

*"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body". 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)*

Stewardship is the 6<sup>th</sup> marker of a mature Christian. (Worship – Community – Serving – Spiritual Disciplines – Evangelism). Stewardship is giving generously of our lives - our TIME – TALENTS – TREASURE for the glory of God and His Kingdom.

Jesus said *"Where your treasure is there your heart is also."* (Matthew 6:21)  
How we use our resources will reveal who has our heart – Jesus or ourselves.

The Grace of Giving: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Grace: "God's unmerited favor." "God's Riches at Christ's Expense" "The desire and power to accomplish God's purpose."

God's grace is His passion to share His goodness and blessings with others.

The Macedonian churches excelled in the grace of giving and are a model for us.

4 things distinguished the Macedonian churches? (v2-5)

#1-They gave generously to help others though they suffered persecution for their faith and lived in profound poverty.

#2. They willingly gave beyond their ability - no special appeal had to be made.

#3. They insisted on sharing in the grace of giving as a means to fellowship

#4-Gave themselves to the Lord first.

Our stewardship of giving comes out of our stewardship of life.

Biblical giving is motivated by God's grace, an extension of His grace and we become recipients to His grace as we give.

Paul gives two reasons for asking the Corinthians to give.

#1 – Follow the example of these mature, grace-filled churches. (Macedonian churches)

#2 – Test the sincerity of their love.

Our motivation to give is love – not law. Grace – not judgment. Our motivation is gratitude for all Jesus did for us.

*"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."* 1 Corinthians 8:9 (NIV)

Paul issues a challenge. *"Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means."* 1 Corinthians 8:11 (NIV)

How much should I give? *"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."* 1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)

*13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, 15 as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."* 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 (NIV)

With the devastation of hurricane Sandy, how can you give from your "plenty" to those in need?