

God's Way for Giving

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 - NCBC, January 23, 2022

Main Point: **God's grace produces intentional giving.**

- Giving is an act of worship (15:58-16:1)
 - Responsive
 - Thankful
 - Sacrificial
- Giving represents your priorities (16:2)
 - Regular
 - Continuous
 - Personal
- Giving reflects faith in God's provision (16:2)
 - Proportionate
 - Expectant
 - Joyful
- Giving reflects spiritual trustworthiness (16:3-4)
 - Prayerful
 - Careful
 - Strategic

Application: **Be intentional to worship God in generous giving.**

Opening Announcements:

GO Care Team Trip Report from recent trip to CJ family in Topaz, Africa.

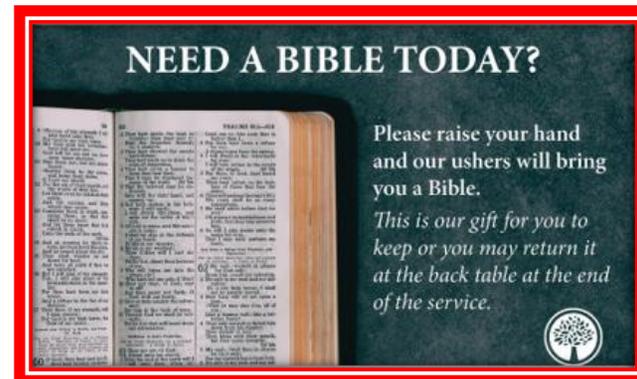
<<My Worth is Not in What I Own>>



May our souls be satisfied in Christ alone.

What a glorious anthem to sing together as we continue our worship on this first day of the week, where we've gathered to celebrate Jesus' resurrection and worship Him together.

Today we continue our January preaching series on key Spiritual Disciplines by opening our Bibles to **1 Corinthians chapter 16.**



If you do not have a Bible with you today, our ushers are coming now to give you a Bible. Please catch their

attention as they pass by and it would be our joy to give you a Bible to use this morning. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just simply return it after our service by placing it on the tables at the exits.



Today we're reading **1 Corinthians 16:1-4**. Please stand now in honor of God's Word as I read **1 Corinthians 16, verses 1-4**, from the ESV translation:

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ² On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. ³ And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Thus says the Lord. You may be seated.

¹ *Your Money Counts*, Howard Dayton, 8.

Let's Pray.

Have you ever noticed how much of the Scripture relates to our money? God's Word actually says more about money than it says about faith, heaven, hell, or prayer!

That's right. The Bible contains more than **2,350** verses on money and possessions.¹ **16 of Christ's 38 parables** deal with our use of money, wealth, or possessions. Nearly **1/3 of the Sermon on the Mount** addresses topics related to money. In fact **nearly 15% of Jesus' words in Scripture** are in relation to money and possessions!²

The biblical emphasis on money is at first surprising. If we didn't know better, we might be inclined to think that God really wants our money!

Is this true? Does the One who owns all the cattle on the hills, and all the gold in the hills, desperately depend on our sharing with Him for His own provision? Of course not.

But God does teach us something very important with his emphasis upon money and possessions in the Bible – that is, our stewardship of our money is a stewardship of worship. **You handle your money the way you do, because of who and what you worship.** Let me say that again. You handle your money the way you do, because of who and what you worship.

² *Money, Possessions, & Eternity*, Randy Alcorn, 17.

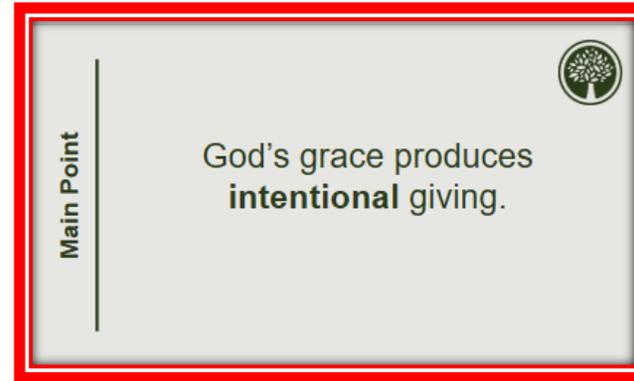
Worship drives your financial stewardship, just like your worship motivates every other aspect of your life and relationships. Worship motivates your earning, spending, saving, and giving. **Your credit score is a reflection of your worship priorities.**

