

Guidelines for Biblical Giving

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AM Service

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Text:

2 Corinthians 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2: How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3: For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4: Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5: And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 6: Insomuch that we desired Titus, thout as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. 7: Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. 8: I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Introduction

This morning I am going to talk about the subject of “Giving”, more specifically “Giving to the work of God.” Financial giving is an **important part of the Christian life**. It’s an **important part of a local church** since each local church has an **annual budget**; a yearly spending plan based on the income and expenses for their own ministry; an **annual budget which pays the salaries** of the staff, pay the **bills** that come with **keeping a building** lighted and heated. On top of that, there are **expenses for important local ministries** like Gospel Tract distribution, Sunday School lessons, Music ministry, and for global causes like missionary support.

For the most part this message about giving in relation to finances or money will be **directed to Christians**. I will be speaking to **Christians who, I trust, have a Biblical understanding and approach to money and things**. In other words, we take seriously what our Lord says in Luke 12:15, “... Take heed, and **beware of covetousness**: for a **man's life consisteth not in the abundance** of the things which he possesseth.

Then our Lord also says to His disciples, “... Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The **life is more than meat**, and the body is more than raiment.”

I trust that we take seriously, Paul’s admonition in Hebrews 13:5, where he says, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and **be content with such things as ye have**: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” I trust that we understand and are convinced that

“**godliness with contentment is great gain** and that we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Timothy 6:6-7).

We must approach this important and delicate subject of “Giving” in a Biblical perspective. We must understand that love of money is the root of all evil. And yet though the love and preoccupation with money and things can lead to all kinds of evil, we must also understand that **money and things are not in themselves evil**. Realize also that you and I cannot operate a local church without money and things. There must be a **balanced view of money and things**.

Our Lord gives us this balanced view of money and things in [Matthew 6](#).

[Matthew 6:25](#) Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

[Matthew 6:32](#) (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Now, our Lord is not saying that we should not be anxious about things such as what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or what you shall wear, because these are evil, and you don’t need them. No. What our Lord is saying is that the reason we should not be anxious about these things is because **your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things**. That’s the beautiful balance of the Scripture. **Our Father knows and will supply all your need**.

[Philippians 4:19](#) But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

This morning, I invite you to consider with me **three important guidelines for giving to the work of God**. This is a very important subject, since this is one subject that people and even God’s own people have misunderstanding and misconception. A. W. Pink preached a sermon on Tithing and begins it with these words, *“There are few subjects on which the Lord’s own people are more astray than on the subject of giving. They profess to take the Bible as their own rule of faith and practice, and yet in the matter of Christian finance, the vast majority have utterly ignored its plain teachings and have tried every substitute the carnal mind could devise; therefore it is no wonder that the majority of Christian enterprises in the world today are handicapped and crippled through the lack of funds. Is our giving to be regulated by sentiment and impulse, or by principle and conscience? That is only another way of asking, Does God leave us to the spirit of gratitude and generosity, or has He definitely specified His own mind and particularized what portion of His gifts to us are due to Him in return? Surely God has not left this important matter without fully making known His will! The Bible is given to be a lamp unto our feet and therefore He cannot have left us in darkness regarding any obligation or privilege in our dealings with Him or His with us.”*

Before we dive in and consider the guidelines for giving to the work of God, let us be reminded that **we are stewards of all we possess and stewards of our ability to own money**. What is a steward? *“A steward is a person who has been entrusted with the responsibility to manage*

another's resources in accordance with the owner's vision and values.” God has created us to be stewards ([Genesis 1:28](#)). We are to use all of the gifts that God has given us wisely, for one day we will give an account to Him for how we use those gifts.

[Psalm 24:1](#) The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

The LORD owns everything. It belongs to Him.

[1 Corinthians 4:7](#) For who maketh thee to differ from another? And **what hast thou that thou didst not receive?** now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

[John 3:27](#) John answered and said, **A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.**

Whatever you and I have, whatever ability or skill we have to earn and accumulate things, everything is a gift from God. It is all a gift. It is stewardship. **And as stewards, we have a solemn obligation and great privilege** to honor God for what He has entrusted us with.

