**The Grace Way of Giving, No. 3 – BD34-01**

We are looking at the subject of the Christian doctrine of the grace way of giving. This is the third in the series. It might seem to many of you that teaching the doctrine of giving would require no more than perhaps one or two sermons. Well, if it were my goal simply to give you an inspirational challenge, that would be true. But since I do not preach to your emotions, but rather I’m preaching to your minds, to that part of your soul that God has provided for you to receive doctrinal instruction, it’s going to take more than a few sessions to explain what the Bible has to say about the Christian doctrine of grace giving. This is particularly true because this doctrine is so fouled up in the thinking of believers and unbelievers in our day.

However, I am pleased by the response thus far that many of you have expressed to me in one way or another on this series. We often expect that when we talk about the matter of how to handle our money relative to God’s work, there is going to be a certain undercurrent of resistance and rebellion and antagonism. However, I think all those of you who have attended this church for any amount of time know that if there is anything we have a grace position on, it certainly is you and your money, and giving to the Lord’s work. So I do appreciate the responses that you have given.

Please turn to 2 Corinthians 8. The reason it’s going to take us a few Sundays to cover this subject is because we’re trying to explain it on this basic area of instruction concerning grace giving that we have in the New Testament which is 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. We have already looked at the first two verses. From these verses we found that only believers should be urged to give money to the Lord’s work. This is a priesthood function and he is speaking to brethren. Unbelievers are not in the Christian priesthood. Therefore they cannot give.

Secondly we found that Christian giving requires grace orientation in the soul to motivate—not external pleas and pressures. This is the first principle that you should have learned from this passage concerning Christian giving, that it requires grace orientation in the soul to motivate. You have to learn to deal the way God deals with us in this age of grace. You have to get over the business of holding grudges against people. You have to realize that God forgave us and you forgive others. You have to get over the concept that what you do merits some reward or recognition. That’s not grace. Whatever you do merits nothing. Grace gives without expectation of return. The whole realm of all that’s included in being grace oriented is basic to being able to give as a Christian. Until you have this grace attitude, then you will not give as a Christian. But grace orientation will enable you to give in trying circumstances, and to do it as did these Macedonian Christians, with great joy because there’s an inner happiness in your soul. These Macedonian Christians were passing through some economically hard times. They were very threatened by the Roman government. Yet in spite of their poverty, they were generous in their giving, and they gave this as the result of responding to the grace of God. They were grace oriented, no strings attached. They gave in a grace way.

So giving in response to any other motivation than the fact of the directions that God gives us for giving is false giving. In other words, if you give out of an emotional response, out of an emotional appeal, it’s not grace. It’s giving in response to something else or someone else. You’re giving in response to that pleader, the one who is appealing to you, the one who is moving your emotions, but you’re not giving in response to God because if you give in response to God, it will be in response to doctrine.

So we’re finding that the first principle of grace giving is that it requires grace orientation and an inner happiness in the soul. Many doctrines you are going to find are related in these two chapters to the doctrine of grace giving. Grace giving requires substantial spiritual maturity in other areas before you can come to this.

We pick the story up at verse 3. Here is the second principle for grace giving. This is the principle of willingness. Paul says, “For to their power I bear witness, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves.” The extent of the Macedonian giving “to their power.” The word “power” is the Greek work “dunamis.” This simply means “ability.” They gave to the limits of their ability. They gave according to their ability. This is what the original language says. This refers, of course, to their financial ability in view of the particular trying economic circumstances that were surrounding them at this time. It could be said of the Macedonian Christians that they were giving to the limits of their economic ability. What we have to determine is what our economic ability level is. Our ability level may rise and fall over the years, but it is up to us before God to determine what our ability level is. It is not determined by some standard percentage such as the tithe. That’s what we’re trying to get away from—to overcome this false concept that ability is indicated by 10% of my income. That is not your ability level. Your ability level is determined by the overall extent of your income and your possessions relative to your needs for survival, and from then on it’s service for the Lord.

