

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

God's Word On Giving

- 1 -- General Instructions on Giving**
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Lesson One

"General Instructions on Giving"

The subject of "Giving" is an important theme of the teachings of Christ! The three major topics Jesus spoke on were: **Money, Hypocrisy, and the Kingdom!** **Sixteen** of the **thirty-eight** Parables in the New Testament are about money and stewardship of possessions. Every **One** of **Six** verses in the Gospels deals with Steward of possessions.

Objections are often raised when the preacher preaches on giving. An often heard comment is: *"All the church cares about is money!"* Let's take a closer look at this outlook!

- 1. All the liquor industry cares about is money!**
 - a) They do not care about the ruin it causes.
 - b) They do not care about the lives it takes.
 - c) They do not care about the families it breaks up.
 - d) They do not care about the unhappiness that it causes.
- 2. All the tobacco industry cares about is money!**
 - a) They do not care about the choking and unpleasant breathing of smoke by non-smokers.
 - b) They do not care about the ill health and cancer that it causes thousands.
 - c) They do not care how many children go hungry or suffer want because too much money is spent on tobacco.
- 3. All the church cares about is.....**
 - a) The souls of men and women for eternity.
 - b) The proper preaching and teaching of moral and spiritual truths.
 - c) The sick, the needy, and the lonely.
 - d) All this and more the church cares about, but money often has to be involved in the process.

Let's be sure that we object to the wrong preaching and teaching on giving and not indict God Word or His Church unjustly!

An Important Truth about Giving

One of the most important facts about God's Plan for giving under the New Covenant is.....that there is no percentage (%) for our giving given or stated! Mankind has understood through the centuries that a 10th belonged back to God! As early as 3800 B.C., writings have been found that indicated such. Abraham (1900 B.C.) understood this!

Gen. 14:17-20

Heb. 7:2-4

The Law of Moses taught the giving of a tenth (tithe):

Deut. 14:22

But for some reason God did not give a percentage (%) figure in the New Covenant! This leaves us with questions to be answered:

1. Does God expect the same of us today as He has in the past?
2. Does He expect less today?
3. Or, Does He expect more of us today?

The conclusion to these questions has to be based on what is taught in the New Testament about God's Plan of Giving. Our "opinions" are not the authority! In this lesson and in this series of lessons, we hope that such will help you in your decision about giving to please God.

Instructions on Giving

1. It is to be on the first day of the week. (1 Cor. 16:2). This was the special meeting day for God's new people. It would be a convenient time for giving into a common treasury for the Lord's Work. Whatever God had commanded them to do, the money was to be used to carry out the commands. This shows the value of regularity in giving. If we are prospered, we give; if not, we don't give. If we miss a Sunday in giving, we are still obligated to make up the week missed.

2. Each one is to give as he is prospered. (1 Cor. 16:2). God enables us to "get" and also to "give." The giving of God's people is to be proportionate—each giving his share as he has been blessed. Our giving is to be based on what we make, not what we have "left over!" It is very important that we be honest about our prosperity. Our prosperity is not what is left over after all of our various expenses, but what we make originally. We are on our honor—no one is checking up on us. God and I know what I receive. If we are not honest about our prosperity, we are the loser!

3. Each is to give as he "purposes" in his heart. (2 Cor. 9:7). This is emphasizing thoughtful, intelligent, and planned giving in the sense that we have thought out beforehand what to give. What we have purposed, we will do..."the Lord willing!" As we give, let's do so as though the Lord Himself was passing the collection plate.

4. Each is to give "generously." (2 Cor. 9:5). This kind of giving is in contrast to the giver who does his giving as a grudging obligation. We are not to give out of a sour or reluctant mind where we feel we are forced to give. Generous giving

is in contrast to stingy giving. The Apostle illustrates his point with a powerful principle that they all recognized.

2 Cor. 9:6 _____

Bountiful giving reaps bountiful blessings. Someone has observed that *"God has a bigger shovel than we do!"*

5. Our giving is to be with "cheerfulness!" (2 Cor. 9:7). We give willingly, joyfully, and with readiness. We are happy that we can be involve in such a great work for eternity. We usually enjoy giving to what we like, or in what we are interested in or have a stake in. We also give to that which we love.

