

Characteristics of Christian Giving

Christian Character Determines the Characteristics of Giving

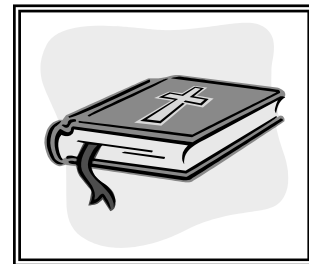
Giving grows out of who we are; Christian giving is an expression of our redeemed nature. If we are selfish and stingy, we will give grudgingly and sparingly. If we are loving and caring, we will give generously and graciously.

Christian Giving is Motivated by Commitment to Christ

Giving is genuinely Christian if its motivation is Christ. We must understand our motives. Christian giving is motivated by belief in and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Paul used these seven New Testament motivation principles as he appealed to Christians to give as:

1. A response to God's Grace.
2. A response to the example of Christ who gave Himself for us.
3. A response to human need.
4. An expression of thanksgiving to God.
5. A Form of sacrifice to God.
6. A way of symbolizing one's commitment of all one's resources to the service of God and man.
7. A Concrete proof of love.



Our appeals for giving are often not those of the New Testament. Christian giving is motivated by Christ and directed toward Him and His cause.

Christian Giving is in Response to Human Need

Sometimes we may serve God directly in moments of pure devotion. Usually, however, we serve God indirectly by serving other persons. Giving to God usually means that we are giving to God through other persons. In the New Testament, there are far more examples of giving to meet human need than any other kind of giving.

Chapters eight and nine of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians present the most comprehensive statement on Christian giving in the New Testament. These two chapters are a manual on Christian giving. All of these teachings are related to Paul's appeal for a collection of money to be sent to Jerusalem to relieve the suffering of needy people.

Jesus commended an unnamed Samaritan for responding to human need. And He said: *“Go and do thou likewise”* (Luke 10:37). And in the profound and powerful account of final judgment Jesus said, *“to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me”* (Matt. 25:31-46).

Christian giving is a response to human needs-physical needs, emotional needs, spiritual needs. We give to relieve the poor and homeless, the sick and helpless. We also give to support the proclaiming of the gospel to all people. In these ways we give to God.

Christian Giving is Responsible Giving

The word responsible means not only response but *accountable* response. We are accountable for what we give, how we give, and what is done with what we give. Christian giving requires us to know that our money does in fact go to the purposes for which it was intended. Paul told the Corinthians that he would send their money to Jerusalem in a very careful and accountable way. (See 1 Cor. 16:3-4; 2 Cor. 8:20-21.) We should give only to causes which give a full accounting of funds.

Christian Giving is Voluntary

While trying to persuade the Christians to give, Paul made it clear that their gifts must be *“a willing gift”* (2 Cor. 9:5). He wrote: *“Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion”* (2 Cor. 9:7). If giving is not voluntary, it is not real giving.

Christian Giving is Cheerful Giving

Christian giving produces joy in us because it is an expression of who we are as persons created in the image of God. As God rejoices in creative and gracious giving, so we should give with joy and grace.

We give cheerfully to those we love. If we love God, we give cheerfully to Him. If we love His cause, we give cheerfully through His church. Such giving is pleasing to God, *“for God loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Cor. 9:7).

Christian Giving is Proportionate

Christian giving has two limits: our own ability to give and desire to give. *“As God has prospered”* (1 Cor. 16:2) suggests that we count our blessing, then determine our gift.

How has God blessed us? He has given us life, health, energy, ability, wealth, the gospel, salvation, eternal life, and many other things. In response to God’s abundant, gracious giving to us, we are to give generously and graciously. God accepts our gifts based on what we have. (See 1 Cor. 16:3-4; 2 Cor. 8:20-21.)

Christian Giving is Systematic and Regular

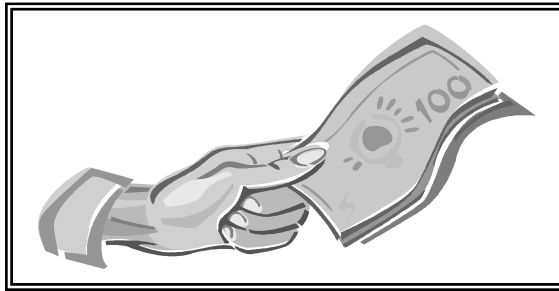
Giving is too important to be left to chance. The lack of giving sometimes reflects a lack of planning. We must plan to give and regularly give according to our plan. Paul instructed the Corinthians to give “*on the first day of every week*” (1 Cor. 16:2).

Christian Giving is Generous and Gracious

Paul used the Greek word *Charis* (*grace*) ten times (2 Cor. 8, 9) regarding giving. Christian giving is a response to the grace of God. (See 2 Cor. 8:1.) In response to God’s grace, the Macedonian Christians first “*gave themselves to the Lord*” (2 Cor. 8:5). Then they gave generously of their meager possessions as a gracious act to support the needy Christians in Jerusalem. Paul urged the Corinthians to follow the example of the Macedonians. That is how our Lord gave.

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

We are to give generously and graciously.



*The Worshipgiver by Talmage Williams
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