The apostle Paul here is referring also to their souls’ condition. God supplied to these Macedonian Christians the money, but He also supplied a soul condition for grace giving. So what we have here, in effect, he says, “For (according to) the measure of their ability, I bear witness.” The witness “bear witness” is the Greek word “martureo.” This word is the kind of a word that you use in a court of law. It’s someone making a solemn testimony as under oath. This word is the source of our English word “martyr.” A martyr is a person who makes a testimony on the solemn oath of his own life. This is in the present tense in the Greek which means that Paul is constantly going about and able to give this testimony about the Macedonian Christians and their giving. He’s describing how a certain group of churches, among which was the church at Thessalonica, the church at Berea, and the church at Philippi; he’s describing how these Christians gave on the particular occasion of a collection which was being taken to relieve the poverty that had overtaken the saints in Jerusalem, and the dire circumstances in which the Jerusalem Jewish Christians found themselves. He is describing how the Macedonian Christians reacted to this and how they proceeded to handle their money for this collection because what they did was grace giving in the classical sense of the word. So we learned a great deal by reading through these two chapters and seeing what these people did and what Paul had to say about it.

So constantly he’s using them as an example. He chose to do this. It’s in the active voice. Paul chose to do this because he had been a witness of their poverty, of their orientation to God’s grace, of the inner happiness, and of their offerings which they gave. He was witness to all these things. So it’s hard today to find congregations of whom it can be testified that we can constantly say of them that they gave according to their ability level.

It is my personal conviction that a work which is sounding forth true doctrine is a work that is functioning in God’s order of things. It’s doing the job and it is a work that God will provide and care for. The way He does that is by bringing together a certain number of people that God in His sovereignty determines that work should have—no more and no less. For some it is few. For some it is many, but God determines the level. And He brings a certain group of people together—specific individuals. And as some, for one reason or another, move off, another is brought in. Over the years, it’s like a breathing organism. Some move out but always others move in. And always there is a basic number of believers who constitute the supply line. Within the incomes of those believers, God provides enough income to carry on the needs of that work. If the church cannot pay its bills, and it is teaching sound doctrine, and it is majoring in doctrine teaching, it is never because there is not enough money in the congregation. It is because somebody is robbing God. It is because somebody is living off the fat back of an expanded income. It is because somebody is waiting to get rich enough to start giving. It is because somebody is waiting to get around someday to doing. It is because the soul condition is so defective that a person cannot rise to give. That’s why there is not enough money. It is never because God hasn’t brought the people together who have the money. That is never true if the church is doing its business.

Yet it is hard very often to find a church of whom you could say, even those who are paying their bills with ease, that these people like the Macedonians are giving up to their ability. You can’t imagine. Your mind just goes wild trying to dream and imagine what could be possible if the people of God ever came around to the point where they realized that the bond is over their head, their days are numbers, the rapture and eternity are at hand, and they started acted accordingly with their money—you can’t imagine. Your mind can’t grasp what the possibilities are for the advancement of the Lord’s work—the doors that are opened but we can’t walk through because somebody is holding onto God’s money. This is a great thing that Paul could say of these poverty-ridden Macedonian Christians—“they gave up to their ‘dunamis’ (to their ability level).” And Paul said, “I can witness to this. I can give you a solemn testimony that this is true. I have been an eye witness.”

As if that isn’t enough, Paul says, “I’ll tell you something more about these Macedonian Christians that reflects the quality of grace giving.” In verse 3 it says, “Yea and beyond their power.” Again it uses the same word “dunamis” for “power.” And they “gave beyond their ability.” Now what does that mean? Well it means that they came up to their economic level of giving, giving what they economically were really able to give and still sustain the necessities of life. But they crossed the line, of all things, of going beyond giving even that which was required for the necessities of life. They cast beyond what they could do to what required giving up something. That’s what’s known as sacrificial giving. They went beyond what they could do to the point of giving in such a way they had to give up something in order to do this. Now that is sacrificial giving.

It is ridiculous for us to talk about sacrificial giving for somebody to be stashing up $20,000 to $30,000 in the bank and giving a $1,000 a year to the Lord as sacrificial giving, or even if it was given per month. That is not sacrificial giving and you ought not to insult God or yourself by calling it that. These Christians at Macedonia knew what it was to give sacrificially.

In the latter part of verse 3 we see their attitude in this giving up to their ability and beyond their ability. It is described as “willing of themselves.” This is one word in the Greek. It is the Greek word, “authairetos.” This word means “self-chosen” or “voluntarily.” What it implies is that this decision to give to the ability level and beyond was a decision that each of these believers made on his own. Nobody got up and gave them an emotional pitch plea. Nobody got up and berated them. Nobody got up and envisioned how the poor saints were dropping in the streets in Jerusalem out of starvation. They gave … voluntarily on the basis of the understanding of doctrine so that they knew what God expected of them and what God would want them to do. The Macedonians acted on positive volition relative to their giving in accordance with their own standards. Grace giving demands freedom of choice, and that’s the point of this verse. If you are giving by grace, it is imperative that you have absolute freedom in giving. When you have that freedom to give by grace, you will be in a position to give and to give even beyond to a sacrificial level.

