

THANKSGIVING

gratitude, grace, & generosity

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- A series about Gratitude Grace and Generosity.
- Last week: Thanksgiving = Attitude of Gratitude + Acts of Generosity
- Series Goal: Tithe to local church and an additional 1% to Missions and 1% to Alms.
- This week: What is Koinonia (Fellowship) and how it relates to giving?

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Acts 2:42 NKJV And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

- **Koinonia Definition (adopted from Thayer):**
 - a) participation : community, the share which one has in anything,
 - b) intimacy: communion, fellowship, friendship
 - c) contribution : a gift jointly contributed, a collection, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship

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- Biblical fellowship is a combination of all three elements. If you lack any element, you don't have Biblical fellowship
- In this series I'm focusing on the contribution aspect of Koinonia - but all three are equal
- **Giving should be practiced where you experience koinonia.**

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- Someone once told me that a co-worker heard that he gave money to the church, and the co-worker said “you'd have to be a _____ idiot to give money to church.”
- If someone doesn't believe in God they would not give to God. That makes sense.
- No faith = No giving.
- But that also mean: No giving = No faith

2 Corinthians 8:1-6 NKJV

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: (2) that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. (3) For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, (4) imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

2 Corinthians 8:1-6 NKJV

(5) And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. (6) So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.

- Paul to Corinthians about a collection for Church in Jerusalem, boasting about Macedonians.
- Applies to special offerings but principles apply to all giving in the New Testament
- v.4, “begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,”
- “participation” = “koinonia” or “fellowship”

2 Corinthians 8:1-6 NKJV

- IVP commentary: “The term (Koinonia) translated “participation” (NASB), “sharing” (NIV, NRSV) or “fellowship” (KJV) was used technically in business documents of Paul’s day for a “partnership.” It could also signify an institution of Roman trade known as the *societas*, by which members contracted to supply whatever they had to fulfill their [corporate] goal. Whether Paul conceives of this “partnership” officially or unofficially, it is clear that the Macedonians saw support, like hospitality, as a privilege.”

2 Corinthians 8:1-6 NKJV

- A picture of what God intends a New Testament church to look like
- **First** = “first gave themselves to the Lord” (in context this could be seen as their tithes)
- **Second** = “and then to us” (also could be seen as a collection for Paul’s team)
- **Third** = “And not only as we had hoped ...” the original expectation of the collection for Jerusalem

2 Corinthians 8:1-6 NKJV

- Twice in this passage “grace” is used
- Vs. 1, “We make known to you the the grace of God” ...
- Second: “favor of participation” = literally “charis” “koinonia” or “grace of fellowship”
- **This is GRACE in action.**
- God’s grace reproduced in the believers as they demonstrate Koinonia by *“participation, intimacy AND contribution”*

2 Corinthians 8:7-8 NKJV

“But as you abound in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us, see that you abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.”

- Not by commandment: motivation is gratitude
- Giving is equated with: faith, speech, knowledge, diligence, and LOVE
- It is a test of the sincerity of our love

2 Corinthians 8:7-8 NKJV

- “Abound in this GRACE also” - A third use of “grace”
- If you think “grace” doesn’t concern money, then you have to tear out this passage of the New Testament.
- Rather this is sanctification of money - taking what it commonly used for worldly, or materialistic purposes, and empowering us to use money to demonstrate God’s Grace!

2 Corinthians 8:9-12 NKJV

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. (10) And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; (11) but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.”

2 Corinthians 8:9-12 NKJV

- Again, Paul points to “grace” as demonstrated in the life of Christ
- Our motivation: the example of Jesus – Christ-like in every area – even our finances!
- Jesus is the ultimate example of giving and of the exponential return giving out of Grace produces!
- Willingness of mind and heart, and giving from what you have is all that is required.
- If you do NOT have anything, then there is no shame or guilt.

2 Corinthians 8:13-15 NKJV

For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; (14) but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack--that there may be equality. (15) As it is written, "HE WHO GATHERED MUCH HAD NOTHING LEFT OVER, AND HE WHO GATHERED LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

- New Testament giving compared to the gathering of Manna in the Old Testament.
 - As each individual gives and does "their share" the needs of all are met.
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2 Corinthians 9:5 NKJV

2 Corinthians 9:5 NKJV (5) Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

- **HEART ISSUE** - Giving must come out of gratitude, or else it will not produce the benefit God desires in the individual, or in the fellowship

2 Corinthians 9:6 NKJV

- “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”
- **Giving is to be proportional** – we give a proportion of what we receive
- **Return is exponential** – one seed = how many kernels? 6# of wheat = 50# grain
- One apple = snack, plant the seed = countless apples!

2 Corinthians 9:7 NKJV

(7) So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

- What is the PURPOSE IN YOUR HEART?
- To give the minimum? To “not go to hell?” To avoid penalty? - **NO**
- What RETURN do you want to see?
- What is your HEART MOTIVATION? How BIG can you DREAM???
- “not grudgingly or of necessity” - In this sense - you don't “have to” give.
- **Purpose to give:** “God loves a cheerful giver”

2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV

(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.

- Once again its about “GRACE”
- “GOD IS ABLE” - the foundation of our giving
- WE need to demonstrate our trust in His ABILITY to make us abound
- How do you do this? By giving as an expression of gratitude and faith in HIM.
- **Giving Proportionately** and **Expecting Exponential return**

2 Corinthians 9:9-15 NKJV

(9) As it is written: "HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR; HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER." (10) Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, (11) while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. (12) For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God,

2 Corinthians 9:9-15 NKJV

(13) while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, (14) and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. (15) Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

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