

LESSON 12

CHRISTIAN GIVING

Scripture Texts: Psalm 24:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Matthew 6:1-4; Malachi 3:8-10; Leviticus 27:30-33

Often the teaching or the learning of this subject is not adequate to effect the Bible ideal of giving. Bible giving arises not in the power of one to draw money from another, rather in the power of love in the heart of the giver to pour out a gift to God and to man. True Christian giving is not material only, but also spiritual. When one has the proper attitude toward God and has given Him the rightful place in his heart he will find no difficulty in fulfilling his duties in respect to finances and other possessions. When one is a faithful steward of the grace and mysteries of God, of his talents, time, and body, he is already a good steward of his money. How could it be otherwise? Let us look in God's Word for light on this subject.



MEMORY VERSE: *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

1 John 3:17

Ownership

Psalm 24:1-2 Here is the basis of stewardship. The Lord owns ALL, ourselves, our possessions, and all creation. An owner has rights of authority, of use, and of profit. Our ownership of anything is only relative. In the larger sense we own nothing. It is only loaned to us; we are made stewards over it for the Owner, God. We must account for our use of it.

Cheerful Giving

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 Paul was writing the church at Corinth about giving money for relief of needy brethren. **He which soweth sparingly . . . bountifully**—grudging giving brings small reward; generous giving brings great reward. This refers not to the amount primarily, but to the spirit of the heart in giving it. Each gives **as he purposeth in his heart**. When God has control of the heart, the giving will be in accord with it. **Not grudgingly**—not wishing to hold back, not **of necessity**—not the unwilling gift given because it is expected of us, or if we do not give, others will have negative thoughts of us. No, give cheerfully, **for God loveth a cheerful giver**. Not the cheer of patient endurance of suffering, a sort of "grin and bear it". If giving to God is suffering the heart is not right. There is no need for jokes and pep talks to get God's people in an attitude to give. The serious congregation gives much more than a merry crowd. The cheer God loves is a joy born of love for Him and full consecration to Him. The gift God wants must come from the heart. **Cheerful givers** were the ones who **first gave their own selves to the Lord** (2 Corinthians 8:5). When God sees a **willing mind**—the wish to give—He accepts it as the gift, whether the giver has much to give, or little (2 Corinthians 8:12). The desire to give is more important than the gift.

God's plan of finance is just as divine as all His other works. This plan is for our own benefit; God does not need our money. When we give as God planned, God enters into the transaction. He makes **all grace abound toward us**. He returns to us a **sufficiency in all things**, spiritual as well as material, so we **may abound to every good**

work. He gives us more so we can give again. Our love to God is manifested in our love for His people (1 John 5:2).

Our Reward

Matthew 6:1-4 Take heed—use thought and care. **Do not your alms . . . to be seen of men.** This reaches the motive of the heart. Do we take pride in the fact or amount of our gift? Do we wish someone saw it? Do we give more easily if our name is to be published? These are wrong attitudes. **They have their reward** already in being seen of men. No more will be given. Jesus tells us, **let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth**—a figure of speech meaning to give **in secret**, for the eyes of God alone. God will reward gifts given for His sake and honor.

The Tithe

Malachi 3:8-10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me now herewith . . . In the Bible we find but two purposes for giving:

- (1) to relieve the needy
- (2) to spread the Gospel.

This is a turning over to God that which already belongs to Him. **That there may be meat in mine house.** Everything else from God is by faith but this is something we can prove. This plan will straighten out all financial problems, because it is doing square business with God.

Ye have robbed me . . . in tithes and offerings. Here God differentiates between an offering and tithe. An offering is brought out of the nine-tenths which is left after the tithe has been turned over to God. The tithe is already His. We have not given anything until we have given over and above the tithe. **Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.** This message certainly can be applied to our country. The tithe is our rent to God for all His good graces to us; above this is an offering. The people of God should be as Abel; he brought the firstfruits, but Cain brought his offering **in process of time.** After he had paid the bills, bought the food, and purchased shoes for the children he brought an offering to God. This will not work for us any better than it did for Cain. God demands the first; anything less is robbing God.

Leviticus 27:30-31 All the tithe of the land . . . it is holy unto the Lord—belongs to God so that the bills of His house can be paid. **If a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes**—if he be compelled to borrow God's money for any reason at all—**he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof**—he shall repay it adding 20 percent interest.

Leviticus 27:32-33 . . . Whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. Every tenth one belongs to God. **He shall not search whether it be good or bad**—let it come through, if the tenth one is bad God will take it—**neither shall he change it**—if it is a good one and you shove it back to let a bad one come through—**then both it and the change thereof shall be holy**—they both belong to God as one. God does fair business and He expects and deserves the same from His creation. The proper attitude is to give God the first and the best whether it be large or small. He will bless the tithe of a small social security check as He will that of a million-dollar inheritance, as long as it is the first of our increase.

Joy does not come from measuring giving to a certain percentage and feeling, "That is God's; this is mine." God owns all. We are stewards. All is to be used to please and glorify Him. Some must be used for self, but none must be used selfishly. This principle applies to the church as well as to individuals. To the dedicated person, not only money, but all possessions are at God's disposal to further His kingdom.

God is not so poor that He needs soup suppers, rummage sales, and candy sales to finance His work. To get consecrated saints to give, it is necessary only to show them a worthy need. Failure to give is a symptom, not the disease.

JUST A THOUGHT

**What we do with what we have is a good indication of
what we would do if we had more.**

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