

1.

Body

1.

You have begun to give (9-10a)

1.

Faith: Taught by God

1.

First, **you have begun to give.** Paul speaks first of the reason for, then of the fact of, your giving. First, the reason you have begun to give is that you have been “
taught by God to love one another.” Paul says this in v. 9, saying,

-

“9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.”

-

Paul didn't need to remind the

Thessalonians of their basic Gospel-duty to love one another, because God Himself was teaching them to do so. Paul is not here denying that the Thessalonians need any teaching whatsoever, for clearly Paul is teaching them about many things throughout this epistle, and even about their duty to love one another. But Paul is speaking here about the fact that God has already begun to give them a working faith, and a laboring love. In giving them faith in Christ as their Savior, God has taught them to love one another, and so now their love has begun to labor, even under persecution, even being willing to suffer so that others might hear the gospel and be saved. In contrast to the Old Covenant, where people would look into the mirror of God's law and then forget its requirements for their lives, now in the New Covenant God in fact writes the law on the hearts of His people, as He promised in **Jeremiah 31:33-34**

, saying

-

"I will put My law within them
and on their heart I will write
it."

-

The New Covenant in Christ is
the fulfillment of **Is. 54**, where
God says this to His needy, afflicted
people, in **v.**

1

,

-

"Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; For the sons of the desolate one will be **more numerous** Than the sons of the married woman," says the LORD.

-

And in vv. 11-13,

-

11 "O afflicted one,
storm-tossed, and not comforted,
Behold, I will set your stones
in antimony, And your
foundations I will lay in
sapphires. 12 "Moreover, I
will make your battlements of
rubies, And your gates of crystal,

And your entire wall of
precious stones. 13 "All
your sons will be **taught of
the LORD** ;
And the well-being of your sons
will be great.

”

-

In the restoration of His
people, in the New Covenant,

and in the salvation He would bring through Jesus Christ, God said “Your sons will be taught of the Lord.” This is what God is doing for us now, writing His holy law on our hearts by *giving* us holy hearts in our regeneration, and now by sanctifying us, making us more holy, throughout the rest of our lives. We are taught

by God.

-

Love: You do practice it

1.

But not only are you taught to love one another, Paul says, but “indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren.”

Paul says this in **v. 10a**

,

-

“10 for indeed you
do practice it toward
all the brethren who
are in all
Macedonia.”

—

Paul told us
about the way the
Thessalonians had
shown love to the
brothers
throughout
Macedonia in ch. 1
:6-10
, where he

says

—

“6 You also
became imitator
s of us

and of the Lord,
having
received the
word in much
tribulation with
the joy of the
Holy Spirit, 7
so that you

became an
example to all
the believers in
Macedonia
and in Achaia. 8
For the
word
of the Lord has

sounded forth
from you, not
only in
Macedonia and
Achaia, but
also in every
place your faith
toward God has

gone forth, so
that we have no
need to say
anything.

—

Now how did
the word of the
Lord sound
forth from the
Thessalonian

church?

Certainly, both
in their words
and their deeds.

But partly
through the
grace of giving.

Turn with me to 2 Cor. 8

, where Paul
says “

the churches of
Macedonia

” generously

gave of their
money for the
work of the Lord
. The three key
churches in
Macedonia
were in Berea,

Philippi, and
Thessalonica.
The
Philippian
church was the
first to give, but
undoubtedly the

others
followed (cf.
Philippians
4:15). This
means the way
the
Thessalonians

practiced love
for the brethren
was specifically
that they gave
of their own
material
possessions to

help support
their needy
neighbors.

1

Paul says in
2 Cor. 8:1-7

,

—

“Now,
brethren, we
wish to make
known to you

the grace of
God which
has been given
in the
churches of
Macedonia ,
2 that in a

great ordeal of
affliction their
abundance of
joy and their
deep
poverty
overflowed in

the wealth of
their liberality.

3 For I

testify that
according to
their ability,
and beyond

their ability,
they gave of
their own
accord, 4
begging us
with much
urging for the

favor of
participation in
the support of
the saints,
5 and this, not
as we had
expected, but

they first gave
themselves
to the Lord and
to us by the
will of God. 6
So we
urged Titus

that as he had
previously
made a
beginning, so
he would
also complete
in you this

gracious work
as well. 7 But
just as you
abound in
everything, in
faith and
utterance and

knowledge
and in all
earnestness
and in the love
we inspired in
you, see that
you

abound in this
gracious work
also

■

”