A person made the observation: *"I can give \$1.00 cheerfully, but not \$10.00."* Such a person may be advertising his stinginess and not his cheerfulness. Cheerful giving infers a liberal amount since it is not to be grudgingly given.

Concluding Thoughts

Have the above instructions given you some basis for making your decision on how much to give each week? Do you believe that God wants us to give **"below a 10th," "a 10th,"** or **"above a 10th?"** What did you base your answer on? If God did not state He wants a 10th, then upon basis do you make your decision as to how much? What would be the safe and logical course to pursue?

- 1. Why do you think that God did not tell us to give a certain percentage (%) in the New Covenant?**
- 2. Why do you think that God has left the percentage (%) of giving up to us to decide?**
- 3. Do you give a certain percentage (%) of your prosperity?**

The wise man teaches us: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction."* (Prov. 1:7). Let's be wise and accept God's instructions. Jesus said that the man who hears and does His words is wise (Matt. 7:24-27). Again, the wise man observes: ***He that refuses instruction despises his own soul; but he that hears reproof gets understanding.***" (Prov. 15:32)

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Almost half of the Parables deal with money and stewardship of possessions.
- _____ 2. I feel that the church leaders are too concerned about money.
- _____ 3. God did not state a percentage (%) for our giving in the New Testament.
- _____ 4. "Hypocrisy" is one of the three key topics that Jesus spoke about.
- _____ 5. Giving is to be done each week as we are prospered.
- _____ 6. Giving needs to be a decision of the heart (mind).
- _____ 7. To be rewarding, giving must be cheerfully done.
- _____ 8. If giving is to be done cheerfully, this would infer that our giving should be liberal—large amount.
- _____ 9. Bountiful giving will bring bountiful blessings, if given correctly.
- _____ 10. Bountiful giving shows that we trust in God's promises.

Lesson Two

"Reasons for Giving"

Bro. V. P. Black, a veteran preacher of the Gospel, was invited to preach a week-end workshop on giving. One man objected strongly, but was out-voted in the business meeting. The day Bro. Black arrived, this man was absent. When Bro. Black left, this man returned. This is a sad outlook for one who claims to be a follower of Christ! We are firmly convinced that: Giving our money correctly, as well as using our money correctly...is just as important as any other activity of the Christian life! This lesson will deal with **four reasons for giving!**

1--Because It is Commanded by God

The very fact that God commands it...is reason enough!

1 Cor. 16:1-2 _____

It is not necessary to apologize for lessons on giving, or to water down lessons on giving! God commands it, He wants it, that should be sufficient. **But God does not command something without good reasons!** We have heard the expression: "*Father knows best!*" God knows best!! The other 3 points of our lesson will help to show God's purpose behind the command.

2—Because of the Dangers Connected with Money!

Let's look at an example in the Old Testament to illustrate. The Israelites, with God's help, conquered the city of Jericho. God had warned the people that all the spoil from this city goes into the Lord's treasury. The first fruits belong to God. A short time later they went against the small city of AI and they failed! The Lord told them the reason: someone has sinned...someone has kept some of the spoil for themselves. An effort was made to find the guilty party. He confessed his sin before all, but still suffered the consequences.

Joshua 7:20-21 _____

Why did Achan sin? He saw, he wanted, and he too it! That which should

have been given to God was withheld and kept for self! Two terms are used to describe this outlook—**Greed and Covetousness!** Achan and all his family were stoned to death. He paid a terrible price for a little silver and gold—**he refused to give God His proper part!** The terrible price for us for greed or covetousness is punishment for all eternity!

1 Cor. 6:9-10 _____

Matt. 6:24 _____

Mark 4:19 _____

1 Tim. 6:10 _____

Money is necessary for survival—for food, clothing, and shelter. But the warning is clear—**You rule over "mammon" or "mammon" will rule over you!** Riches can be deceitful—they can mislead us and corrupt our thinking. They can cause us to become unfruitful as a Christian and cause us to lose our soul over money. The love of money has caused much, much evil in the world. But it can also cause one to err from the faith. It can also bring many sorrows into our lives.

**3—Because of the Promises given to those
Who give and use money wisely!**

The promises of God concerning giving are clear and can be found in both the Old and New Testaments.

