

How Much Should I Give Under Grace?

Introduction:

1. Last week we looked at the joy of grace giving. In this church age, we don't give out of law, or rules, or give to get something back. We give out of a sincere love for Jesus and a deep appreciation for the grace He has poured upon us.
2. But people ask, “**How much** am I to give to God, and how do I decide that?”
3. How much do I **give** to propagate what **God** is doing on the earth, and how much do I **keep** to propagate what **I** am doing? How do I decide this?
4. We are going to look into God's Word for the answer. But we aren't going to misuse the Word to support the conclusion we are looking for. This happens often in churches. Religious charlatans take Scripture out of context to make it say what they want it to say, and they extort money from people.
5. In this lesson, we will examine giving in three different time periods in your Bible and compare them.

Giving under the law

1. The law was a covenant between God and His people, Israel. It consisted of numerous laws and regulations, many of which dealt with the area of giving.
 - Deuteronomy 14:22 – Annually, 10% of all the income they produced went to God (called a tithe).
 - Deuteronomy 14:27 - Another 10% tithe went to the Levites (they had no inheritance in the land). It was to go for their livelihood, and to keep and maintain the temple.
 - Deuteronomy 14:28 - Every 3rd year, another 10% went towards a type of social welfare program.
2. There were even more instructions which we will not examine at this time, but here's the point: under the law, God gave very **detailed** and **precise** instructions regarding what to give, how to give, where to give, etc.
3. God said, “You **do** what I've commanded, and I'll give you so much you can't spend it all. If you don't, I'll close up the windows of heaven.” Luke 6:38
4. So, under the law, it was basically a religious system of tithes. This dealt with the amount.

Giving under the kingdom program

1. Jesus came to the lost sheep of Israel during His earthly ministry. He came to call them to repentance for breaking God's law and to prepare them for their prophesied kingdom on earth. Matthew 4:17, 10:6-7
2. Under the kingdom program, Jesus raised the level of commitment. Luke 12:27-34
 - The level of giving was precise - **everything!** The kingdom plan was to give it all! Sell what you have; divest yourself of all assets.

- Why? Because they faced going through the tribulation, and after they endured they would enter the kingdom and receive back 100-fold more than they gave up. Matthew 19:27-29
3. Biblical examples:
- The rich young ruler - Luke 18:18-27
 - Peter and the apostles - Luke 18:28-30; Acts 3:6
 - Notice Luke 18:28. Peter was a small business owner. He owned a commercial fishing business. When he followed Christ, he shut it down, left his nets and equipment, and followed Jesus. The reward? Verses 29 and 30 say that, in the kingdom, they will receive manifold.
 - The poor widow - Mark 12:41-44
 - The Spirit-filled believers
 - This explains and sheds light on Acts chapters 2 and 4.
 - When the apostles and disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were supernaturally equipped to understand and do what Christ had told them to do. Acts 2:44-45, 4:32, 34-37
 - When people want to go back to Acts 2 and “practice some Holy Ghost living,” they never want to apply these verses concerning the selling of their possessions.
 - The level of giving was **everything** under the kingdom program. They were preparing for the kingdom and doing exactly what Jesus had told them to do. cf. Matthew 10:9; Acts 3:6

Giving under grace

1. You may be getting a little nervous, but I've got good news. We aren't living under God's kingdom program today. Let me explain:
 - Had Israel repented and turned to Christ, Christ would have returned and given them that prophesied kingdom. Acts 3:19-21
 - But they didn't repent. Instead, they persecuted, jailed, beat, and killed the Spirit-filled apostles in Acts 1-7. Prophecy called for God's wrath to be poured out in the tribulation, but there was a mystery (a secret) hidden in God. It was the marvelous dispensation of grace.
 - Instead of God pouring out wrath on a world that deserved it, God poured out grace, giving all of His enemies in the world an opportunity to repent and turn to Christ and be saved.
 - God's kingdom program was temporarily put on hold, and we are living in the marvelous dispensation of grace. It will end with the rapture of the church.
2. But when it comes to giving, here's the problem:
 - The law we talked about (with its system of tithes) is dead. It was nailed to the cross. Romans 7:6
 - The kingdom program (give it all) has been postponed. Romans 11:25-27
 - We live in God's dispensation of grace.
3. So in this grace program we live in, how much are we to give?

4. As you search the church age epistles, specific amounts for your giving are not given. It's just not there. You won't find it. But here's what you will find:
2 Corinthians 9:6-8
5. Where does Christ live? In you! It is **your** responsibility to yield yourself to Christ and discern His guidance in what you are to give to God's work on this earth.

In Conclusion:

1. You say, "But aren't there any guiding principles for me to go by?"
2. Absolutely! Paul has more to say about giving than any other New Testament writer.
3. Giving is one of the supreme privileges and joys of a believer living under grace. Giving is a grace that Paul says we should abound in.