So here are some factors to note: 1) All giving by Christians in the church age must be voluntary. It cannot be under human pressure in appeal or technique. It cannot be on the basis of competition.

I was in a church one time where I saw a pastor take up the offering by walking up and down the aisles. It was an evening service. He said, “Now I’m going to collect the offering.” He announced it. “I’m going to get ready for the offering. Get ready for the offering.” Then he walked up and down the aisles and people personally handed him the money. He kept building it up in his fist. And as everybody gave something, he would call out, “One dollar. Five dollars here. Ten dollars here. Fifty cents?” And up and down the aisles he went, collecting. He had two fistfuls of money and that was the offering, and he announced it piece by piece. Now that’s competition. That’s gimmickry. That is not voluntary, and it is not private.

To impose a tithe as an obligation upon all believers is not voluntary giving. That’s what’s wrong with the tithe. It cannot be voluntary. If you want to start with a tithe or move on a tithe because you come to it as some conviction of your own before the Lord, that’s alright, but don’t do it on the basis of some obligation. There’s no place for pride as a member of the tither’s club. I find this amusing among church members when they love to refer to themselves as the tither’s group which means that they’re the ones who are carrying the Lord’s work. When I hear somebody say that, I know that person is disoriented toward grace, he has never learned what grace giving is, and he is going to get a big surprise when it comes to rewards for his giving because God is not conned by that kind of strings-attached giving. Anytime you call yourself part of the tither’s club, implying that you’re the supporting backbone, you have stepped out of line because you and I are nothing and God is everything. When you and I are no longer here, somebody better will be in our place. For this reason, Christians are not to give from some emotional motivation but from the doctrinal orientation in their souls so that it may be voluntary.

Also, grace giving is part of a Christian’s priesthood. We must note that. Therefore it must be done in privacy. You can’t be your own priest unless you are able to do that privately. You can’t be a priest in front of other people. What you give is therefore between you and the Lord and it is nobody’s business. It is nobody’s business what you give. You and I as Christians are to give because we commemorate the grace of God to us, but it is not because we’re going to bribe God, because we’re going to get merit, or because we’re going to secure praise. It’s done privately as unto the Lord. This is why Satan seeks to destroy voluntary giving and private giving because that’s giving that God does not bless, if it is not voluntary and if it is not private.

Christians are not to pass on from giving according to ability to sacrificial giving beyond their ability as a result of emotional appeals. It is desirable that there are times when we go beyond our ability to sacrificial giving, but not as the result of an emotional appeal. Sacrificial giving is also to be an expression of freewill as it was with the Macedonian Christians. Sacrificial giving is the product of being grace-oriented. Alerting believers to the needs of the Lord’s work is legitimate, but hitting up the emotions is using coercion, and that is not legitimate. Grace giving is spontaneous. It is inspired by doctrine.

Now verse 4 shows us the evidence of freewill giving on the part of these Macedonian Christians. Paul says, “Beseeching us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift.” The word “beseeching” in the Greek is “deomai.” This word means “to beg.” What these Christian did, now mind you: Here is a group of church members that are begging a spiritual leader to receive their offerings. When was the last time you came up to me and begged me to receive an offering from you? I have a hard time remembering and perhaps you do too.

But here was a church where they were begging for Paul to take their money and to use it to help that situation in Jerusalem. They were beseeching, and it’s present tense in the Greek which means they were doing it all the time. They just kept on and kept on and kept on, asking for an opportunity to give. It’s in the middle voice which means that the begging that they themselves did to be permitted to share in this offering was going to be a benefit and a blessing to them. They were begging that they themselves personally should be permitted to share in this. They weren’t just begging for the congregation in general. They were begging for themselves personally because that’s where the blessing was going to come. It says they did this “with much entreaty.” That means they made strong appeals to Paul to be permitted to have a part in this contribution.

In the Greek sentence, this expression “with much entreaty” comes first because that’s the thing the Holy Spirit is stressing. He’s emphasizing that they asked earnestly, “with much entreaty,” they were begging to have a part in this offering. Now it may be that Paul was reluctant to press upon the Macedonians that they should have a part in this Jerusalem contribution because of their poverty situation that the Macedonians themselves already were in. It’s understandable how Paul would have been hesitant to press upon them to have a share. When he got over to Corinth where the wealthy people were, he didn’t mind championing and urging them to have a substantial share in aiding the Jerusalem saints.