Acts 20:35 _____

Jesus, Himself, stated that it is a greater blessing to give than to receive. The difference between a "cloud" and a "sponge" helps to illustrate this concept. A "cloud" receives in order to give; while a "sponge" receives in order to keep! The remedy for the sponge—you have to squeeze it! Do we have to be squeezed before we will give; or does God have to squeeze us?

Mal. 3:10 _____

God's people were giving, but they were giving inferior things, that which was not proper. As a results, they were cursed, and not blessed! God wanted to give them a blessing, but He could not because of their wrong outlook and actions.

Mal. 1:6-8 _____

God even called upon His people to test Him! Give like you should and see if I will not bless you abundantly.

2 Cor. 9:6 _____

2 Cor. 9:10-11 _____

The main promise that God gives to the proper giver is that it determines if we will receive Eternal Life.

1 Tim. 6:18-19 _____

4—Because it Pleases God!

Our giving is a living biography of our life. How we use money and how we give money reveals our **hopes**, our **dreams**, our **values**, and our **priorities**. It tells us where our heart really is.

Matt. 6:21 _____

2 Cor. 8:8 _____

Proper giving proves our love to God and others. The Corinthian's voluntary gifts to help the poor saints in Jerusalem would show how much they loved! *"Love wants to please the one it loves!"* Of all whom we want to please, God should be the first one on our list to please!

Concluding Thoughts

What about our giving? Am I just ignoring the warnings the Bible gives about money? Am I truly concerned about laying up treasures in heaven? Do I really want to please God? What am I revealing about myself to others and to God in my giving or lack of it?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. God has reasons for all He commands!
- _____ 2. A person can refuse to give on the first day of the week and still be pleasing to God.
- _____ 3. Sermons on giving are out of place in our worship assembly.
- _____ 4. Covetousness is a sin that will cause us to be lost if not repented of.
- _____ 5. Achan and his whole family were stoned to death because of covetousness.
- _____ 6. It is possible that "mammon" can rule over us.
- _____ 7. Riches is said to be deceitful.
- _____ 8. Money is at the root of all kinds of evil.
- _____ 9. It is possible to err from the faith because of the love of money.
- _____ 10. God promises blessings to those who give or use their money wisely.
- _____ 11. The Prophet Malachi pointed out that God's people were giving, but not giving correctly; and were cursed because of such.
- _____ 12. Proper attitude and use of money can help us receive eternal life.
- _____ 13. Our giving can be a biography of our life.

Lesson Three

"Reasons for Poor Giving"

"Giving" has always been a part of Religion (Man's or God's). "Heathen" religions, as far back as 3800 BC, were advocating the giving of 10% to their religion. The Patriarchs, before the Law of Moses was given, seemed to realize the need of giving 10%. The Law of Moses commanded 10% as the beginning point, but were expected to help the poor also, as well as take care of their relatives who needed it. Jesus stated in Matthew 15 that their religion was vain if they did not do so. When they failed to give as they should, God called it robbery. Christ's attitude about giving was as follows:

1. He approved of the teaching of the Law on giving.
2. He approved of the Widow that gave all of her living.
3. He approved an extravagant gift of expensive oil poured over Him to anoint Him for His death.
4. He commended the Pharisees for their tithing.

However, we are under the New Testament that is based upon better promises.....and possibly expects more of us. Our righteousness is to exceed that of the Pharisees. Our mission is "world-wide!" The early Christians not only gave, but they sold possessions and gave as well. The New Testament stresses liberal, bountiful, planned, purposeful, and regular giving!

In view of the above, why do so many "Christians" give so sparingly? It is rare to find a Christian who gives 10%. How would I know that? Just do a little counting of families, estimate low on their income and take 10% of such and see what you come up with. This has been done at several places and without exception—the giving is always much lower than the figure you will come up with! Upon one occasion, I was challenged by a person about how much I put down for his income. When I showed him, he said nothing, but it was obviously lower than what he made.

In this lesson, we want to suggest at least six possible reasons for poor giving!

1. A Lack of Teaching on Giving. Some are new Christians and it may take some time before they will learn and do the things God wants. Some may have to get their finances in order. They may want to give more, but they are strapped by former decisions. It may take some time for them to work out of the problems.

1 Pet. 2:1-2

This is one of the reasons for sermons on giving—to help both new and old members of the church to learn God's will on this matter.

2. A lack of Spiritual Growth. God wants us to grow in our love and giving to His Cause and Kingdom. This growth will come from: **study, meditation, prayer, and soul-searching.** Unfortunately, many stay in the church for years and never seem to grow in this grace.

