 - C.** Giving is the sum of the application of individual believers and the act of acquiring money, etc., is not to be a pursuit of the church as a church corporately. (In other words, no church garage sales, church bazaars, etc., to raise money under the concept of giving.)
 - D.** The determination of when, how much and to whom giving is to be applied, by the church administration, will be determined by the extent or lack of application by the believers with regard to the specific needs. (If the church does not have the funds or further application is not made in that regard, then we are to hold off in our pursuit of applying.)
 - E.** What is given must be properly administered. 2Cor.8:19-21
 - F.** Believers must trust the judgment and leadership of those whose responsibility it is to administer the gifts. 2Cor.8:5

- G.** The church is not to accept any offerings of others that knowingly has strings attached or from known unbelievers. Cp. Gen.14:21-23, of Abraham's refusal to receive money/goods from the unbelieving king of Sodom.
 - H.** There is nothing wrong with making a financial statement available denoting the overall financial status of the church, and believers are to be encouraged to avail themselves of the information for helping to determine applications of giving to the church.
 - I.** Everyone's privacy should be maintained for both the givers and the receivers.
- XI.** Concluding observations.
- A.** Grace giving is one of the spiritual sacrifices of the Royal Priesthood. Heb.13:15-17
 - B.** It is an area of Divine good production, in which each believer is to be involved.
 - C.** As such, it will be rewarded with SG₃. Phi.4:17
 - D.** Grace giving leads to thanksgiving. 2Cor.9:12-15
 - E.** Like any other function in the Christian life, to have action with honor it must be applied according to the dictates of BD.
 - F.** Each believer should evaluate and make certain that the following is in place:
 - 1.** Right MA, beginning with being in FHS.
 - 2.** Right object(s).
 - 3.** Right priorities.
 - 4.** Right amount.
 - 5.** Right consistency.
 - 6.** Right time.
 - G.** Grace giving on the part of the P-T is to sow spiritual things (BD), while the congregation is to sow material things. 1Cor.9:11; Gal.6:6
 - H.** Grace and generous giving is not preempted due to minimal resources. 2Cor.8:1-3
 - I.** Grace giving is a test of our Divine love for others. 2Cor.8:24; 1Joh.3:17
 - J.** Generous giving is stimulated by the example of others. 2Cor.8:1-6; 9:1-4
 - K.** The result of correct giving is that God is glorified and well pleased. Phi.4:18
 - L.** For those on the receiving end, needs are met. 2Cor.9:12
 - M.** Grace giving includes the recognition that today's givers may be tomorrow's receivers.
 - N.** Our attitude in giving is a direct reflection of our attitude towards Divine good production.
 - O.** In the last days, the mass of Christians are preoccupied with accumulating wealth at the expense of Divine good production. Rev.3:17
 - P.** This in turn leads to spiritual destitution.
 - Q.** The pursuit of Divine good production or lack of is a determining factor as to whether blessing and prosperity is from God versus the cosmos.