But maybe because of his hesitance to press upon the Macedonians to have a part, they said, “Look, Paul. We’ve had hard times. The Roman army has knocked the fool out of us. They have undermined our economic situation. They have burned our property and taken our possessions. All that is true, but we still have enough to get along on, and we can still share out of what we have, and we can give a little more than what we have, and God will probably come through for us because those people in Jerusalem don’t have anything. And furthermore, we’re Gentiles. The heritage we have spiritually is because of those Jewish Christians who were there in the first place hacking out the basics of the church. And we want to take care of them now.”

So they begged with much entreaty to have a part. It says that “we would receive the gift.” This is a wrong translation. It should not be that “we would receive the gift.” Actually the gift is the word “charis” or grace, and it means “favor.” What it should say is that “they begged with much entreaty beseeching us the favor.” They were asking that Paul would do them the favor of taking their money and letting them share in the offering.

So we would say, “with much imploring, begging us for the favor, take upon us the fellowship.” The word “fellowship” is the Greek word “koinonia.” This word means “fellowship” and it has the idea of “taking part in” or “a partnership.” “They were begging us for the favor and the partnership of the ministering.” This is a Greek word which means “service.” Here it refers to the particular priestly service—as Christian priests, the service of the sacrifice of substance. The Greek word is “diakonia” from which we get the word “deacon.”

So what they were saying was, “with earnest pleading, give us the opportunity, do us the favor, of letting us have a share in the fellowship, the service, the priestly ministry of ministering to the saints” which refers to these destitute believers in Jerusalem for whose relief Paul was gathering this offering. So we may say, “with much imploring, begging us for the favor and partnership of ministering to the saints.”

Now there are some factors to note here: 1) Christian giving is a privilege which we will eagerly pursue. If we do not eagerly pursue Christian giving, it is a sign that there is trouble in the soul. 2) There is a great eternal reward for sharing financially in ministries to spiritual and physical needs of believers. There is great eternal reward sharing in your finances to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of other believers. 3) Pressure methods of giving are incompatible with the joy of freewill service. 4) Christian giving thus is a favor, which we get from the Greek word “charis,” and a priestly service, which we get from the Greek word “diakonia.”

Now let’s look at the fifth verse. This brings us to another principle. We have seen, first of all, at the beginning of chapter of 8 the principle of giving by grace orientation and inner happiness. We have found a second principle of willingness in giving. If you do not give willingly, that’s the problem you need to work on. Don’t grit your teeth or give yourself a speech or read a book and tell yourself you have to do this. Instead, go to the Lord and say, “God, there is something wrong with me. I can go week after week and never give to the Lord and it doesn’t bother me a flip. I can have a great deal and I’ll give some modest regular amount. It doesn’t bother me at all.” There’s trouble in the soul if it is not willing giving.

**2 Corinthians 8:5**

A third principle here is the principle of soul giving. In 2 Corinthians 8:5, he says, “And this they did (this kind of willing giving to their level and beyond their ability) not as we hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.” Here was something beyond expectation. The words, “and this not as we hoped,” should be, “not even as we hoped.” The Macedonian Christians not only insisted on sending a gift out of their poverty, but they did it in a way that Paul had not anticipated. He says, “We hoped,” and the word “hoped” here means “to expect.” It’s the Greek word “elpizo.” This means to expect something. Paul says, “There was a certain point when I went to receive the collection that I expected something and I found that they had given their money, and given it generously, but then I discovered that they gave something much more than just that.” What was it that they gave? “First gave themselves.” The word “first” emphasizes the person rather than the gift. Literally, it says, “themselves they gave first.”

Now the pronoun here, “themselves,” precedes the verb. Usually in Greek it follows, but the reason it precedes here is to emphasize the fact of the person. The person is the thing that God is first concerned about in giving, not the gift. The first step in grace giving is to give your soul to the Lord. There’s a definite distinction in this verse made between a believer and his money. Unbelievers can give money. That’s no problem. Any unbeliever can give money to the Lord’s work, but an unbeliever cannot give himself. He cannot give his soul to God. If soul giving does not precede money giving, it’s not grace giving. That’s the principle. First you must give your soul, then you can give your money under grace.

The word “gave” here refers to that point of time when these people went positive toward doctrine. Their soul came into phase with what God thought. It’s active, meaning they did it by their personal choice. They committed themselves to whatever God’s plan was for their lives. This prior giving of themselves to the Lord resulted in their money gift. Because they had given their souls, the money followed easily. Now Paul expected the money, but he rejoiced most of all when he discovered when he discovered how these people in the Macedonian churches had given their souls to the Lord. The money and the amount in grace giving is really of secondary importance. The gift of the soul is the primary thing.