In other words, **an honest review of your financial records will expose your functional god.**

Jesus taught it this way, *“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*³ He affirmed that no man can serve two masters.... *“You cannot serve God and money”*⁴. In **Luke 16:11** Christ even taught that *“if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true [spiritual] riches to you?”*

Now we could many weeks studying all that God says about our financial stewardship, and still not exhaust God’s instruction on this practical aspect of our worship. So this morning, I want to just focus in on a very specific expression of our financial stewardship. Our giving. This morning we open our Bibles to **1 Corinthians 16** and there discover that,

³ Matthew 6:21



God's grace produces intentional giving.

Faithful stewards trust God’s provision as they worship Him in generous giving. Saved people share. Grace produces generosity.

Now some of you just checked out of this message. Because for you – no matter how much you might like the idea of being able to give to others – this idea seems about as far-fetched as,



being able to drive this tractor out of its miry predicament.

⁴ Matthew 6:24

You're literally buried in bills, financial obligations, and debt. Any effort you've put into improving your financial situation just seems like you're spinning your wheels, and only sinking deeper into financial quicksand.

But church... this morning my prayer is to help you find,

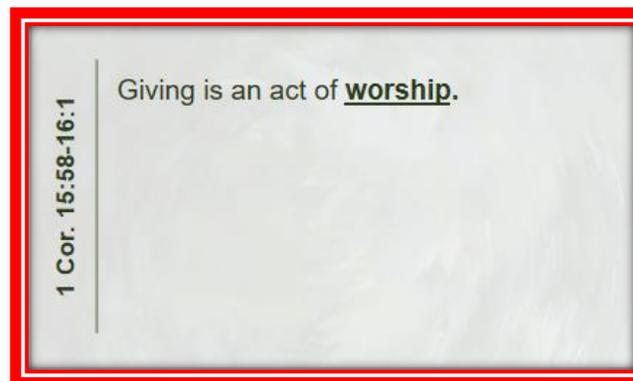


the shovel that's been present in this photo all along.

I want to help you see that a grace-produced practice of giving is actually a great place to start when thinking about getting your financial house back in order. Sure it's hard work. But if you can get your giving right – you'll get your worship right. And when you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, Jesus promises that all your other needs for food, clothing, and shelter will be provided for you.⁵

When God's grace is reigning in your heart, intentional giving towards others will be the result.

⁵ Matthew 6:31-33.



Because the first lesson we learn from our text is that **Giving is an act of worship (15:58-16:1).**

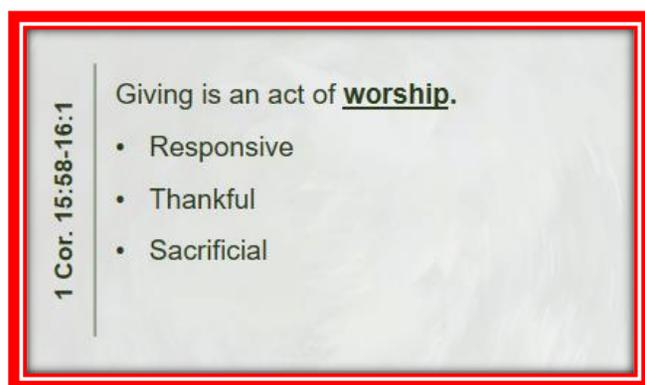
As we catch up to Paul in **chapter 16 of 1 Corinthians**, Paul here is answering another question from the Gentile believers in Corinth. This is the sixth time in the letter that he says, "*Now concerning....*" and introduces a new subject to his Corinthian readers.

He now takes up the topic of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. He sees no conflict between the discussion of the collection of the saints and the resurrection which he just concluded.

