

CHRISTIAN GIVING

Money has been described as an article which may be used as a passport to everywhere except Heaven and a provider for everything except happiness. Whether you are aware of it or not, the Bible has a great deal to say about money and possessions. Over one half of the parables Jesus told had to do with money. Jesus knew that money plays a major role in a person's life, and the measure of a man's life is really what he thinks about money and possessions. What a person thinks about money reveals a great deal about that person's character and faith.

One cannot think about money and possessions, especially as it relates to the Christian life, without thinking about the subject of "**Christian Giving.**" Giving is perhaps one of the most misunderstood subjects in Christianity today. It is an extremely controversial subject. This is due primarily to the tremendous pressures exerted on God's people to give to so many worthy causes, coupled with the fact that so many in our day have misused and abused what has been given by God's people. Although these things may be a very serious concern to you as a new believer, they do not minimize your responsibility to God concerning this important matter of giving.

Now, before you can properly understand the nature of "**Christian Giving,**" you must first understand one very important truth, and that is, "*God does not need your money.*" You see God owns everything there is. Everything in the universe already belongs to Him.

The Bible says, "*The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.*" (Psalms 24:1) "*For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof*" (Psalms 50:10-12)

The purpose of this lesson is to give you an understanding of what "**Christian Giving**" is all about. It is to help you understand *what* you are to give, *why* you are to give, and *where* you are to give.

I. WHAT SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GIVE?

A. A Christian Should Give Himself To God.

1. Before a Christian can give properly, he must be willing first to give of himself.

a. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. That ye _____ your _____ a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your _____ service." (Romans 12:1)*

b. God wants you and I, as His children, to present ourselves unto Him as a living sacrifice. He wants us, not just our money and possessions.

2. The giving of oneself to God as a living sacrifice would also include the giving of one's time and talents.

a. God has given each of us time on earth with which to serve Him, and we must be careful not to waste it.

b. God has also given each of us talents and abilities that He expects us to use for His honor and glory.

3. Paul commended the poverty-stricken churches at Macedonia for giving themselves to God. (II Corinthians 8:1-5)

a. What did God bestow upon these churches that so encouraged them to give? (v. 1) _____

b. What did these churches possess that enabled them to give beyond their power? (v. 3) _____

c. What did they give first? (v. 5) _____

B. He Is To Give A Tithe To God.

1. What is the tithe?

a. The tithe is the first 10% of one's income. It is not just 10%, but rather the first 10%. To tithe then, is to present to the Lord His 10% before we use any of our income.

b. One who pays all of his bills first, and then presents to the Lord the 10% that is left over, is not really tithing.

c. *"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the _____ of all thine increase:" (Proverbs 3:9)*

2. The tithe belongs to God.

- a. "And _____ the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the _____ : it is holy unto the LORD." (Leviticus 27:30)
- b. This 10% that God requires you to give back to Him is really His already. It is not yours to do with as you see fit. It is God's and it belongs to Him.
- c. The Lord requires us to give, not because He needs it, but because of what it does for us when we do.

3. The tithe principle is found throughout the Bible.

- a. Even Abraham, who lived under the promise of grace and not under law, paid tithes to Melchisedec who was an Old Testament type of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. Therefore, the New Testament Christian should accept tithing as his minimum standard, just as the Old Testament saint accepted tithing as his commandment.

C. He Is To Give An Offering To God.

1. The Bible speaks of tithes and offerings. (*Malachi 3:8*)

- a. The tithe is the first 10% of one's income, and it belongs to God already. When we present it to the Lord it is really not a gift. It is simply returning to the Lord what is already His in the first place.
- b. An offering is what is given to the Lord above and beyond the tithe. When we go beyond the tithe, that is when we really begin to give in the truest sense.

2. As Christians, we should not stop at tithing but go far beyond the tithe in giving.

- a. "Therefore, as ye _____ in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye _____ in this grace (**the grace of giving**) also." (II Corinthians 8:7)
- b. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him _____ : not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful _____ ." (II Corinthians 9:7)

II. WHY SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GIVE?

A. Because Of Obedience

1. God commands His children to give.

a. *"Bring ye all the _____ into the storehouse saith the LORD of hosts," (Malachi 3:10)*

b. *"Upon the first day of the week let _____ of you lay by him in store ... " (I Corinthians 16:1-2)*

2. Giving is not something the church or the preacher demands, but something that God Himself commands.

a. *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the _____ of the Lord." (I Corinthians 14:37)*

b. When a Christian does not give, he is simply being disobedient to the direct command of God.

B. Because Of Honesty

1. The Bible clearly teaches that the tithe belongs to God.

a. *"And all the _____ of the land ... is the Lord's: it is holy unto the LORD." (Leviticus 27:30)*

b. In reality, everything in existence belongs to God, but God expects His children to give a portion of what He has blessed them with back to Him.

2. Since the tithe already belongs to God, when we fail to give Him that tithe, we are guilty of stealing from God.

a. God accused the nation of Israel of stealing from Him by refusing to give back to Him what was His, and He placed a curse upon them as a result.

b. *"Will a man _____ God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In _____ and _____. Ye are _____ with a _____ for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." (Malachi 3:8-9)*

C. Because Of Gratitude

1. Our God has done more for us, and He has given more to us, than we could ever hope to repay.

- a. Everything that we have, and everything that we are, has been received from the hand of the Lord.
- b. *"Every gift and every gift is from above, and cometh down from the of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)*

2. Giving to God is a wonderful way of expressing our gratitude to Him for all He has given to us.

- a. *"O give _____ unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalms 107:1)*
- b. What better way can one express thanksgiving unto God than by giving themselves *(along with their time, talents and tithe)* totally and completely unto God?

D. Because Of Faith

1. The Christian life is to be a life of faith, and giving demonstrates faith in God as the Provider of our needs.

- a. *"The just shall live by _____ ." (Romans 1:17)*
- b. *"But without _____ it is impossible to please _____ ." (Hebrews 11.6)*

2. God's Word definitely teaches that the way to receive God's blessings, and to have our needs met, is to give.

- a. *"Bring ye all the _____ 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 _____ you out a _____ , that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10)*
- b. *"Give, and it shall be _____ unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men _____ into your bosom. For with the same _____ that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. " (Luke 6:38)*

E. Because Of Love

1. Love and giving always go hand in hand.

a. "For God so _____ the world, that he _____ his only begotten Son ... " (John 3:16)

b. "Herein is _____ , not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and _____ his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (I John 4:10)

2. True love will always manifest itself in giving.

a. It has been said that a person can give without loving, but he cannot love without giving.

b. If a Christian truly loves the Lord will he give? _____

III. WHERE SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GIVE?

A. He Should Give In And Through The Place That God Has Appointed.

1. In the Old Testament, God had a special place for tithes and offerings to be presented. (Deuteronomy 12:5-6)

a. Who was it that chose this place? _____

b. What was this place called? (Malachi 3:10) _____

2. In the New Testament, that place was the local church.

a. All giving in the New Testament was done within the context of the local church ministry; therefore your primary responsibility is to your own local church.

b. Any giving outside of your local church should never be done at the expense of what God would have you do in your local church.

Conclusion: I trust you will endeavor to make giving a vital part of your Christian life. (Memorize: II Corinthians 9:7)