[Proverbs 3:9](#) Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: [10](#): So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your harvest. In other words, don't give your leftovers, give Him the best part of everything you produce and earn. Brothers and sisters in Christ, young and old, determine that whatever God enables you to earn, whatever blessing God gives you, whether salary, bonus, unexpected gifts, or stock earnings, that you will honor the Lord with it. Before thinking of how you are going to spend the money, set aside what is the Lord's. Don't even act like it's yours, it's the Lord's.

Now, let's look at three important guidelines for giving to the work of God.

I – Our Giving Must Be Regular

How do we give to the work of God? First, our giving should be both **regular and systematic**.

[1 Corinthians 16:1](#) Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. [2](#): Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Here the apostle Paul gives the local church in Corinth specific instructions about collecting money for suffering Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. Paul encourages every believer in Corinth to set aside some a percentage of their income on the first day of each week, meaning Sunday. We are to give upon the first day of the week, because that's the day when our Lord Jesus rose from the dead. That's the Lord's Day. That's the day of worship. That's the main day for believers in Christ get together and worship. **Our giving should be regular and consistent, just like our worship.** We gather and worship weekly and giving is a part of worship.

The point here is our giving must be **regular and consistent, not sporadic, or spontaneous** giving. Of course, some of our giving is to be spontaneous when unexpected and

unplanned needs or crisis arise. But most of our giving is to be regular and systematic. **Don't give just when you feel like it.** Our giving should **not be based on emotions or feelings.** Our giving is based on our **commitment to worship and honor the Lord** for who He is and all He does. He is faithful to supply our needs and we should be faithful in giving.

This also implies that our giving should not only be regular, but our giving **should also be planned.** Don't wait for the offering plate to come and then decide how much to give. **Plan ahead.** Decide how much percentage of your firstfruits, income you should give. And how do you arrive at the percentage? [1 Corinthians 16:2](#) Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. It must be proportionate to how God has prospered you. Ten percent of one's income is a good starting point. Give it as the firstfruits, off the top, and trust God to meet your other needs.

[Malachi 3:10](#) Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. [11:](#) And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

*“When we talk about the “tithe” we are referring to the Christian’s regular giving to the church. In the Old Testament believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry and the needs of the poor. However, if you were also to include what believers were to give for feasts, sacrifices, gleanings for the poor, and special offerings...it would amount to 23-25% of gross income. The New Testament does not specifically mention the tithe, but since we are far more blessed and indebted to God than were Old Testament believers, we assume that we are held more responsible for generosity, not less. Thus, **the tithe (10%) is a kind of minimum guideline for giving.**” - (Grace Driven Giving; Redemption Hill)*

II – Our Giving Must Be Responsible

Our giving not only must be regular, but also must be responsible. We are to give to the work of God, but **we must not forget our other responsibilities.** As we give, we must not neglect our other monetary obligations and responsibilities. God doesn't want us to give to the work of God and neglect our other financial responsibilities, such our family or our bills.

[1 Timothy 5:8](#) But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Don't be like the Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' day who used giving to the work of God as an excuse not to provide for their aged parents.

[Matthew 15:1](#) Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, [2:](#) Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

The Scribes and the Pharisees which were from Jerusalem came to challenge Jesus. They complained that His disciples break the tradition of their religious leaders. They complained that His disciples do not wash their hands before they eat.

To which our Lord responded ...

Matthew 15:3 ... Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4: For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5: But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6: And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

In response, Jesus asked why they break the commandments of God for the sake of their tradition. Then He brought up the 5th Commandment which clearly demands that children are to care for and respect their parents. Our Lord brought this commandment because the Pharisees are breaking this commandment for the sake of their traditions.

*“Religious leaders such as the Pharisees, however, had a tradition which allowed for someone to declare that some of their possessions or money were ‘**korban,**’ meaning **a gift devoted to God.** This is the spiritual equivalent of a tax write-off: a way to shield resources from being taken for some other purpose. That loophole in tradition apparently allowed such a person to continue to hold on to these valuable items and make use of them. Alternatively, they could claim the goods were devoted to God—as of today—then later annul the vow. In this way, they could avoid the responsibility to care for parents either to save the cost or because of resentment.”* - Bible Reference

In truth, the Pharisees, are neglecting both their obligations to give to the work of God and to take care of their aged parents. Understand that our stewardship to give to the work of God **does not contradict our stewardship to provide for the basic needs of our family** and our stewardship of paying our bills. As I have said earlier, our giving must not be based on emotions or feelings. Our giving must not be impulsive.