2 Cor. 8:7 _____

Is this lack of growth our fault? Have we done what we should do to grow? Or, do we want to grow in this grace also?

3. A lack of proper evaluation and appreciation of God's love to us. God has given us all that we have. He doesn't need "our" money for Himself. He wants us to learn to give for our own good! God has made His Kingdom's growth partially dependant upon our giving. But primarily our giving is to be an expression of our gratitude and love to God.

1 John 4:10; 5:3 _____

God proved His love by **GIVING!** We prove our love to God by our giving as He commands. To fail to give liberally, shows, in most instances, a lack of love. It can also show that we have failed to comprehend from whom our material prosperity comes.

1 John 2:3-4 _____

In giving, there are two persons involved—the giver and the receiver! What I decide to give may please me (the giver); but does it please God (the receiver)? If it doesn't please God, does it make any difference whether we give or not?

4. Because of Selfishness. Man tends to be selfish or self-centered from his babyhood on up. Covetousness is one of the words that show this spirit. It is called Idolatry also (Col. 3:5) because possessions come before God. Obviously, selfishness has never been God's way for man. It has never been God's spirit, nor the spirit of Christ. It should not be our spirit either—we should grow out of it!

Rom. 8:9 _____

Someone has illustrated this spirit by telling the story of a beggar who sat

begging for money. A merchant came along who had 10 pieces of money with him. He decided to give 9 of the 10 pieces to the beggar. But the beggar began to think, *"I need that other piece of money more than he does."* So, he slipped up behind the merchant, hit him, robbed him of the other piece. Would we say, ***"What an ingrate?"***

Do we reason like the beggar? Do we also say, *"We need all for self. The Church has enough....I need it more than the Church?"* God called such actions, robbing Him.

Mal. 3:8-9 _____

5. Because we do not trust God! Do we say to God, *"If I give liberally, I won't have the necessities of life?"* Do we show a distrust in His promises?

Matt. 6:33 _____

Are we saying by our failure to give liberally and bountifully, *"Lord, I don't believe what you say? I don't believe you will bless me bountifully."*

2 Cor. 9:6 _____

Do we say to God, *"Lord, just prove to me and then I will give?"* Have we really given God a chance to prove it by our giving liberally?

2 Cor. 9:8 _____

6. Because we think the Lord is unfair in expecting such liberality. Are we saying that God is unfair? Are we sitting in Judgment upon God's Law? Is that what we want to do?

Rom. 9:20 _____

Is our job to question God, or obey God? Are we speaking evil of God? Have we tried to become the Lawgiver rather than a doer of the Law? If we are a doer, we will do what God commands—liberal giving!

Concluding Thoughts

If we haven't given liberally to the Lord, please don't refuse to do so or speak against it until you try it! If you have no intentions of giving liberally, then what about your religion?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Giving has always been a part of giving.
- _____ 2. Christ wants His followers to be liberal givers.
- _____ 3. Both Jacob and Abraham either promised or gave a 10th of their prosperity.
- _____ 4. The Jews were commanded to give a 10th plus other giving under the Law of Moses.
- _____ 5. It is rare to find a Christian who gives 10% on the Lord's Day.
- _____ 6. God does not expect new Christians to give liberally.
- _____ 7. Sermons on giving should be designed to teach and motivate Christians to give liberally.
- _____ 8. Selfishness and covetousness are identical twins.
- _____ 9. Covetousness and Idolatry are the same.
- _____ 10. The beggar who stole the 10th coin is like a Christian who keeps all he makes for himself.
- _____ 11. Trust in God has nothing to do with giving.
- _____ 12. God is unfair to expect the poor to give out of their small amount.

Lesson Four

"Attitudes Connected with Giving"

One of the best examples of good attitudes in giving, to be found in the New Testament, was given by Paul, the Apostle. The Macedonians were given opportunity to help out in the effort to send money to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul's inspiring statement is found in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5:

- a) They were going through trials of affliction.
- b) But they gave out of their deep poverty.
- c) They gave even beyond their ability.
- d) They had to urge Paul to accept their offering.

A part of the secret of such giving was that they had first given themselves to the Lord.

