

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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MONEY – Terrible Master or Excellent Servant

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One of the topics many pastors hesitate to preach and teach about is money and giving. Many believers get very defensive when the preacher begins to “meddle” in this important matter. But if we are going to prosper and be good stewards of our riches, it is important that we know and act upon what God says about money and giving. The next few weeks we will be looking at what the Apostle Paul says about giving in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.

The first thing that Paul says is that giving is a Christian grace (2 Cor. 8:7). Just what does that mean? A Christian grace is a disposition, attitude, or spirit created within a person by the Holy Spirit. So if we are going to be good givers, we must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading in this area and allow the Spirit to develop this grace in our lives.

It is interesting to note that Paul commends the Macedonians for their giving. However, it is most important to see that before they gave any money, they gave themselves to God for His use and then to the Apostles for their use (2 Cor. 8:5), which Paul said was the will of God. If the grace of giving is going to be evident in our lives, we must first give ourselves completely to God and then to the leadership of our church to be used in ministering according to God’s will. I wonder, what are you and I not willing to do for God? Are we willing to make ourselves available to our pastor? We must first be willing to give *ourselves* before we will be willing to give our money as God directs. *The grace of giving is giving ourselves to God to be used as He chooses.*

The second thing we notice in this passage is that they gave out of hearts of joy. Look carefully at what verse two says. Out of severe trial and affliction and deep or extreme poverty their joy abounded. Paul even says that their joy abounded to the point of giving as much as they could and even giving beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3). *The grace of giving is joyful giving.*

The third thing we notice is that they were not cajoled or begged to give. In fact, it was just the opposite. They begged the apostle to allow them the privilege of giving to meet the needs of the saints! Giving to meet the needs of others is a privilege each of us should cherish the thought of – not perish the thought of. *The grace of giving is a willing ministry to others.*

It has been said, “Money does not change men, it only unmask them” (Riccoboni). If you were to be unmasked and your use of money and your spirit of giving revealed, what would people see? Would a person who has allowed the Spirit of God to develop the grace of giving be revealed, or would a person whose money and spirit of giving has enslaved him be revealed? 2 Corinthians 8:7 says, “Therefore, as ye abound in *everything*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also” – the grace of giving (*italics my emphasis*).

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