Notice the end of **chapter 15**: Paul concludes this swelling crescendo of glorying in the Gospel of Christ, and he charges the Corinthians to "*therefore, [in light of these glorious truths of the believer's victory in Christ] my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*"

In other words, Paul is calling all Christians to respond to the glories of Christ's resurrection by *abounding in the work of the Lord*. And now, in **chapter 16**, Paul transitions to the next topic of giving, which is just one particular way that God's children are called to abound in God's work in response to the resurrection of Jesus.

This means then that God intends for our giving to be:



- Responsive
- Thankful, and
- Sacrificial

Truly all worship is responsive, thankful, and sacrificial, and the worship of giving should be no different.

So – if you give to the Lord merely out of duty or obligation or legalistic guilt – it's not worship. It's just a

⁶ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:3

⁷ Proverbs 3:9.

⁸ This principle explains why God created the “forbidden tree” of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the beginning (Genesis 2:17). Apart from

mere transfer of funds. And according to **1 Cor 13:3** such giving gains nothing.⁶

But God's grace produces *intentional* generosity. Because a natural response to receiving so much from God is to sincerely and sacrificially give it all back to Him!

Having received so much ourselves, our hearts respond in cheerful thanksgiving by sacrificially sharing our wealth with others!⁷

Now just a word on the sacrificial aspect of worship. Love is the proper and right motivation for all of our worship, but I would submit to you that where there is no sacrifice there is no love.⁸ This is true in marriage. And it's true in our personal worship of God. True love requires sacrifice. This is why in **2 Samuel 24** King David refused to offer a burnt sacrifice to the Lord that cost him nothing.⁹ Love always requires sacrifice.

So don't be deceived by cheap worship which costs you nothing. Be intentional to truly worship God in your giving. Know the joy of sacrificial worship – for the glories of Christ's resurrection compel us to abound in such God-glorifying love.

Now quickly, I want you to notice one more important truth from **verse 1 of chapter 16** before we move to our

Adam and Eve's sacrifice of their own desires to eat from what was forbidden, they would have no way to express their worshipping love to God.

⁹ 2 Samuel 24:24.

next point. Notice these directions are to be universally applied,

As I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.

In other words, this worship of giving is expected in all the churches. This is not just something that was culturally specific to the Greek believers in Corinth. The principles provided in this passage are to govern the collections for the saints for all time in God's church.

So giving God's way is an act of worship, and it is to be expected as a common element of worship for all God's churches through the world.

Next Paul teaches that,



Giving represents your priorities (16:2)

In many ways money represents us. How we earn, save, spend, and invest our money all represents us. Our money reveals our treasures. It's a medium of exchange,

a means of transferring value. So it's only natural that our giving will honestly reflect what we treasure and value most.

God's grace generates intentional giving towards biblical priorities. And God's instructions for giving first prioritize the needs of our own families, then other's spiritual needs, and then other's physical needs.

If you looked back through your giving records for the last year, what priorities does your generosity reflect?



Perhaps this chart can help us better understand God's priorities for biblical generosity:

First Timothy 5:8 and 5:16 both teach that families have the first responsibility to care for their own family members, before the church is to be called. So if your extended family has a need, the first biblical priority for your giving is to help care for them.

This brings up an important side note regarding the right definition of financial stewardship. You see – sometimes

in the church today stewardship just degenerates into “the protection of assets.” So people who are savers or who are “stingy and tight” feel real good about biblical stewardship. But that kind of attitude is more rooted in fear and control than worship and love.

The true definition of biblical stewardship is sacrificial generosity. And biblical generosity starts at home. So if you’re not being generous with those closest to you because you think God wants you to give it all away to others – you’re missing the point.¹⁰ The biblical priority for generosity always starts at home – just like all other evidences of God’s grace in our lives.

So after caring for the needs of our own extended family, **1 Timothy 5:17** and **Galatians 6:6** both teach the priority of supporting our spiritual leaders – those who preach and teach God’s Gospel in our own local church.

Then **1 Corinthians 9** and **Philippians 4** teach the priorities of supporting the non-local work of proclaiming the Gospel around the world.

