

The Blessings of Giving

“I have shown you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
Acts 20:35

When we think of “blessings”, we usually think in terms of “getting” or “receiving”. Much emphasis is put on “prosperity” by modern church movements and it is the desire of many Christians. The “Full Life Study Bible” mentions, “The measure of blessing and reward we receive will be in proportion to our concern and help given to others.” It is a biblical principle mentioned in 2 Corinthians that if we “Give Generously ... Reap Generously.” However, if we “Give Sparingly ... Reap Sparingly.”

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

When we give cheerfully and generously, we are planting a seed and will reap greater blessings. Perhaps this is why in some of our churches, we shout “Offering Time...” and hear the response, “...Is Blessing Time.” Some churches also call the time for offering and/or payment of tithes “SEED TIME.” We are giving our tithes (one tenth of our income) and offerings, praising God for His blessing and expect more blessings in the future (sowing the seed knowing that we will reap the harvest in the future.) It is truly more blessed to give than to receive, because when you give you will receive again. If we give we will never lack.

“Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” (Luke 6:38)

The Bible teaches us that “**the love of money is the root of all evil.**” Money is not the root of all evil BUT the love of money. However, the Bible also says, “**money answereth all things.**” (Eccl. 10:19) Some people become trapped in living for money rather than using money to live. Obadiah 1:17 tells us to “**Possess our Possessions.**” We must be careful not to allow our possessions to possess us. We should love people and use our possessions (material things we acquire) but often we love our material things and use people to achieve the things that we want in life. It seems that people are always looking for ways to get money but money is only useful if you do something (useful) with it.

It has been said, “**People will do almost anything for money and money will do almost anything for people.**” God is really the one that owns all of our possessions, including money (Exodus 19:5; Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12).

“The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Haggai 2:8)
We just manage the resources that He provides for us. We are His stewards. A “**steward**” is one who manages, conducts, or directs the business of another.

We, as Christian stewards, exercise our responsibility over all God entrusts into our care including our time and money. A steward, according to 1 Corinthians 4:2, is required to be faithful.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
(1 Corinthians 4:2)

Faithfulness in handling money is necessary if we want God to give us more blessings. The way we spend our money is a true indicator of our priorities and the condition of our heart (Matthew 6:21) Only when we are faithful will we hear Him say, “**Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.**” (Matthew 25:21)

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“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” (Calvin Coolidge)

Rev. Michael Ntumey, in his book *“Financial Breakthrough: Discovering God’s Secrets to Prosperity,”* suggests three main aspects in the use of money: upward to God; inward to your family (1 Timothy 5:4,8); and outward to society. In this lesson I would like to look at only the first one mentioned.

upward to God

The word **“Tithe”** means, **“a tenth part.”** The **“tithe”** is one tenth of a person’s income. However, **“tithing”** does **not** stop at our income. In Bible times the **“tithe”** was also one tenth of a person’s crops and the fruit of trees. (Leviticus 27:30-32; Numbers 18:21,26; Deuteronomy 14:22-29) According to Deuteronomy 14:22, the **“tithe”** was one tenth of all increase that the people received. You can **“tithe”** on your income, crops, animals, and even your time. Cain and Abel offered firstfruits unto the Lord. (Genesis 4:3-4) When we pay our **“tithes”** we are recognizing that God has blessed us.

Michael Ntumey states that one of the major causes of **“Poverty Bondage”** is the failure to tithe properly. **“The tithe belongs to the LORD. Failure to give the tithe to God is tantamount to robbery that attracts serious consequences. This sets in motion the vicious cycle of poverty that brings one from one degree of bondage to another.”**

The focus on paying the **“tithe”** is for our blessing. (Deuteronomy 14:29) **“Tithing”** is part of God’s plan of blessing man. However, failure to pay our tithes will bring a curse into our life instead of blessing. Many people are concerned about receiving deliverance from all types of curses but it seems that little thought is given to curses that we bring upon our selves through disobedience to God’s Word. If we OBEY the Word of God by paying our tithes we will receive a BLESSING. On the other hand, if we DISOBEY the Word of God and do not pay our tithes we will receive a CURSE.

Things to Learn From Malachi

John Hopkins in his book entitled **“Christian Giving”** lists six things we can learn from Malachi 3:8-10.

1. **We can rob God by not giving our tithes and offerings to His work.**
2. **If we do not give to God we forfeit (cancel) His blessings.**
3. **We should bring tithes into the storehouse (church treasury).**
4. **The purpose of the tithe is to provide for the ministers of the gospel who work in the House of God.**
5. **We should PROVE God to see if His Word is true when He promises blessings to those who give to His work. Here is one of the few places in the Scriptures where God challenges us to try Him in something.**
6. **God promises to bless that entire tithe.**

If you have not been faithful in paying your tithes, it is a good time for you to repent, offer restitution (where possible) and start obeying the Word of God so you can reap the blessings attached.

Tithing should be the very first thing that you do when you receive your salary/income. If you postpone paying your tithes for a month or two you will find it is very difficult to pay them. You should pay your tithes each time you receive your salary. It is said, **“Life is hard, yard by yard. Life is easy, inch by inch.”** So, don’t allow your tithes to add up with the intention of one day paying it. The slightest deed done is better than your greatest intentions.

You are also exhorted in God’s Word to give offerings. God does not determine the amount you are to give. The amount you give should be according to your income. The more you earn the larger the amounts that you give. I once read, **“Give according to your income or God will make your income according to your giving.”** If you give like a poor man don’t be surprised if God makes you a poor man.

“But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a

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supply for your want: that there may be equality:" (2 Corinthians 8:14).

We came naked into this world and we will leave the same way. The only wealth/money that you can take with you will be that which is sent ahead and is invested in the "First Bank of Heaven." (Matthew 6:19-20; Phil. 4:17) Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.

You may feel like the member who complained to his pastor, "In this church there is so much emphasis on give, give, give." The pastor responded, "You have just given one of the best descriptions of Christianity that I have ever heard." (Lucille Goodyear)

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the root of all evil? _____

- 2. What is the Bible principle concerning giving in 2 Cor. 9? _____

- 3. Who owns all money according to Haggai 2:8? _____

- 4. What is meant by the "Tithe"? _____

- 5. What should we possess according to Obadiah 1:17? _____
- 6. What is a "steward"? _____

- 7. According to Michael Ntuny, what are the three uses of money? _____

- 8. What should we tithe besides money? _____

- 9. What is one of the major causes of poverty bondage? _____

10. Failure to pay tithes is described as what in Malachi 3:7? _____

11. What is the purpose of tithing? _____

12. Complete this sentence: "Give according to your income _____"

13. In the illustration ending this lesson, what did the pastor say was the best definition of Christianity? _____
