

Grace-Giving in the Life of a Christ-Follower

I will bless you... so that you may be a blessing. – Genesis 12:2

Freely you have received, freely give. – Matthew 10:8

We love because He first loved us. – 1 John 4:19

You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way. – 2 Corinthians 9:11

All the Bible's theology can be summed up in this: God blesses a people so that we might be a blessing, and that through us He might receive more praise from more people (Mk 12:29 – 31).

Introduction:

- Canadians and Giving
 - Systems of Giving that don't belong in the Church
1. Grace Giving: The Principle of Sowing Generously (vs. 6)

 2. Grace Giving: The Privacy of Giving Gladly (vs. 7)

 3. Grace Giving: The Promise of Grace Abounding (vs. 8 - 10)

 4. Grace Giving: The Purpose of Glorifying God (vs. 11 – 15)
- Arrow down – Grace-giving deepens our generosity.
 - Arrow up – Grace-giving results in Thanksgiving to God.
 - Arrow out – Grace-giving meets the needs of others.
 - Arrow in – Grace-giving stirs up our affection for one-another.

Notes from *The Lent Experience Journal*
(Challenge #4: *Almsgiving*)

Almsgiving:

At the heart of the meaning of this word are compassion and mercy.

Almsgiving is an act of love by which we meet someone else's practical needs

It's an honest assessment to ask this question:

Am I becoming more like Jesus or more like the culture in which I live?

God has always been concerned for the weak, the needy, the marginalized, and the defenseless.

Furthermore, He is concerned that we are concerned as well.

*“When you reap the harvest of your land,
do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.
Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen.
Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the Lord your God.”*

Leviticus 19:9-10 NIV

God expected and still does expect His people to limit their own consumption in order to provide for the needs of others.

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this:

to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

James 1:27

True religion and genuine faith is evidenced by living a life that increasingly includes acts of mercy, justice, and giving oneself for orphans, the poor, the widow, the struggling single mom, the fatherless kid, the prisoner, the sick, etc

This week's challenge has 3 options:

1. **Keep your eyes open.** Simply ask God “Who do you want me to help and what do you want me to do?” Then go throughout your normal day looking for the answer. You'll likely be surprised at how much more you notice all around you.
2. **Explore donating to your local church or a local organization** that meets the needs of people.
3. **That idea or person that's in your head right now.** You've thought about it, but maybe have put it off or haven't been sure exactly what to do. **Do it...this week...**even if you do it imperfectly.