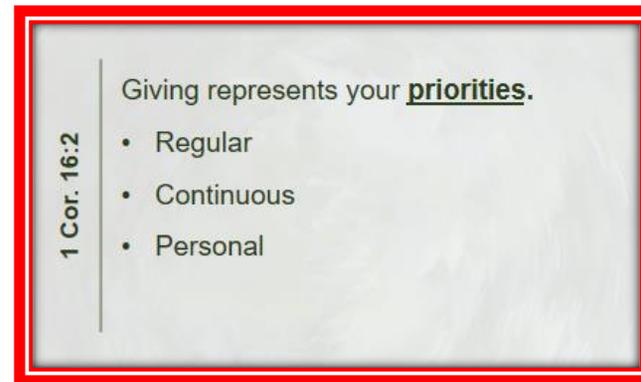
In short, funding spiritual needs are a higher biblical priority than funding physical needs.

But that is not an excuse for neglecting the physical needs of the Believers or Unbelievers...for there are many biblical commands for God’s children to share with the poor. And our generosity towards those with real needs is a powerful testimony of God’s transforming grace.

¹⁰ C.f. Mark 7:6-13.

Now this is not a legalistic order – but it’s a biblical priority that should be reflected in the big picture of our worship as giving. Because giving represents our priorities.

And **verse 2** makes it pretty clear... intentional giving is going to be:



- Regular
- Continuous, and
- Personal

Notice Paul says in **verse 2**,

On the first day of every week...

Their giving should be regular and continuous. He was not asking for a large one-time gift or collection; rather he was commending a practice of giving where each Christian would continually bring some gift every Sunday in order to store up for the upcoming need. It was good

to remember the poor among the saints on a regular basis, and setting a portion aside each week made it easier to give a larger amount.

This is why we encourage giving as part of our weekly worship gatherings here at New Castle Bible Church. Before Covid, we used to pass a plate. Now we collect our tithes and offerings using the tables at the exits.

But even though our mode of collection has changed, our priority of weekly giving for God's people remains a constant.

We gather together every Sunday to worship – to give ourselves entirely to God and celebrate all that He has given to us. And since the treasure of our hearts is represented by our money, our regular worship together must include opportunities for us to sacrifice financially.

Note this isn't waiting until the end of the year and seeing how much I have left... and then determining how much I can afford to give away... but it's a regular and continuous priority of faith.

And notice...each person who is a part of the church is one who should be participating in this exercise of giving.

... *each of you is to put something aside...*

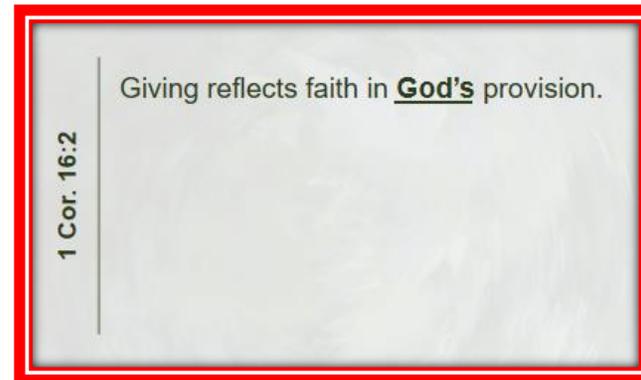
In other words... No worshipper should abstain from personally participating in a regular pattern of giving.

And when the text speaks of putting the gifts aside... this is speaking of putting the gifts into a common treasury, and not in every one's individual home. So the prescribed place of the collection is the church, as a part of its weekly worship gatherings.

So... giving God's way is motivated by worship, occurs regularly and continuously, and reflects Gospel priorities.

But still you may say ... but where's the money going to come from? I'm already short on funds... how can I justify giving anything away right now?

And that brings us to the rest of **verse 2**, where we learn



that **Giving reflects faith in God's provision (16:2)**

The phrase in **verse 2** is...

As he may prosper...