—

The NIV
translates this
last phrase “e
xcel in this

grace of
giving

.” Even
though they
were in “
deep
poverty,

” Paul says,
the
Macedonians
gave out of
the
overflow of
their joy in

Christ, so that
they could
contribute to
the “
support of the
saints,
” as

v. 4

says. And so
Paul exhorts
the
Corinthians,
who were
more wealthy

than the
Thessalonians
, to show the
sincerity of
their love by
doing just as
the

Thessalonians
have done, as
he says in
vv. 8-9

,

—

“8 I am
not speaking
this as a
command,

but as
proving
through the
earnestness
of others the
sincerity of

your love

also

. 9 For

you know the

grace of our

Lord Jesus

Christ, that
though He
was
rich
, yet for your
sake He

became

poor

, so that

you through

His

poverty

might
become
rich

”

■

—

You see,
just as Jesus
Christ gave

up the great
riches of
glory and
honor which
he had at His
Father's right

hand in
heaven in
order to
humble
himself, to
take on

human flesh
and be made
in the
likeness of a
man, in order
that we

might
receive in
His death
and
resurrection
the riches of

salvation
from our
sins, so
now Christ
calls you to
give of

yourselves
self-sacrificia
lly in order
that your
brothers and
sisters in

Christ may
come to
know Him,
to love Him,
to be saved
from their

sins, and to
be
delivered
from some of
the misery of
this life. God

has begun to
give you a
real,
laboring,
hardworking
love for your

brothers and
sisters in
Christ, as
well as for all
those whom
God may call

through
your efforts
to share His
salvation, but
now you
must

prove the *sin*
cerity
of your love
by giving
from your
heart, by

giving of
your life, of
your
resources,
that others
might be

saved. Will
you “
excel in this
grace of
giving
?”

—

You see,
God has
blessed you

so that you
will be a
blessing.
Now in
the New
Covenant

God is
fulfilling the
promise He
made to
Abraham
in Gen.

12:2-3 ,

saying

-

**“I will
make you
a great
nation, An
d I will**

**bless you,
And make
your
name
great; And**

**so you
shall be a
blessing;
3 And I
will bless**

those who
bless you,
And the
one who
curses you

I will
curse. And
in you all
the families
of the earth

will be
blessed.&q
uot;

—

And
God

promised
to His
people in
Deut.
28:12-14

that if
they
would
keep His
command

ments,
then He
would
make
them a

blessing
to all
nations,
saying

—

12

"Th

e LORD
will open
for you
His good

storehouse,
the
heavens,
to give

rain to
your land
in its
season

**and to
bless
all the
work of**

**your
hand;
and you
shall**

lend to
many
nations,
but you

**shall not
borrow.**

”

1 Th. 4:9-12 - Excel in the Grace of Giving

Written by Tim Black
Monday, 02 April 2007 07:26 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 April 2007 20:07



**“You
shall
lend to
many**

nations,
but you
shall not
borrow.”

Do
you hear
what this
is

saying?
In Christ
God has
given

you all
things,
but more
than that,

we count
all things
to be
loss in

view of the surpassi ng value

of
knowing
Christ
Jesus

our Lord.

God

does

richly

bless us,
spiritually
as well
as

materiall
y in
this life,
and in

view of
this let
us not
cling

selfishly
to what
He gives
us, but

rather
gladly
give of
these

blessings
to those
who are
in need.

Is this
benevole
nt spirit
not the

heart of
what
God
comman

ded His
people to
have in
Deut.

15:6ff

?

God

says

there,

—

6

"F

or the

LORD

your
God will
bless
you as

He has
promise
d
you, and

you will
lend to
many
nations,

but you
will not
borrow;
and

you will
rule over
many
nations,

but they
will not
rule over
you.

7

"If
there is
a poor

man with
you, one
of your

brothers,
in any of
your
towns in

your

land

which

the

LORD
your
God is
giving

you, you
shall not
harden
your

heart,
nor
close
your

hand
from
your
poor

brother;
8 but
you shall
freely

open
your
hand to
him, and

shall
generou
sly lend
him

sufficient
for
his need
in

whatever
the
lacks. 9
"B

eware

that

there is

no

base
thought
in your
heart,

saying,
'The
seventh
year, the

year
of
remissio
n, is

near,
and your
eye is
hostile

toward
your
poor
brother,

and you
give him
nothing;
then he

may cry
to the
LORD
against

you, and
it will be
a sin in
you. 10

"Y
ou shall

generou

sly give
to him,
and your
heart

shall not
be
grieved
when

you give
to him,
because
for this

thing the
LORD
your
God will

bless
you in all
your
work

and in all
your
undertak
ings. 11

"F
or the
poor will
never

cease to
be in the
land;
therefore

I
command
you,

saying,
'You
shall
freely

open
your
hand to
your

brother,
to your
needy
and poor

in your
land.'

