

Abound In This Grace Also

Introduction:

1. Our God is the supreme giver. God's desire is to manifest His giving heart through His children today. Giving is the **natural** and **normal** response of a person that is in a close relationship and walk with Jesus Christ.
2. A believer saved by God's amazing grace doesn't give out of rule, law, guilt, or coercion, but out of a deep love and appreciation for our Savior, Jesus Christ.
3. Giving is a grace that God wants us to abound in. 2 Corinthians 8:7
 - “abound” - “to be in excess; to excel”
4. The question is asked, “How much does God require that I give?” We saw last week:
 - Under the law - God required a system of tithes of Israel.
 - Under the kingdom program - Give it all away. Everything!
 - But, under grace today, God is not specific about the amount - 2 Corinthians 9:7
5. There's a lot of foolishness today being expounded on TV and in churches:
 - “God wants you to send me \$1000 and He will surely bless you...”
 - “If you don't give this amount, you are cursed, and God's going to get His tithe from you...”
 - “Send me money, and I'll pray and bind Satan and loose your pocketbook...”
 - This is religious tyranny and extortion. It is no wonder that Christians are wary.
6. The purpose of this lesson is **not** to ask you for anything or to try to guilt you into giving something.
7. But you do, in fact, need guidance so you can make good decisions about how much to give to God and His work.
 - While God doesn't lay down a set amount, in Paul's epistles to the church, we see three guiding principles that will help us to abound in the grace of giving.

First, give systematically. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1. Paul taught the church to give on the first day of the week. Why Sunday?
 - This is the day the saints come together and worship together.
 - Paul says, “When you come to worship, be prepared to give.”
 - Whatever the previous week brought in (“*as God hath prospered*”), you give **out of** God's blessings.
 - Sunday is a good day to be able to meditate, pray, and seek God about what He would have you to give because, typically, you don't have the distractions that come during the week.
2. Giving should be a regular, definite grace that you practice. Must you give every Sunday?

- Not necessarily - it depends on how you are paid (whether weekly, monthly, etc.). But the point is, **if** He prospers you that week with income, you give out of those blessings.
3. The opposite of systematic would be erratic, occasional, and spontaneous (when the urge hits you).
 - It's the idea, "I've got an extra ten bucks in my billfold this week, so I guess I'll give it to God." We kind of "tip" God. This grace of giving is far too important to treat in such a casual way.
 4. You are giving to your Lord (the one who saved you, redeemed you, purchased you, changed your life, etc.), and the Bible says that you show your love for Him this way. So when you give, it's a serious thing to you. There is a definite, systematic way you do it.
 - **Illustration:** You can look at your checkbook from this past year and see clearly if you give systematically. Your mortgage, electric, water, car, etc. are systematic. But what about your giving to God?

Second, give proportionately. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1. You give in proportion to God's blessings.
 - Anything and everything you have comes from God. 1 Timothy 6:17
 - Everything that is here on this planet is here because God put it here for us to use and benefit from. If you have the ability and understanding to take those things that God has put here in creation and work them together so as to produce gain, then that is **God** prospering you. 1 Corinthians 4:7
2. The Bible teaches that we give according to what we **have**. 2 Corinthians 8:11-12
 - If you made \$20 this week, and you give \$5, that is a lot. But if you have \$100, and you give \$5, that is not quite so much.
 - **Illustration of widow and mites:** Her offering was more than that of the rich men, **proportionately speaking**, and that is what Jesus was looking at.
3. More than the amount, giving is a **heart** issue. If the heart is in tune with the Spirit and in love with Jesus, the amount will take care of itself.
4. Sometimes people get upset because they can't give what they used to give (their business declined, a financial reversal, sales are down, etc.). They feel guilty, but they shouldn't. We give proportionately to God's blessings. Life has its ups and downs, therefore our amount will differ from year to year, month to month, or even week to week. Acts 11:29
5. But when material prosperity comes, the Christian should view this as an opportunity to **give** more, not necessarily to **buy** more.
6. Each time we give, we should reflect on God's blessings on our lives and determine what **proportion** we will return to Him.

Third, give sacrificially.

1. Jesus is the original grace giver. 2 Corinthians 8:9

- How amazing! Jesus gave up riches that He could have kept. Why? The Bible says, “...*for your sakes*...” This is sacrifice!
 - He gave up riches so that we could be spiritually enriched for all eternity.
2. When I am allowing Christ's Spirit to live through me, His attitude of sacrificial giving abounds in and through me. It can't help but come out! Just like Jesus, I give up riches I **could** keep (God isn't going to make you give and take it by force). Why do I do this? Just like Jesus, I do it to enrich others.
 - It is not the attitude of “How little can I give and still feel good about myself?” It is the attitude of “How much can I give and still survive and take of myself and family?”
 - What motivates us to give this way? Is it guilt, fear, or greed? Absolutely not. It's the sacrificial heart of Jesus living through us.
 3. You say, “At what percentage would it be considered sacrificial?”
 - I don't know, and I cannot be God in your life and tell you. You must pray, and Christ **in you** will reveal that to you. 2 Corinthians 9:7

In Conclusion:

1. When it comes to the amount we give in the age of grace today, we've seen three key principles:
 - Give systematically
 - Give proportionately
 - Give sacrificially
2. It is your responsibility to sit down before God and make some spiritual choices. Every spending decision you make is a spiritual choice. The way you spend your money is a reflection of the spiritual attitude of your heart.
3. When it comes to giving under grace, you probably will end up somewhere between law giving and kingdom giving. Grace does more for you than the law ever did. Grace should get a response out of you greater than the law would ever require.
4. You say, “But I've made some bad decisions, I'm in debt up to my neck. What should I do?”
 - Go back and read Acts 11:29.
 - My advice to you is this: Pay your debts, take care of your family and their needs, but set aside something for God each week (as little as it may be), and give it systematically and faithfully.
 - As God prospers you and allows you to get out of the bondage of your debt, be a wiser steward and increase your giving as God prospers.
5. As you grow in your relationship with Christ and your love for Him, you will find so much joy in giving to Him and His work on this earth. You will want to **abound** in the grace of giving!