Someone has observed: *"I am more concerned about a man's attitude toward giving than the amount that he gives."* The reason for such a belief is:

- a) If a person gives a large amount with wrong attitudes, it is not acceptable;
- b) But, if his attitude is right, the amount he gives will be right also.

In this lesson we want to look at some attitudes that are connected with giving.

Matthew 6:1-4

Is Jesus saying that it is wrong for someone to know how much I give? If so, please explain:

Matt. 5:16 _____

Matt. 6:5-6 _____

Does this condemn public prayer in our assemblies? Does it condemn prayer at the Lord's Table? What is Jesus condemning? We believe that it is the attitude or motive behind the act that He is concerned about! If our motive is to be "seen of men" or to be "praised of men;" then, we are wrong! Such fanfare is to feed one's vanity or ego; not to bring glory to God!

I do not believe that Jesus is condemning public righteousness or of even

publishing what someone gives. Jesus published the liberality of the poor widow (Mark 12:41-44). The giving of Barnabas was published (Acts 4:36-37). As long as it has a proper and righteous purpose, it should be okay for people to know. As a rule, it is generally published by someone other than the giver. I don't believe Jesus is saying that no one may know what I give; but, that no public display is made over it for the wrong purpose.

2 Corinthians 9:7

In the above passages there are two negatives and one positive in regards to attitudes.

1. Not grudgingly. Not to be given out of sorrow, grief, or with a sour reluctant mind. We are not to be grieved after it is given as so much loss. Some people part with money as though it is their life's blood.
2. Not of necessity. To be put on the spot and feel forced to give. To be compelled to give because of public opinion, or stress of circumstances. *"He who gives reluctantly never truly gives at all."*as far as God is concerned!
3. God loves a cheerful giver. One who gives and wants to give. One who finds happiness in giving to God's work to help others. It is to be convinced that this is the right thing to do to please God.

Giving is not for God's benefit, but ours! Giving is God's way of making us like Himself.....unselfish! Some advocate, *"Give until it hurts!"* But is this the right attitude? Should it hurt us to give correctly?

2 Corinthians 8:8, 24

Giving can be a clear index or indication of our love for the Lord. In this sense, "Money talks and says a lot!" Our giving or lack of it may tell more than we would desire. Usually, it is a thermometer of our spirituality. I appreciate this quote: *"If you know how a man deals with money, how he gets it, spends it, keeps it, shares it, you know one of the most important things about him."*

Does our giving reflect or prove that we love God above all else? Does our giving show we love our fellowman as much as we do ourselves? If Jesus sat next to us, would our giving be any different?

Matthew 6:33; 23:23

Giving of our possessions is not the ultimate end of Christianity. There are things more basic than giving. That is the reason why a man can give a lot and

not be right with God. This was the trouble with the religious leaders Jesus was talking to. The "weightier matters of judgment, mercy, and faith" were more important; but, don't be misled....giving is still to be done as well as the other! All are involved in our being a true and faithful servant of God.

However, if our emphasis is right, all else will be there too. We must decide which is the most important in our lives—the material or the spiritual; the kingdom of God or the kingdom of this world; or doing my own righteousness or submitting to God's righteousness. If we let God be first, He and His kingdom come before all else. We will learn to be content with what God blesses us with and our faith will be in God, not money or possessions. God will come first in our giving as well.

What do we want most out of life? What is our goal toward which we are directing our energies? Is my reliance upon my possessions or upon God? If the Lord were to demand of me to sell all and give to the poor, what would I do? Would we sell it all, or only a part? If we lost all, would we realize that our greatest treasure is still with us—knowing God and being in His Church?

Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 9:6; 8:7

Acceptable giving is bountiful or liberal giving. Liberality is a "grace" to be added to the Christian's life. Of all the "graces," giving is the most like God when it is done with the right attitudes. The early Christians exemplified this grace effectively.

A great deal of honesty with self and God is demanded here. When the question is asked, "*How much is Liberal?*", it must be asked in sincerity and without a desire to evade responsibility. When the Lawyer asked Jesus, "*Who is my neighbor?*", it seemed like he was trying to evade his responsibility! When we ask such a question sincerely, then we really want to know what the Bible teaches!

Concluding Thoughts

If we increase our contributions, it will be because of:

- a) A concern to have the right attitudes about giving;
- b) A desire to prove the sincerity of our love for God;
- c) A concern for the spreading of God's Kingdom;
- d) Or, we want to show our concern for others!