1 Th. 4:9-12 - Excel in the Grace of Giving

Written by Tim Black

Monday, 02 April 2007 07:26 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 April 2007 20:07

—

Work

**to give
more
(10b-11)**

1.

And

so if you
have
received
the

incredibl
e riches
of
salvatio

n in
Christ,
and
have

been
given
life, and
health,

and
material

blessing

s in any
measur
e
whatsoever

ver, do
not
harden
your

hearts
against
your
needy

brothers
.
Make
it your
ambition

to work
with
your
hands

so that
you may
give
more to

those in

need.

Make it

your

ambition
to give
more
food,

more
clothing,
more
hospitali

ty,
more of
Christ's
love,

more of
the
gospel,
and

more of
the
ministry
of the

church,
to those
who
need

Christ's
love so
desper
ately in

the
world
around
you.

Paul
exhorts
you to
do just

this in 1
Thess.
4:10-11
,

saying,

1.

“But
we urge
you,

brethren,
to
excel

still
more,
11 and

to make

it

your

ambitio

n to

lead a

quiet
life and
attend

to your
own
business

s and
work
with

your
hands,
just as

we
comma
nded

you, 12

so

that you

will

behave

properly

toward
outsider
s and

not be

in

any

need.”

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2.

Paul
exhorts
you,

then, to
“work
to give

more. ”

3.

Now

Paul is
not
being a

slave-driver
here.

He is
not
exhortin

g you to
drive
yourself

ves into
utter
poverty,

but

rather

he is

exhortin
g you
to work

so that
you
have no

need.
So that
you will

NOT be

in

poverty.

But
further,
he

exhorts
you to
work so

that you
may
give

to

others.

Just as

you
have
begun

to give

to those

in

Macedo
nia,
he

says,
just as
you

have

begun

to show

hospital
ity, to
be

genero

us to

the

needy
in your
house,

your
neighbo
rhood,

your
presbyt
ery, so

now
excel
still

more,
for the
gospel

must go
out,
for the

needy
will
always

be with
you, for
you

must
continu
e to

grow
and
abound

in love
for one
another

, for
you
must

continu
e to
excel in

this
grace
of

giving.

4.

My

parents
have
diligentl

y,

faithfull

y,

worked
all their
married

lives,
not
earning

a great
amount
of

money,
but
earning

enough

to be

able to

give to
those
who are

in need.

I have
sought

to do
the
same.

And I
know
that

God
has
begun

to give
you this
grace

of
giving
as well;

this is
why He
has

given
you a
job, a

house,
and a
willing

heart.

But

now

Paul
exhorts
you,

you
must
excel

still
more.

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5.

Practical means



work.

The

practic
al
means

by
which
you do

this is
to
work at

your
job.
Paul

had set
a Godly
exempl

e in
word
and

deed
to the
Thessa

Ionians,
as he
remind

ed
them in

ch.

2:8-9

,

saying

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1.

“8

Having
so fond
an

affection
for
you,

we

were

well-pl

eased
to
impart

to you

not

only

the gospel of God

but
also
our

own
lives,
becau

se you
had
becom

e very
dear to
us. 9

For
you
recall,

brethren,
our

labor
and
hardshi

p, how
workin
g night

and
day so
as

not to
be a
burden

to any
of you,
we

proclai
med to
you the

gospel of God.”

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2.

Paul's

goal
was
not to

take,
but to
give.

He
worked
with

his
hands
to

earn
money
so that

he
could
preach

the
gospel
to the

Thess
alonian
s, so

that he
would
not be

a
burden
to

them.

This

was

his

pattern

, his

habit,
everyw
here

when
he
preach

ed the
gospel.

Someti
mes
he

even
would
bring a

gift
from
more

establi
shed
church

es with
him, in
order

to

impart

to a

needy
church
the

gospel of God.

And
now
the

Thess
alonian
s had

becom

e

imitato

rs “of
us and
of the

Lord,
” as
Paul

says in

1:6

,

giving

self-sa

crificial
ly out
of the

abund
ance
of

God's

provisi

on,
that
the

gospel

would

go out

to
perfor
m its

saving
work
in the

hearts
of their
neighb

ors.

3.

But

the tempt ation

is to
lose
heart

in
these
acts of

benev
olence
.
To

neglec
t to do
good

to all,
and
especi

ally to
those
of the

house

hold

of
faith.
And

some

in fact

in

Thess
alonic
a, and

even

in

any

churc
h
today,

will fail
to
excel

in this
grace
of

giving.

