

The Grace of Giving

I. God is a God of Giving.

A. His abundance is predicated on giving.

1. *(Luke 6:38 KJV) 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 mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

B. The standard of God's generosity is demonstrated in the law.

1. The law is the representation to us of His character, nature, and expectations of us. Those who truly walk by faith will manifest the righteousness of Christ in all areas of their lives. God's standards will be met in us, not by obligation, but by the flow of His power in us through faith.

a. *(Rom 3:21-22 YLT) And now apart from law hath the righteousness of God been manifested, testified to by the law and the prophets, {22} and the righteousness of God is through the faith of Jesus Christ to all, and upon all those believing, -- for there is no difference,*

b. *(Rom 8:3-4 KJV) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: {4} That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

2. The standard of God's generosity, demonstrated in the law, was mandated in the tithing system. It is found (primarily) in Duet. 14 and Lev. 22. The tithing system mandated, over a period of seven years, giving of between 40 and 50% of income, depending on several factors.

a. Every year:

(i) 10% was given off the top to the tribe of Levi. In turn the Levites gave 10% to the sons of Aaron (the priests).

(ii) An additional 10% was to be set aside, meaning it could not be used for any other purpose, for the worship of God. It was rightfully used for travel expenses, sacrifices, lodging and food during an annual pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem.

(iii) The first born of any animal, or its cash value equivalent was given to the Levites.

(iv) An unspecified amount of the first harvested portion of each type of produce or grain was given to the Levites.

(v) The corners of every field and anything accidentally dropped were left for the poor to harvest.

b. Every third year:

(i) An additional 10% was to be distributed to the poor, widows, and Levites living in your community.

c. Every seventh year:

(i) All debts were cancelled.

d. At any time:

(i) An animal, from your own flocks or purchased from another, was required for sacrifices for sin, thank offerings, and special worship.

3. God makes an unconditional promise to those in the tithing system that if they keep this standard they will be blessed with a flow of His wealth that will sustain it.

a.(Deu 14:29 KJV) *And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.*

b. (Deu 15:6 KJV) *For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.*

4. The tithe was the minimum standard. Offerings and gifts besides were spoken of and encouraged in the scriptures.

a. (Deu 12:6-7 KJV) *And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: {7} And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.*

C. Most people in our society fall into one of two categories:

1. Those who

a. have at an income level where this kind of generosity would not be possible and still keep the bills for basic living paid.

b. have an income level where this kind of generosity would be possible but live a lifestyle of accumulation instead.

(i) People in this category may even be generous by the world's standards, giving to charity, church, etc., but fall far short of God's standards

2. Neither group can be said to be truly living by faith according to the motivation and blessing of the Holy Spirit. Both lifestyles are manifestations of the Spirit of Lack, even though they may appear to be different.

II. What shall we do?

A. Analyze your current position in light of God's standards. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the Iniquity(s) that hold you in a position of Lack. Label it "Point A".

1. Repent for living in Lack: not having enough, or holding on to what you have for fear of not getting more, or accumulating because you find your joy in possessions, etc.

2. Wash yourself in the Blood from the Bruises of Christ to cleanse and remove that iniquity and its associated curses from you.

B. Ask God to lead you to revelation of what it means to live by faith in the true flow of God's abundance. Label it "Point B".

1. Especially important is to understand the nature of a "flow."

a. The widow of Zarephath (I Kings 17) had the same vessel of flour and jar of oil before and after the miracle of the unending supply. But during the manifestation of the miracle she provided over 3000 meals for Elijah, herself, and her son.

b. It was said of Jesus that he had no place to lay his head. Yet he had so much money flowing through his ministry that he required one of the disciples to be a treasurer. On the night of His betrayal He spoke privately to Judas to go and do what he had to do quickly. The other disciples assumed that he was sending Judas to give money to the poor. (John 13: 28,29) This was necessarily a common enough event that they had a basis for making that assumption.

C. Actively seek the Holy Spirit's direction and plan for moving from "Point A" to "Point B."

1. Understand:

- a. That for each person "Point A" and the plan for moving to "Point B" will be unique.
- b. The rules learned from religion must be discarded. The matters of percentages and other legal standards must be abandoned.

- (i) The rich young ruler had kept the law all of his life. This meant that he had given 40 to 50% of his income, including giving to the poor, etc. He had met the standard of the law. Yet when he sought the truth from Jesus he was told to rid himself of everything he had accumulated and follow after Jesus, living in the flow of God's provision.

- (ii) The law was given to point us to Christ. It is as we allow His life to flow through us that we will manifest HIS fulfillment of the law flowing through us. If we fall into trying to meet the standard of the law, thinking we will "purchase" the favor of prosperity we will have missed the whole point.

- (a) *(Gal 5:1-6 KJV) Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. {2} Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. {3} For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. {4} Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. {5} For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. {6} For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.*

- (1) Substitute any tenant of the law, including tithing, for the word circumcision in the preceding verse. You will see that any activity given in the law, must be manifested, now, by faith. It must flow out of the life of Christ, not human will.

- We are to be obedient to the Spirit of Christ in us, not obedient to the law.

- c. Spirit led giving will be a fluid practice, change may come at any time. We must be open to the perception of others needs, perhaps supernaturally revealed.

- (i) Giving to a church or other ministry is only one avenue of giving. Don't be limited to the conventional.

- (ii) Individual peoples needs are potentially important destinations of giving. Both saints and the poor of the world.

- d. We must be prepared to move quickly, at the Holy Spirit's direction, without fear, trusting that He will furnish us with what we need at the appropriate time.

- (i) He may ask us to give something that we plan for an anticipated expense, trusting that He will meet that need, in time, out of His supernatural supply.

- (a) *(Mat 6:31-34 KJV) Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? {32} (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. {33} But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. {34} Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

- e. As we are faithful with what we have now, He will bring the increase, and we will progress toward the goal. Don't expect to leap to 50% giving by tomorrow if that is

beyond your current means. Allow God to bring you into abundance by increments as you are stretched little by little, gift by gift.

(i) *(Mat 25:23 KJV) His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

(ii) *(2 Cor 9:6-10 KJV) But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. {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. {8} 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} (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. {10} Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)*

f. Apply the blood from the crown of thorns to your life and finances.

(i) Break the curse of the connection between your labor and the amount of substance in your life.

(ii) Release the supernatural, continuous supply activated by:

(a) Your confession of its truth. Saying so even before you actually see it.

(b) Obedient giving at the Holy Spirit's direction.

(1) *(James 2:22 KJV) See thou how faith wrought (was implemented) with his deeds, and by deeds was faith made perfect?*