



# The Grace of Giving

## Giving Matters

### 1. Giving in the Old Testament:

- **Giving matters:** Cain & Abel. *Genesis 4* Cain brought an offering of some wonky veg. Abel brought the best of his flocks. God took pleasure in Abel's but not Cain's sacrifice.
- **Tithing:** Abraham & Melchizedek. *Genesis 14:18*. Abraham gave a tenth to the priest, prior to the law being established.
- **Law:** 3 tithes: For Levites (*Num 18:21*), for festival attendance (*Deut 12:17-18*), for the poor every 3 years (*Deut 26:12*).
- **Voluntary Offerings:** Tithes were recognised as belonging to God. But generosity was more than that. *Exodus 35:20* describes a voluntary offering where people gave as they felt stirred.

### 2. Giving in the New Testament:

New Testament is written in context of the old. *Luke 11:42* Jesus chastises the Pharisees for tithing in a legalistic manner while ignoring issues of justice.

Under the Old Covenant- your obedience brings God's blessing. (You do)

Under New covenant- Christ's obedience brings God's blessing. (He has done it)

But, while Jesus frees us from the requirements of the law, the new covenant is described as greater in every way. *Hebrews 8:6* He doesn't abolish the principle of Sabbath. He doesn't abolish the principles of giving. In fact it becomes even more wonderful.

## Evidence in the New Testament of Grace-filled giving:

*Acts 2:44* “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”

*Acts 4:32* “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.”

...“God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles feet and it was distributed to anyone who had need”

Although they lived in a unique era (many “refugee Christians” unable to return to their homes), it shows the power of God’s grace at work.

## Principles of Giving taught in the New Testament:

1. **Give Generously.** Jesus insisted that the story of a woman anointing his feet with expensive perfume worth a year’s wages should be told around the world.
2. **Give systematically.** *1 cor 16:2* “on the first day of every week, each of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with their income”
3. **Give voluntarily.** *2 cor 9:7* “Each one should give what they have decided in their heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion.”
4. **Give joyfully.** *2 Cor 9:7* “God loves a cheerful giver.”
5. **Give worshipfully.** Cornelius in *Acts 10*. “Your prayers and gifts to poor have come as a memorial before God”
6. **Give proportionately.** *1 Cor 16:2* “In keeping with your income”.
7. **Give sacrificially.** *2 cor 8:3* The Macedonian Christians were in extreme poverty, yet they dug deep to produce rich generosity.
8. **Give quietly.** *Matt 6:1-4* “don’t announce it with trumpets”

If I give more away won’t I be worse off? There is a scriptural principle that God blesses us financially and in other ways when we are generous. It’s a guiding principle of scripture.

*2 Cor 9:6* “Whoever sows sparingly reaps sparingly. Whoever sows generously will also reap generously”

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# Questions:

- Our attitude to money. How do we feel when we hear money talked about in church? Excited, energised or awkward and annoyed? Why?
- Dismantling the lie. How does *2 Cor 9:6* challenge our belief that if we give away we'll end up poorer?
- Old Testament giving. What principles can we learn from the stories of Cain & Abel, Abraham & Melchizedek?
- New covenant giving. If the new covenant is better than the old, do you agree our giving should reflect this? How?
- 8 Principles. Which of the 8 principles do you find easiest and hardest? Why?



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