If it remains the same or goes backward, it will be because of:

- a) We do not plan to give liberally;
- b) We are not sufficiently concerned nor have a real interest in giving correctly.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. The Macedonians Christians had a very poor attitude about giving to Jewish Christians.
- _____ 2. To give a lot with the wrong attitude will invalidate the blessing.
- _____ 3. Jesus makes it very clear that it is wrong for someone to know what I give.
- _____ 4. It is wrong to pray publicly since it is a show.
- _____ 5. Giving should not be forced on people.
- _____ 6. Giving is not for God's benefit, but for our benefit.
- _____ 7. Money talks and says a lot about its owner.
- _____ 8. There are things more basic or weightier than giving.
- _____ 9. If the attitude is right, then the gift will be acceptable.
- _____ 10. Bountiful or liberal giving is a "grace" to be learned.
- _____ 11. A sincere person will not ask a question so he can evade his responsibility.
- _____ 12. Liberal giving can show a person's concern for the lost in the world.

Lesson Five

"Growth in the Grace of Giving"

The writer of the Hebrew Letter is trying to help those to whom he was writing to look closely at their lives and recognize their need for growth. He tells them plainly in Hebrews 5:11-14 that:

- a) They were dull of hearing;
- b) They were having trouble keeping a spiritual interest;
- c) They were questioning the first principles of the Gospel;
- d) They were still babies spiritually;
- e) They were not able to rightfully discern between good and bad.

In other words, they had not grown spiritually as they should. They had allowed other things to be more important in their lives. God challenges His people to grow!

Matt. 5:48 _____

2 Pet. 3:18 _____

Passages like these are dealing with an over-all growth that continues to strive for perfection or completeness in Christ. One of the areas of growth is to be in our giving.

2 Cor. 8:7 _____

We need to grow in our ability to handle and use money wisely. We need to grow in our ability to put away covetousness from our lives. And we need to grow in our ability to give sacrificially or liberally.

The Apostle identifies giving as a grace that we need to grow in. In fact, God wants His people to "abound" in this grace. The Church at Corinth excelled in **faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, and love!** They also needed to excel in their willingness to give liberally.

**Motivations for abounding
in the Grace of Giving**

Whatever we do, we do because we are **MOTIVATED** to do it! Let's look at some things that should be a help in motivating us to grow in this grace of giving.

1. Look at what other Christians are doing! The Apostle made use of the

example of the Macedonian Christians to help to motivate the giving of the Corinthians. Can we see the example of the Christians around us to help motivate us to grow in this grace. Look at what he says about these Christians at Macedonia:

1. **They gave out of a sense of joy;**
2. **They gave liberally out of their poverty;**
3. **They gave beyond their power;**
4. **They begged Paul to take the gift for the poor saints in Jerusalem;**
5. **They first gave themselves to the Lord! (2 Cor. 8:1-5)**

We need to look at the godly lives of those around us and follow their example!

2. Look carefully at the example of Christ! (2 Cor. 8:9). He gave up Heaven so that we could be saved. He was rich, but became poor so that we could become rich!

There is no activity more like God than the grace of giving (Jn. 3:16). God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (Jas. 1:17). Giving is the very essence of His nature. The underlying theme of the Bible is **God's unselfish giving to man!** The Lord's Supper each week is a continual reminder of God's great gift to man. The Lord's Supper and Giving are inseparably tied together! There should never be an apology made for the two activities together! In fact, giving is far more strongly taught and dealt with than the Lord's Supper in Scripture. It is one of the main problem areas for mankind. The Lord's Supper is a reminder of what God has done in giving to us. Our giving back to Him shows whether we appreciate His gift or not. It reflects what we have learned about God. Giving truly is a grace!

3. We are motivated to prove our love. (2 Cor. 8:8). What we give to should reflect what we are concerned about.

Matt. 6:21 _____

Do I love God? Do I love my fellow-man? Then, prove it!

1 John 3:16-18 _____

4. We are challenged to live up to our word. (2 Cor. 8:10-11). The Church at Corinth had shown a willingness a year ago to give to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul had even used their willingness to serve as an example to others to motivate them to give. Their zeal had evidently provoked many others to give (2 Cor. 9:1-5). So, live up to your word!

