

GRACE GIVING

A Devotional Prayer Guide on the Subject of Financial Stewardship

Prayer Time #3

The Heart of Giving

Focal Passage: 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

When studying the topic of financial stewardship as it relates to giving to the Lord, 2 Corinthians 9 is a chapter chocked full of vital truth. As I write these devotions on grace giving, I will refer to this section more than once. For the purpose of this devotional piece, I am going to concentrate on one single phrase. It may be a brief portion of Scripture, but it a colossal bit of teaching from the Word of God. In verse 7, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, instructs each believer to “give as he purposes in his heart.” As you meditate on this passage and pray, recognize that financial stewardship is ultimately a matter of the heart.

If asked how much a person should contribute to the local church, this is the place I would first instruct them from . You and I are to give as we have purposed in our heart. We are to determine what we believe the Lord would have us give, and we should follow through on that commitment. Sounds simple, agreed? Well, not so fast. It may be simple as far as being straightforward and clear. It is not so simple to live out. We may read this phrase in verse 7 and say, “well, that’s easy, I want to give \$5 per week, \$1,000 a month, or \$250 per year.” Only the Lord truly knows the state of your income, since He is the One who provides it for you. Since He knows how much your income is, He also knows how much you give, and more importantly, He knows your heart. See, I told you it wasn’t that simple! The heart issue is never simple, but it is a place of great reward, if we get this right.

Jesus commended a widow who gave a pittance at the Temple. The amount was miniscule, but the lady’s heart was overflowing with generosity toward the Lord. She gave all she had. Would the Lord have us give all we have? Not necessarily. The Lord would have us give with a heart that has purposed to honor Him.

Purposing in one’s heart is a matter of commitment. It speaks of priority. It reveals intention and “purpose.” The Puritan preacher Thomas Watson wrote, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” That is the purpose of every believer. To glorify Him we must honor Him. We must love Him. Love is a matter of the heart. The Word of God here in 2 Corinthians reveals the importance of recognizing that financial giving is a matter of the heart. It is a matter of purpose. That purpose in giving should dovetail with our overarching purpose to love the Lord and glorify Him.

As you pray today, think about your financial stewardship as far as your giving to the Lord is concerned. Does your giving reflect a heart to glorify the Lord? Do you give for that purpose? Is your heart committed to honoring the Lord?

Let me share a few examples of real life matters that require commitment of the heart. Consider these statements, and bear with me as I share them from a facetious position. I am not telling you to do these things, I want to make a point about purposing in our hearts. Here are the statements:

“I have purposed in my heart that I love my wife, but I’m not going to tell her I love her, nor do much to show her I love her.”

“I’m going to purpose in my heart to be more health conscious, but I’m not going to give up sweets or fried foods!”

“I’ve purposed in my heart to get a promotion at work, but I’m going to try to do as little actual work as I can get by with.”

“I’ve decided to commit to being a better parent, but that doesn’t mean my children should expect me to devote more time to them or give up my ‘me’ time.”

I know, no one makes statements like these. I told you the statements would be facetious. I’m trying to make a point. We are to be committed to giving to the Lord from a heart of purpose. Would we make a statement about our commitment in giving as ridiculous and even foolish as the one’s about other important areas of our lives? I would hope not.

What would it say about our hearts if we purposed to give to the Lord, but weren’t generous, or were downright selfish. What if we aren’t committed as all? Do we want the area of giving to be one where we try to do as little as possible? As we purpose in our hearts in the discipline of Christian stewardship, the Lord knows our hearts. Thank you for reading.

Suggestions for your prayer time:

- Praise the Lord for the teaching of His Word in the area of stewardship.
- Ask the Lord to help you purpose in your heart to give to the Lord in a manner reflecting a desire to honor Him.
- Meditate upon the truth taught in our focal passage about our responsibility to be committed to giving.
- Ask the Lord to reveal what He sees in your heart, and, if necessary, confess any shortcoming or sin.
- Ask the Lord to grant you repentance for any struggle you may have to commit in your giving.
- Commit to honor the Lord through your giving.