

Recession Proof Living

How to Excel in the Grace of Giving

If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception; it is a prevailing attitude.

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BIG IDEA FOR RECESSION-PROOF GIVERS: *But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 2 Corinthians 8:7*

- Excellence in giving leads to grace giving: check out I Corinthians 1:4-5
- Grace giving starts when you understand it is no longer about you!

What keeps you from grace giving? *“And if your wealth increases, don’t make it the center of your life.” Psalm 62:10b (New Living Translation)*

- People in the US spend more on trash bags than 90 countries spend on everything!
- If money could buy you happiness, how much would it take? _____

So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:6-9

- God's generosity through the grace of Jesus is the platform for our generosity.
 - Grace is generosity without borders!
1. **GRACE GIVING IS RELATIONAL:** *And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 2 Corinthians 8:5*
 - When Jesus changes our hearts, he changes our desires—and it shows!
 - *So show these men the proof of your love and the reason we are proud of you. Then all the churches can see it. 2 Corinthians 8:24*
 2. **GRACE GIVING IS INTENTIONAL**
 - *So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. 2 Corinthians 9:5*

- *Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:7

- Intentional in planning: We will make other commitments if we fail to plan our gifts.
- Intentional in joy: Cheerful giving is the result of planning that tests our faith and keeps us dependent on God.

Motive is more important than amount: *For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.*

2 Corinthians 8:12

3. GRACE GIVING IS BIBLICAL: *Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

Biblical principles for giving:

Systematic

Proportionate

Generous

We should have a regular and proportionate plan for our ongoing giving, but at times we will be led to make extraordinary investments in opportunities God reveals. The Eternity Portfolio

4. GRACE GIVING IS TESTED: *Command those who are rich in the things of life not to be proud, but to place their hope, not in such an uncertain thing as riches, but in God, who generously gives us everything for our enjoyment.*

1 Timothy 6:17 (TEV)

Which question should we be asking?

- How much should I give to fulfill the biblical requirements?
- How much is enough for my family and me so I can maximize giving?

5. GRACE GIVING IS REWARDED: *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. Matthew 19:29*

BIG IDEA: Grace givers have a financial plan that allows them to follow God's directions to channel His resources through you that will produce the maximum return for eternity.