**The Soul**

So this explains why the Macedonians were generous. They gave their souls to the Lord. Now what does that mean? Well, here’s your soul. There are several facets to your soul. If you’re going to give your soul to the Lord, it means that the parts of your soul are going to have some relationship to the Lord. Here is, first of all, the fact that in your soul is self-awareness. Now what are you preoccupied with? Well, if you give your soul to the Lord, you are preoccupied with Christ. You’re not preoccupied with securing praise or giving your money to achieve some human good. A lot of Christian giving is rat hole giving because it’s going to achieve some human good that money from unbelievers can just as well achieve. But when you have your soul given to the Lord, your self-awareness with be preoccupation with Jesus Christ—not for securing or for achieving your human good.

You have your mind. What will be the status of your mind? Your mind will be filled with doctrine so that you will be guided to worthy investments of the Lord’s money. The only true giving that comes by right motivation. The only true motivation is God’s principles of doctrine. When your mind is filled with that, and your mind is running your soul, then you will be giving in a way that is pleasing to the Lord, and nobody will have to push you to do it. But until your mind is filled with doctrine, you’re going to be kind of a sea as to how to give.

You have emotions in your soul. If your emotions are given to the Lord, you will rejoice to respond to money that your mind directs you to give. And you won’t be depending upon some appeals for funds made on some false motivation to your emotions. That frustrates grace giving. So you want to beware of somebody who gets up and gives you some tear-jerking story approach because when he does that, he is hitting the emotional part of your soul for giving. No preacher or spiritual leader ever has the right to do anything but to approach you as of your mind, relative to doctrine, when it comes to giving.

So when somebody gets up and appeals to you on some emotional story, just remember that God is not going to reward what you give in response to that emotion. That motivation is giving in response to the pleader, not in response to the Lord.

Then in your soul you also have your will. If you have given your will to the Lord, you are positive toward the objects toward which God wants you to give your money—the objects that He wants you to help finance, those are the things that your will will say, “Yes,” to, and you will not be resisting to the very thing that the Lord may be wanting you to prosper.

Soul giving before money giving is the principle. The same thing is true in other relationships of life. This is exactly the condition that you have in sex. Soul giving between a man and woman before body giving is the divine principle. We have the same thing in the matter of money—soul giving before money giving is the divine principle. So the Christian who does not give his soul through doctrine to Jesus Christ is cheap when it comes to giving.

“This not as we hoped. But first they gave themselves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.” The Macedonian Christians gave themselves to Paul as the Lord’s agent as the result of having given their souls to the Lord. Paul was the Lord’s agent in this financial drive, and they gave themselves to Paul by supplying him generously with the funds he needed to administer the Lord’s work. The Macedonian Christians were fulfilling the will of God when they did this. This was God’s plan for them, to back their spiritual leadership as it was constituted in Paul. The Macedonian Christians backed the Lord’s agent, and they did it out of their poverty while unfortunately today we have many people who out of their prosperity will not back the Lord’s spiritual agent. That’s not the will of God.

So we may translate: “and not even as we expected, but themselves they gave first to the Lord and to us by the purpose of God.” So on the basis of this verse there are certain factors we should note: 1) Giving to support God’s work is His plan, but in the sequence of soul giving before money giving. In the Lord Jesus Christ we have this demonstrated, for he went to the cross, and there He gave Himself on the basis of His own soul; that is, on the basis of who and what He was. It was on the basis of His character that he went to the cross. Therefore you and I as believers also must give ourselves on the basis of our character, under grace. That’s exactly what we do. As our souls are oriented to God’s plan, that’s how we give. As our souls are not oriented to grace, that’s how we will not give.

So giving is an extension of what goes on in the Christian’s soul. Giving is just the outward manifestation of what we are. What you are, what you and I really are, that’s how we’re going to give. So giving by Christians must originate in the soul. Grace giving therefore does not center in the amount, but in the motivation.

Thirdly, giving under emotional control is not grace giving, and it ends up often being a bribe to God or with strings attached. These strings are often expressed in such words as “after all I’ve done for you.” Anytime somebody says, “after all I’ve done for you,” you know that whatever they have done for you has not been in grace. It has been with strings of expectation. If you go talking to God like that, you may most certainly be assured then that you have not given in grace.