Do we claim to be Christians? Is Jesus really the Lord of our lives? Then, let's let Him be Lord...by growing in this grace of giving that He calls upon us to do!

5. Be sure that it is a willing offering! (2 Cor. 8:12-15). This giving may have been something beyond their normal giving—extra giving for a good cause. This may be why it is referred to as a willing offering. It was not something they had to do, but that they wanted to do because of the good that could come from such a gift! This kind of giving is the greater challenge because it is above and beyond what we are normally doing.

2 Cor. 9:5

6. Give people the assurance that the gifts will be handled honestly. (2 Cor. 8:19-21). The Apostle was making sure that they would not hold back their promised gifts because of the mishandling of these funds! He actually asked for messengers to travel with these gifts to Jerusalem to assure the giving Churches that it will be used correctly. And....these messengers could bring back a report of the results as well! Paul wanted to be sure that he left no room for questions about his integrity!

When money is being handled, every effort should be put forth to keep down any questions about who and how it is being handled! Why? So that they are above board in all of their dealings....but also, to assure and motivate those who are giving to be liberal knowing that their gifts will be used correctly.

7. God blesses the liberal, cheerful giver. (2 Cor. 9:6-11). He is bountifully blessed! God will richly provide for our needs and make it possible for us to abound in every good work. Our fruits of righteousness will increase. God will multiply what we give! What a motivations for us to give freely, willingly, cheerfully, and liberally.

8. Our giving will bless others. (2 Cor. 9:12-15). Again, we want to see others blessed.....so, we are motivated to give for their benefit. However, when we do this, we become the blessed also! Such giving will also bring glory to the God who has given generously to all!

Concluding Thoughts

With such motivation, who wouldn't want to give and give generously! God's Word provides all the motivation we need to do His Will. Let's go to it continuously for the motivation that it offers.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Christians can be dull of hearing and not grow as they should.
- _____ 2. "Growth" is a requirement of being a Christian.
- _____ 3. Growth in our giving is also a requirement of the Christian.
- _____ 4. Correct giving is identified as a "grace" in which the Christian is to "abound!"
- _____ 5. It is wrong to use examples of giving to encourage others to give.
- _____ 6. The example of Christ's giving cannot serve as an example for us.
- _____ 7. The Lord's Supper and Giving are separate acts of worship and are not identified as being alike.
- _____ 8. The proof of one's love is in the doing!
- _____ 9. If I give my word on something, I must live up to my word!
- _____ 10. A "willing offering" is something that is not pressured out of us.
- _____ 11. Honest handling of money is a must if people are to be encouraged to give.
- _____ 12. The cheerful giver not only blesses the one who receives the gift, but he is also blessed by God.
- _____ 13. It is wrong to try to motivate people to give.

Lesson Six

"The Christian and Wealth and Poverty"

A missionary was trying to raise money in the States for the mission work in which he was involved. He was asked the question: "What is the biggest danger to the church?" His answer was quickly and clearly given: "An over-emphasis upon material things, and a lack of feeling of responsibility to use our blessings for God's work." It is easy to pass off such thoughts of a missionary by saying: "He is over-zealous!" or "He doesn't understand....." or "He expects everyone to do like he does."

Before we get caught up in this kind of thinking on our part, we need to hear what Jesus said about the use of material possessions. He warns that our attitude towards possessions will determine our eternal destiny.

Luke 16:1-13—The Story of the Unjust Steward. Look at verse 11 in particular: *"If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"*

Luke 16:19-31—The Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Look at verse 23 in particular: *"And in hades he (the Rich Man) lifted up his eyes, being in torments....."*

Luke 12:16-21—The Story of the Rich Fool. Look at verse 20 in particular: *"You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided?"*

While these show the dangers of riches, there are also some things said about poverty that needs to be listened to as well. In this lesson we want to look at what should be the attitude of the Christian towards both wealth and poverty.

The Christian's attitude Toward Wealth

1. We are told not to love money, nor put our trust in it.

Luke 12:15 _____

1 Tim. 6:9-10 _____

1 Tim. 6:17 _____

Amassing possessions is not what life is all about. Such can bring grave

temptations that ensnare our soul. Yielding to these temptations can lead into foolish and hurtful lusts and all kinds of evil. It usually leads us from the Faith! It can cause many sorrows to come into our lives and eventually condemn our soul to eternal ruin.