We must give responsibly and **to give responsibly we must live responsibly.** Live within your means. Don't live like a rich man or rich woman. Be simple. Be wise. Sometimes, as someone has said, *“We buy things with money we don't have, and things we don't really need, and things to impress people we don't even like.”* Remember the exhortation in [1 Timothy 6:8](#), **“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”** Learn to be content and don't be irresponsible.

Responsible giving is also **giving according to our ability.**

[Acts 11:29](#) Then the disciples, every man **according to his ability**, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

Don't feel guilty of what you cannot give and don't give what you ought not to give. There are those who are **overly sensitive** that they want to give, and they feel guilty because they cannot give more. Then there are those also who are **overly protective** of what God had

entrusted them. They have the ability to give but they would not give. Again remember 1 Timothy 6:7, “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”

III – Our Giving Must Be Reflective

Our giving not only must be regular and responsible, but also reflective. Our giving should be reflective. It must be **thoughtful**. It must be **reflective of God’s grace**. Reflect the sacrificial grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Paul says to the believers in Corinth, think about this. Reflect on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know how the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us.

Galatians 1:3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4: **Who gave himself for our sins**, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and **gave himself for me**.

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14: **Who gave himself for us**, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Paul here is encouraging them to **be generous** in their giving **because they know the giving of our Lord Jesus Christ**. They know by experience the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that **He impoverished Himself** that we might become rich—rich in the gospel, rich with eternal life, and rich towards God. It is so important as we give, we must be reflective. Reflect on the Lord Jesus Christ, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil 2:6-8). So, reflect on the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, left the glories of Heaven, became poor, and laid down His life for us. Why did He become poor? So that people like you and me could have our sins forgiven, receive His righteousness, adopted into His family, become heirs of God with Him, and right and a privilege to enter and dwell in Heaven..

Why is it so important for us to reflect on these things? Because a person who knows and has experienced that kind of blessings and benefits through Jesus Christ; **such a person becomes a giver**. A person who knows and has experienced that kind of saving grace **becomes a generous giver** because he has been given so much. Think about the dishonest thieving tax collector named **Zacchaeus**. After he encountered Jesus Christ and experienced His saving grace, **Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the**

poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold (Luke 19:8).

How about **the woman who stood at Jesus' feet**, weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment? This woman gave much and did much for our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because she realizes she has been forgiven much. Our Lord said of her in [Luke 7:47](#), “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

When God saves us and we come to realize that we have been given much, regardless of how much we have or how little we have, we desire to give even as our Lord Jesus gives. The bottom line is—we are to **give because God's grace has been given to us**. God has been good to us. He has given us so much. That's the truth! But now, pointing out this truth is **not to guilt us into giving** to the work of God. The apostle Paul is **not trying to coerce** the Corinthians; he is **not trying to pressure** them in any way, **but only to inspire them**. Realizing how much we have been blessed, makes us thankful and motivates us to express our love and gratitude to God. And one way to express our love and gratitude to God is through our generous giving.

Closing Thoughts

The Lord through His Word has given us instructions when to give, how to give, and why to give. Our giving should be regular, responsible, and reflective. **We should never give out of guilt or pressure or to avoid embarrassment**. We should not give because **we have to, but because we love to**. Our giving must be a **response to the grace of God** that has been abundantly given to us and that we have freely received. **As we experience God's grace more and more, may we all become generous givers**.

Now let me speak to those who are still outside of Christ. Meaning, still lost in their sins. The exhortation to you today is not—give to the work of God. The exhortation to you today is come to Christ for forgiveness and salvation.

[2 Corinthians 8:9](#) For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Paul here is speaking about **Christ's incarnation and crucifixion**. How our Lord Jesus Christ willingly came into our world to become a man. He humbled Himself and impoverished Himself and **left the glories and the benefits of Heaven that are rightly His** as the eternal Son of God. He impoverished Himself and laid down His life for you and me. He willingly submitted to the will of the Father and sacrificed Himself and died for our sins. Why? So that sinners like you and I could have our sins forgiven and receive eternal life. Oh, trust Him today. Call upon Him who “[though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich](#).” Rich in the gospel. Rich with eternal life. Rich towards God.

AMEN!