

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

BBC FOUNDATION • CLARKS SUMMIT, PA

## Compassion: Grace and Stewardship in Action

*Denis Tocci, PhD*

The prophets and other men of God were deeply aware of the wonder of God's mercy to sinful men. They taught that anyone who had experienced this would feel it his duty to have compassion on his fellow man (Deut. 24:19), those in poverty, and the afflicted (Prov. 19:17). In the New Testament the words for compassion are translated as "have compassion," "have mercy," "have pity," "mercy," "merciful," and "of tender mercy." There is no doubt from the frequent references in Deuteronomy that God expected His people to show compassion not only to each other, but also to foreigners. Through the teachings of Jesus Christ, especially in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), it is clear that compassion is to be shown by believers to anyone who needs their help.

Paul personalized the practical outcome of love and grace and challenged the people of the church at Corinth to abound in giving of their material possessions (2 Cor. 8:6-7). He did not address the church as an impersonal organization. Instead he challenged each believer, no matter his or her financial circumstances, to honor God and participate in the giving. The grace he talks about is the practical reflection of God's grace in their lives that results in tangible good works. Similarly, in 1 John 3:11-24 we find John's teaching of love in action. In verse 16 we are reminded that love is not a feeling but is evidenced by deeds. John uses exaggeration to make a point that unusual and extreme action taken by one person for the benefit of another is an appropriate demonstration of our love for God. In verses 17 and 18 John provides practical advice by stating that those who have material possessions should give of those possessions to those who have needs.

Stewardship is worship. Stewardship is practical. Stewardship is a believer's response to God's grace. Stewardship is God's design for a Christian lifestyle. Authentic stewardship is a blessed opportunity to experience the joys on earth and in heaven as we make

a difference in the lives of others. The key point is that obedience is God's measure of His people's love. God consistently equates authentic love with compassion in both the Old and New Testaments. Compassionate giving can be inconvenient or difficult but is always rewarded (Malachi 3:10).

Here are some thoughts from author H. Joseph Miller on how to practice authentic stewardship<sup>1</sup>:

- Give regularly – "Upon the first day of the week" (1 Cor 16:2)
- Give universally – "Let every one of you" (1 Cor 16:2)
- Give proportionately – "As God has prospered him" (1 Cor 16:2)
- Give sacrificially – "Our Lord Jesus Christ...for your sakes" (2 Cor 8:9)
- Give purposefully – "According as he purposes in his heart" (2 Cor 9:7)
- Give cheerfully – "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7)

Let us be ready and prepared for our reward and not be as indifferent unbelievers who do not recognize the signs of the times (1 Thess. 5:3-9). Our opportunity is now. Our motivation is love. Our reason is compassion. Our destination is secure. And, our God beckons us to a future rich in rewards. Let us purposefully build up our treasures in heaven through living lives as faithful stewards who daily reflect God's unbounded love, grace, and compassion.

---

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: [bbcfoundation.org](http://bbcfoundation.org); e-mail: [info@bbcfoundation.org](mailto:info@bbcfoundation.org)

---

<sup>1</sup> Miller, H.J. (1996). Well done, good & faithful servant: Stewardship of life. Schaumburg: Regular Baptist Press.