How do you identify those who love money? Please evaluate and discuss the following thoughts:

1. **Money is the chief thing in his thoughts, desires, and actions.**
2. **To secure such is more important than doing right and good.**
3. **Indifferent to the feelings, wants, and needs of others.**
4. **Inflated ego and contempt towards others who are not "successful!"**
5. **Self-indulgence and vices that money can afford.**

It is important to know that "Money" is not what is evil; it is our attitude towards money that can be evil—how we gain it and how we use it. Money can be used wrong by feeding one's egotistical pride; or, trying to corrupt others' integrity with it; or to increase our power and control over others.

The love of Money (covetousness) has caused many sins:

1. It caused Balaam to try to curse God's people, so that he could get a lot of money.
2. It caused Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit.
3. It caused Achan to steal that which belonged to God.
4. It caused Judas to betray Christ for 30 pieces of Silver.

What do you think of this quote: "**Money is a good servant, but a dangerous master!**"

The love of Money has robbed the Lord and His Church of untold power and strength:

1. In money that should have been given to His Cause;
2. In ability that should have been used in His Service;
3. In time spent in His service;
4. In service that should have been given.

The sad thing is.....those who persist in covetousness have no hope of Heaven.

1 Cor. 6:9-10 _____

2. The Christian is encouraged to lay up treasures in Heaven.

Matt. 6:19-21 _____

1 Tim. 6:18-19

If it is laid up here, it can and will perish—maybe sooner than one might expect! If laid up in Heaven, it will be a help unto eternal life for those who do so.

What do you think of this quote found on a grave? **"Here lies a man that men thought mad; the more he gave the more he had."**

Money used selfishly has no eternal value, but when used to accomplish good, it can make a difference between our destiny being Heaven or Hell!

What do you think of this quote? **"Heaping up treasures on earth without being rich toward God means a billionaire in America can be bankrupt in Hell."**

What do you think of this quote? **"You cannot take your money with you, but you can send it on ahead."**

Again, we emphasize, it is not the possessing of, gaining of riches that is wrong, but:

1. It is gaining them in the wrong way;
2. It is the selfish hoarding for self alone;
3. It is the failure to become rich towards God;
4. It is the failure to use money righteously.

Our attitude towards possessions should be...**We are Stewards of what God has entrusted into our hands—whether great or small!** All belongs to God; He has lent it to us for good use.

1 Cor. 4:2

The more that is entrusted to us, the greater the responsibility to use it well. Constant emphasis needs to be given on the accountability of our stewardship. We will be found either....Faithful and wise Stewards; or, Wicked, Covetous, and Slothful Stewards.

The Christian's Attitude Toward Poverty

Can "poverty" be a sin? What do the Scriptures indicate?

Prov. 6:6

2 Thess. 3:10

For sure, poverty has its dangers as well! It can lead to:

1. Stealing, lying, cheating in order to secure things;
2. Being envious, jealous, and hate toward those who are better off than we are;
3. Blaming God or others for our condition;
4. Temptation to discouragement when we cannot dress like and have what others have;
5. Stop going to worship;
6. Losing the initiative or motivation to work well;
7. Begging.....and lose our independence!

But, we need to remember that it is the poor that more often see their need of God.

Jas. 2:5 _____

Poverty may be our lot in life, but we don't have to be poor spiritually here and for all eternity. Christians are also warned not to hold respect of the rich over the poor....or even vice versa.

Jas. 2:1-4, 9 _____

Christians do need to be concerned for the poverty-stricken. Look at what God's provisions were under the Law of Moses:

1. A widow's raiment could not be taken as security (Deut. 24:12-17).
2. A poor man's raiment cannot be kept overnight as security.
3. The poor were allowed to glean in the harvested fields or vineyards could not be gathered twice nor the corners at all (Deut. 24:19-22).
4. Slaves were to be set free after 7 years with the things needed (Deut. 15:12).
5. Money was to be lent to the poor without interest (Exo. 22:25).

There are also many passages that emphasize God's watch care over the poor and needy.

Concluding Thoughts

The subject of giving should be studied carefully and a commitment made to be obedient to God in all things. It may not be easy at first, but the Lord wants us to put Him to the test.....prove Him! See if He will not carry out His promise of the blessings that will come to the bountiful giver!