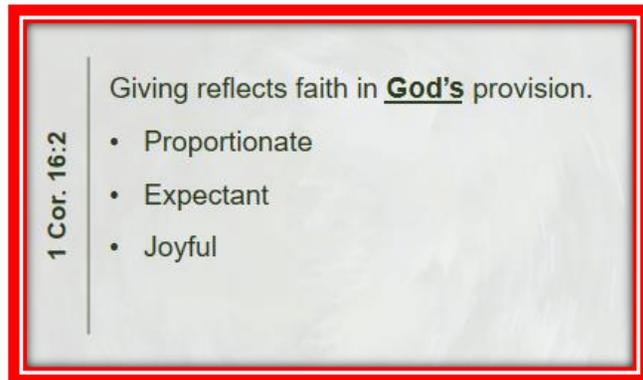
Meaning that Paul intends that the amount of every week's gift be in direct proportion to each man's success

for that week. Back in Greece, they got paid at the end of every day. Maybe you only get paid once a month. But the principle still applies...the amount of one's worship gift should be proportionate to the amount of profit God has provided.

The more God has blessed you, the more you give.

Note Paul is not soliciting a tithe. This collection is not an oppressive tax which requires rich and poor alike to give the same amount. The measure of God's blessing to the Corinthians is to be the measure of their return to Him.

This means that our giving should be



- Proportionate
- Expectant, and
- Joyful

Church – studies commonly demonstrate that people with higher incomes are significantly less generous as a

¹¹ *The Treasure Principle*, Randy Alcorn, 30.

percentage of what they earn. I saw one report years ago that reported families with an annual income of \$20K or less gave away over 10% of their income, but families making over \$100K only averaged giving of 2%. Why?

Because the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke out our worship, and we live as if God prospers us to raise our *standard of living*, rather than our *standard of giving*.

The Macedonian Christians in **2 Corinthians 8:2** teach us that “giving is not a luxury of the rich, but the privilege of the poor.”¹¹ Because when we worship God with our giving – we’re investing in the heavenly. We’re sending it on ahead. As Jim Elliot is credited for saying, “He is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

Of course giving reflects faith in God's provision. But all our money is God's after all, right? It's not like God only claims ownership of the percentage we determine to give away. No, Scripture is clear that God owns everything. We are just managing his funds. Do you live like that?

I still remember one day when someone of great financial means approached me with a checkbook, and said, Kevin – you are regularly interacting with people who have legitimate needs. I've set up this account at the bank, and given you authority to write checks of any amount from this account to sincerely help others. I trust you to be wise with how you invest this money. But be generous. And whenever you get low on funds, let's get

together. I'd love to hear how God is using this to encourage and provide for others, and I'll make sure you have the funds you need.

Now if that was you, how would you respond?

I'll be honest... At first I was a bit timid about it all. I didn't want to make a mistake. But then I realized the tremendous joy of my position. I could pray, and God's Spirit would help me to know how to best use these funds for His greater glory. That was a thrilling assignment!

Wouldn't you love to be given that opportunity?

Church – don't miss this. You have. Everything that God has given you is His... but He's given it to you to use it for His glory and eternal purposes.

As R. G. LeTourneau was fond of saying, "You can't out-give God. I shovel it out, and God shovels it back, but God has a bigger shovel."

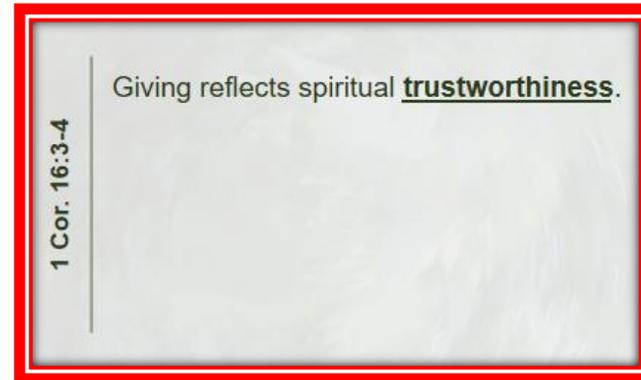
So don't live by a law or by duty... but intentionally pursue generosity according to all that God has entrusted to you.

Now there is some false teaching in some circles today that teach us to give what we do not have, or to actually give beyond our means. Sometimes this tradition teaches us to "plant a seed" and give money that we don't have so that God will prosper us in return.