Another expression is, “we pay the preacher’s salary.” That means, “I have strings attached.” You’d be surprised how often that is spoken, and unspoken. Another expression is, “I’ve given enough to have some say around here.” That is giving with strings attached. That’s giving under emotional control and is not grace giving.

In the fourth place, the backing of spiritual leaders with finances from a grace-oriented soul is the will of God.

**Luke 21:1-4 – The Widow’s Mite**

Now let’s just sum this up this morning by turning to Luke 21. This is the story of the widow and her mite. Luke 21:1 begins with Jesus sitting at the treasury of the temple observing people coming and dropping things into the offering box. It says, “He (Jesus) looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in their two mites. And he said, ‘Of a truth, this poor widow hath cast in more than they all, for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God, but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.’”

This woman actually gave what today would amount to two-tenths of a cent. It was nothing in economic value. But it was all the money she had in the world. There wasn’t any more stocked away at home or in the bank. The Bible says it was all the living that she had. She had no means for securing the necessities of life after this act of sacrificial giving—none. Now Jesus was watching the rich men bringing much larger gifts into the treasury. But He also noted that they had much left over for their living. They gave in accordance with the condition of their souls. That’s what they were doing. That’s the only way any of us can give. There was nothing wrong with what they did give unto the Lord, mind you, but what they gave was with the condition of their soul and it fell far short of grace giving.

Now the widow’s gift was declared greater than that of all of these rich men. This was true in economic value, but it was true in terms of what each had left over after the giving had been performed. The rich men gave out of abundance and they still had more than they needed to survive left over. The widow gave out of poverty and she had nothing left over for her needs.

So here we have a very important principle revealed to us by God the Holy Spirit. What the Lord Jesus said here shows to us that God looks first not at what we give, but at what we have left over in reference to what we gave. That’s the way God views our giving. He views a gift in terms of the total reserve from which that gift was drawn. Thus in God’s sight there was a distinct difference between the giving of the widow and the giving of the rich men. Her giving reflected the condition of her soul as the rich men did of theirs. She loved the Lord God with all her heart, with all her mind, and with all her soul, and she obviously had enough doctrine to know how to express that love. Consequently, she gladly gave everything she had, but after she gave everything she had, she still had the Lord. That was the great thing she had. She was grace-oriented enough to realize that after she gave every last little fraction of a cent that she owned, that she still had the Lord.

In reality, the Lord was her living, so she was not destitute. She could go and depend on Him. I doubt that she went home and did without supper that night, or the next day’s necessities. Even if she had, she would have done it with an inner happiness because of the condition of her soul that enabled her to give in this magnificent way in the first place. Since the Lord was her life, not her money, it was no problem to give all the money that she had when the Lord so directed.

Now I don’ mean that we are to give out of some hilarious, joyful, and “I’m going to sell all and be poor and wait upon the Lord to take care of me” attitude. Sometimes young people get inspired and they get hold of this vision of giving to God. It’s kind of nice to see one of your kids to come home and storm into his room and grab his bank and tear out all of his money there--$15.33—and give it in the next offering. And you have to explain to him how he gives under the Lord’s direction and the Lord’s guidance, and there’s a proportionate share of giving, but you know that he has gotten the principle. Something has happened in his soul and He wants to give to God.

Now God may want you to storm home and do that, but He’ll lead you to do that if that’s the case. But it all comes back to who has your soul—you, or the Lord. If God has your soul, and you have delivered yourself to Him through an understanding of the Word of God, then grace giving will be something that you can participate in. It will be easy, and you’ll be surprised with what delight you will give even out of trying circumstances. You will have a magnificent time giving out of your expanded circumstances.

So we’ve learned two principles here. 1) If you’re going to give by grace, it has to be by freewill, without coercion, in complete privacy, and willingly as one of God’s priests. 2) If you are going to give under grace you must first give your soul. Until you give your soul to God, and the only way you can give your soul to God is by learning doctrine so that you know how to function before God, until you have given your soul to God in that way, you cannot enter fully enter into the grace system of giving. But once you do, you’ll be surprised what magnificent sums of money will flow through your hands, and about the time you think you have come to the end of the line, you will discover that God has restocked you with finances all over again. Now you just try Him and find out. If you are acting out of a soul that has been delivered to Him, your giving will be of the magnificent level that the supply will be unending, and that’s the kind of people God is looking for. It all comes back to who has your soul—yourself, or the Lord.

Dear Father we thank you for this Thy Word, and we ask you to sustain us in it that we may perform it in Christ’s name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971