My

friend

s, do
you
think

you
have
nothin

g to
give?
Do

you
think
first of

yours
elf as
some

one
who is
needy

,

rather

than

as
some
one

who
can
give?

That
you
must

receiv
e
before

you
can
give?

I know
what
that

feeling

is like.

You

may
need
to

hear
Paul's
warnin

g in 2 Thess

alonia

ns

3:6-13



Turn
with

me
there,
and

hear
what
Paul

says
to us.
He

says,

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1.

6

Now
we
comm

and
you,
brethr

en, in
the
name

of our
Lord
Jesus

Christ,
that

you
keep
away

from
every
brothe

r who
leads
an

unruly
life
and

not
accor
ding

to the
traditi
on

which
you
receiv

ed
from
us. 7

For
you
yours

elves

know

how

you
ought
to

follow
our
exam

ple,
becau
se we

did

not

act in

an

undisc

iplined

mann

er

amon

g

you, 8

nor

did we
eat
anyon

e's
bread
withou

t
payin
g for

it, but
with
labor

and

hards

hip we

kept
workin
g

night
and
day

so
that
we

would
not be
a

burden
to
any of

you; 9

not

becau

se we
do not
have

the
right
to

this,
but in
order

to
offer
oursel

ves as

a

model

for

you,

so

that

you

would

follow
our
exam

ple.

10 For

even

when

we

were

with
you,
we

used
to
give

you
this
order:

if

anyon

e is

not
willing
to

work,
then
he is

not to
eat,
either.

11 For
we
hear

that
some
amon

g you
are
leadin

g an

undisc

iplined

life,
doing
no

work
at all,
but

acting

like

busyb

od dies.

12

Now

such
perso
ns we

comm
and

and
exhort
in the

Lord Jesus Christ

to

work

in

quiet

fashio

n and
eat
their

own

bread.

13 But

as for
you,
brethr

en, do
not
grow

weary
of
doing

good.

2.

And

so I
exhort
you

as
well,
do not

grow
weary
in

doing
good!
If you

are
tempt
ed to

lead a
disord
erly

and
undis
cipline

d life

so

that

you
end
up in

povert
y, or if
you

are
tempt
ed to

depen
d on
others

rather
than

work

to

suppo

rt
yours
elf, or

if you
are
tempt

ed to

spend

your
time
acting

busy,
interfe
ring in

the affairs of

others

,

rather

than
worki
ng

dilige
ntly at
the

tasks

which

God

has
set
before

you to
do,
then

Paul
gives
you

one
very
solid,

trustworthy,
orthodox,

and
inesc
apabl

e

piece

of

advic

e—w

ork

**with
your**

hand

s .

He

says

in

v. 11

Of 1 Thes

S. 4

,

1 Th. 4:9-12 - Excel in the Grace of Giving

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“make
it
your

ambiti

on to

lead a

quiet
life
and

attend
to
your

own

busin

ess
and
work

with
your
hands

, just
as we
comm

anded
you.”

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My
friend
s,

even

if you

are

needy
, even
if you

are in
deep
poverty

ty, a
s *the*
Thess

alonia

ns

were

, work
so
that

you
will
have

some
thing
to

give
to
those

who
are in
need.

Do
not
think

of
yours
elf

first

as a

ward

of the
churc
h or a

ward
of the
state,

do
not
think

of
yours
elf

first

as

one

of the
needy
but

think
of
yours

elf

first

as

one
who
can

give
to
those

who
are in
need.

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Written by Tim Black

Monday, 02 April 2007 07:26 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 April 2007 20:07



The Lord DOE

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richly

bless

us in
this
life

with
all
things

, even
in
giving

you

this

grace

of
giving
and

just
as He
has

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fy you
in this
area,

so He
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contin

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bless
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so
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So

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to
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the
love
of

Jesus Christ .

And

so if

His

love

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is at

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you,

you

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work
to
give

more,
to
give

to

the

needy

, that
they
may

know
the
salvat

ion of
the
Lord.

1 Th. 4:9-12 - Excel in the Grace of Giving

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—

Then

**you
will
bear**

**much
fruit
(12)**

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1.

And
the
result,

then,
is that
you

will

bear

much

fruit.

Paul

says

this in

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sayin

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and

not
be in

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need.

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2.

You
see, if

you
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love

for
one

another,

then

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you.

You
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take

from
them,

but

rather

for

your

desir
e to

give
to

them.

You

will

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but

rather
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kind.

If you

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give
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those
who

are in
need,

you

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3.

But
also

then

you

will

not

be in
any

need.

You

will

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And

so
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13:35

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2.

What
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love

is this
love

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we

must
have

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John

3:16-

18

says

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1.

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