¹² Luke 16:10-13

But loved ones, to give more than you have, or to put yourself in debt or to be unable to pay your bills is not what God wants from you. God desires for you to be generous according to what He has given you – not according to what you don't have.

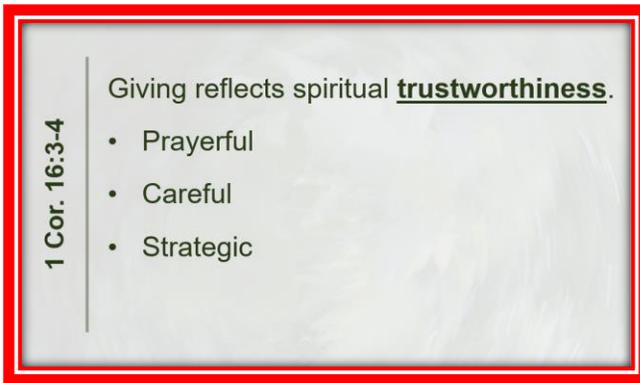
Finally, let's recognize that,



your **Giving reflects spiritual trustworthiness (16:3-4).**

Faithful money stewardship demonstrates that God can trust us to be faithful with true spiritual riches.¹²

To say it another way – we must be intentional to make sure our financial giving is,



- Prayerful
- Careful, and
- Strategic.

Notice how intentionally Paul approached this matter with the Corinthians in **verses 3-4**.

He did not want there to be any collections for the Jerusalem saints while he was present with them. He wanted the collections done without any impropriety or perceived manipulation. Paul wanted the giving to be a private matter where he did not know who gave what.

In **verses 3-4**, Paul gives careful and specific instructions about how the collection would be handled and delivered.

He wanted the gift delivered by men who had proven their dependability. Paul himself would endorse them by letter. If possible, Paul may even accompany their delivery of the gift.

In the final analysis – he wanted to ensure the collected funds would safely reach their intended destination.

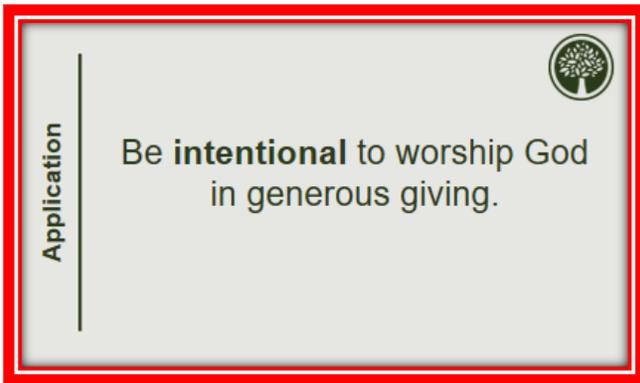
What can we learn from this today? God’s grace produces intentional giving that is prayerful, careful, and strategic.

You don’t need me to tell you that there are many “wolves” in our world who selfishly prey upon the gullibility of Christians.

Pray about your giving, church. Plan out your regular giving. Like every other part of your spiritual worship, sacrificial generosity benefits from prayerful forethought and intentional planning. Most people who do not plan out their giving are surprised at the end of the year by how small of a percentage they have actually invested in eternal treasure.

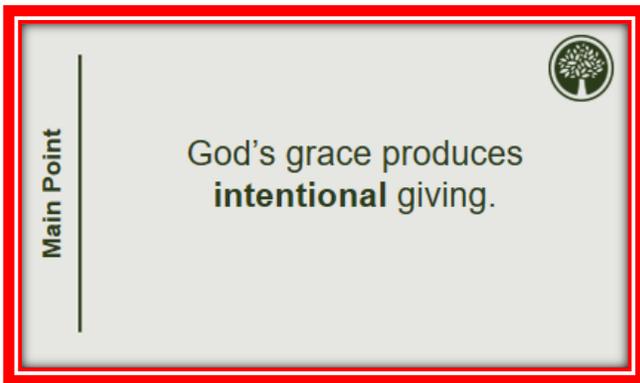
After all, all giving is really a strategic investment isn’t it? That’s why the discussion about biblical priorities is so relevant. Every club and special focus group in our nation greedily clamors for a piece of our generosity. And of course you can’t give to everything. So pray, be intentional, and make strategic investments with God’s money. And then joyfully watch as He brings Himself glory by entrusting you with everlasting riches for all of eternity.

