

this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men".

God instructs us here that the money matters of the Church should be handled with the utmost honesty and integrity. All transactions should "...provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the SIGHT OF MEN" (8:21). All financial procedures are to be without reproof or suspicion. In these verse special men were appointed to this task. The Christian's first responsibility in giving is to his own local Church. Any giving beyond the local Church should be done with extreme caution and evaluation to make sure God's funds are being wisely managed. God's people are not to blindly give to any organization that calls itself Christian.

**Principle # 7 "GIVE REGULARLY"**

1 Cor. 16:2 "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come". 16:1,2

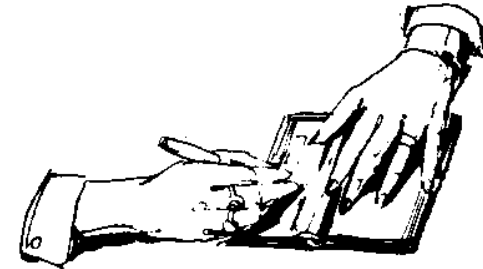
Our God is a jealous God. He demands to be first place in every area of our lives. We are not to give to God the leftovers of our finances. We don't pay our bills and make our desired purchases and then determine what is left for God. God is to be honored with the "...FIRST fruits of all our increase" (Proverbs 3:9). God is to be at the top of our budget sheets, not the bottom. The pattern given here in 1 Cor. 16:2 is that the Christians gave on a regular basis on the FIRST day of the week. God promises if we seek His kingdom and righteousness FIRST, then He will add His blessing to our lives

----- "GIVE, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye measure, it shall be measured to you again. (Luke 6:38) "...It is more blessed to give than to receive."

# **CORNERSTONE**

**BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

## **THE GRACE OF GIVING**



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2 Corinthians 8 and 9 are the key chapters in God's Word concerning giving. The repeated reference to God's grace in these chapters is the grace of giving (8:1, 6,7,9,19 9:8,14).

"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;" 8:1

"Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also" Therefore, as ye abound in every [thing, in] faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and [in] all diligence, and [in] your love to us, [see] that ye abound in this grace also". 8:6,7

'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich". 8:9

'And not [that] only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and [declaration of] your ready mind": 8:19

"And God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all [things], may abound to every good work": 9:8

"And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you". 9:14

Through grace God imparts to us the desire and power to do His will. As we respond in obedience in this grace of giving, we are then able to experience the fullness of God's blessings in our lives. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The life of the Lord Jesus Christ is manifested through a life of love that is characterized by an overflowing spirit of giving. May God give you understanding in the following 7 principles of giving, so that you can enter into the fullness of Christ's victory and joy.

#### **Principle # 1 "GIVE COMPLETELY"**

2 Cor. 8:5 "And [this they did], not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God".

The highest priority in giving is not our money but ourselves. Before the Corinthians gave monetarily, they "...FIRST gave themselves to the Lord...". The God who created the universe does not ask us to give because He needs it. Our giving is a reflection of our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21). Furthermore, our monetary giving is no substitute for personal ministry to those in need. Giving to a rescue mission does not relieve one of the responsibility to personally care for those supposed "outcasts of our society". The good samaritan did not call the local mission of his day to help the man in need; he took the time to help the man personally.

#### **Principle # 2 "GIVE SACRIFICIALLY"**

2 Cor. 8:3 "For to [their] power, I bear record, yea, and beyond [their] power [they were] willing of themselves;"

God DEMANDS our tithes (Malachi 3:7-15) and is DESERVING of our offerings. The pattern of N.T. giving is not only "...to their power..." but also "...beyond their power...". The measure of our giving is not how much we give; but how much is left over after we give. Jesus commended the widow's giving not because of the amount, but because of the sacrifice involved (Mark 12:41-44) Has your giving to God and others ever cost you anything? Have you ever had to delay a purchase. or even possibly forfeit the opportunity of a purchase you desired for

yourself? If not, the chances are great, that you have never experienced the joy of sacrificial giving.

#### **Principle # 3 "GIVE CHEERFULLY"**

2 Cor. 9:7 "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give] not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver".

God loves a CHEERFUL giver! The greek word for cheerful is the word hilarious. Our giving is not to be a burden but a delight. We don't give because we have to, but because we want to. We don't give to avoid guilt feelings towards God we give because of our great love for God. If God so demonstrated His love for us, when He gave His Son to the cruel death of the cross; how much more should we delight in expressing our love to Him by a genuine spirit of giving without reservation (1 John 4:11).

#### **Principle # 4 "GIVE BOUNTIFULLY"**

2 Cor. 9:6 "But this [I say], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully".

It has often times been said: you can't outgive God. We don't give in order to get; but when we do give God richly blesses our lives. A single kernel of corn abides fruitless, unless a farmer gives it away to the fertile ground of the soil. Once given away, the single kernel is multiplied so that hundreds of kernels are available to the farmer (John 12:23-26). In the same way God promises "give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye measure it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). The true spirit of giving is not to ask what God's minimum requirement is, but to give in full assurance that God is able to make our cups truly run over (Psalm 23:5).

#### **Principle # 5 "GIVE RECIPROCALLY"**

2 Cor. 8:14,15 "But by an equality, [that] now at this time your abundance [may be a supply] for their want, that their abundance also may be [a supply] for your want: that there maybe equality: As it is written, He that [had gathered] much had nothing over; and he that [had gathered] little had no lack".

In Philippians Paul stated that he had learned how to abound, but he had also learned how to suffer need (Phil. 4:12). Have you learned this lesson? This verse and others make it clear that we will all experience times in life when we need others to help us. We are not only to find joy in giving to others when they have a need; but we are also to be prepared to cheerfully receive help from others in our time of need. Sometimes in our pride we refuse the help God has provided through others and miss the great blessing of reciprocal giving. The early church experienced the anointing power of God's Spirit as they mutually met each other's needs (Acts 2:45 4:33-37)

#### **Principle # 6 "GIVE CAREFULLY"**

2 Cor. 8:16-21 "But thanks [be] to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise [is] in the gospel throughout all the churches; And no [that] only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and [declaration of] your ready mind: Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in