God’s grace produces intentional giving. So let me ask you, what’s your plan for generous worship in 2022?



Are you willing to **be intentional to worship God in generous giving this year?**

This is not a competition. And it's not about guilt or law. It's all about grace.



And **God's grace produces intentional giving.**

Giving is an act of worship. Your giving represents who you are, and what you value. And of course, your giving is a demonstration of faith in God's provision. For your

¹³ Acts 20:35.

faithfulness with your earthly wealth reflects your trustworthiness for spiritual treasures as well.

God has grown Jody and me in so many ways in this aspect of our own worship.

When we moved to Los Angeles to attend seminary, it was because we were convinced God was calling us to get equipped in the areas of our gifts. But the cost of living in LA at the time was exorbitant. Our rent alone was \$1500/month. We had some savings that could float us for a while, but certainly not enough to get us through the 4 year program. We believed God would provide everything we needed to fulfill His calling in our lives...and so that's why we continued to financially share with our local church and others who had needs throughout our entire time in school. Literally we couldn't afford not to trust God through our giving.

Even today looking back on those four years, we marvel at the supernatural provision of God's grace to us. It never did add up on paper. There's no explanation for how we returned home after 4 years in LA without debt. None, except for God's grace. And having been such a recipient of God's grace, how could we not share it freely with others. For it is far more blessed to give, than to receive.¹³

Church – your worth is not in what you own. Jesus' sacrifice set you free from materialism. His sacrifice set you free from consumerism. His sacrifice set you free from fear, and He gave you a new heart and a new spirit

of power, of love, and sound mind. Grace has made you new.

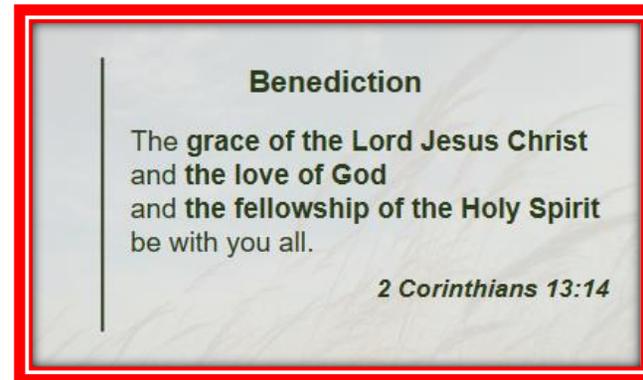
Do you personally know God's grace today?



If so, give God's way. He is worthy of your worship.

Let's pray. **Closing prayer.**

Closing Song – <<Jesus Thank You>>



*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
2 Corinthians 13:14*



Recommended Resources for God's Way for Giving:

- *Proverbs 3:9, 15:1, 17:1, 22:1*
- *Ecclesiastes 2:24-26*
- *1 Chronicles 29:11-12*
- *Malachi 3:10-11*
- *Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 10:8*
- *Luke 6:38*
- *Romans 12:8*
- *1 Corinthians 13:3*
- *2 Corinthians 8-9, especially 9:6-8*
- *Galatians 6:6*
- *1 Timothy 5:8,16; 6:6-10,17-19*
- *Hebrews 13:5,16*

- *The Treasure Principle, by Randy Alcorn*
- *Money, Possessions, & Eternity, by Randy Alcorn*

- *Crown Financial Ministries - www.crown.org*

Growing Deeper: Life Group Discussion Questions

1. *Is it easy to grasp that God owns everything we possess? Why, or why not?*
2. *What can we learn from the attitudes of the Macedonian believers in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5? Is it possible to excel in the worship of giving without these attitudes (c.f. 2 Cor 8:7 & 1 Cor 13:3)?*
3. *Consider the meaning of each phrase in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. What is one principle from this passage you want to personally apply in your own life?*
4. *What are the benefits and dangers of a systematic giving plan?*
5. *What specific steps are you willing to take to implement any needed changes in your worship of giving?*