

## Giving

- I. The way a Christian conducts his affairs in the area of mammon says much about his character. **LUK 16:10-14.**
  
- II. Giving is a common ministry in which all saints participate. **2CO 8:4; 9:1.**
  - A. Our giving rests upon the foundation of Christ's gift. **2CO 8:9.**
  - B. Under the law, a specific amount was *commanded* to be set aside for God.
    1. There was a tithe each year for the Levite. **NUM 18:21.**
    2. There was also an annual tithe for feasts of worship. **DEU 14:22-27.**
    3. There was also a tithe every third year for the Levite and the poor. **DEU 14:28-29.**
    4. Israel was obliged to give about 23-1/3% annually in tithes.
    5. There were also soul offerings, freewill offerings, sacrifices, vows, etc.
  - C. Under the N.T., a different principle applies. **1CO 16:1-2; 2CO 9:7; ACT 11:28-29.**
    1. A personal fund instead of a central treasury is best: "...lay by him..." (**1CO 16:2**). Scripture supports the *individual's* power of decision in giving. **MAR 14:7; ACT 5:1-4.**
    2. "...in store..." (**1CO 16:2**) and "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart..." (**2CO 9:7**) as opposed to an amount mandated by law or a corporate policy, and as opposed to unplanned spastic giving. **2CO 9:2; 1TI 6:18.**
    3. "...every man according to his ability..." (**ACT 11:29**) for God honors sincere efforts, large or small. **MAR 12:41-44; 14:8; ACT 3:6.**
    4. **HEB 7:2** is not a proof of a N.T. tithing requirement. c/w **GEN 14:20.**
      - a. If a tenth is "law," then giving less *or* giving more would be wrong. **DEU 4:2; 1CO 11:2.**
      - b. Abraham gave a tenth of the *spoils* once. **HEB 7:4.**
      - c. This passage is meant to show the superiority of Melchisedec, not that Christians are bound by a tithing example of Abraham. **HEB 7:4-10.**
      - d. You are not in trouble with God if you decide to give Him a tenth/tithe unless you fudge on what you have promised or if you make this into a law that binds others. **ECC 5:4-5; JAM 4:11-12.**
  - D. Giving should come from the *firstfruits*, not the leftovers or discards. **GEN 4:4; PRO 3:9.**
    1. firstfruit: The fruits first gathered in a season; the earliest products of the soil; esp. with reference to the custom of making offerings of these to God or the gods. 2. *transf.* and *fig.* The earliest products, results, or issues of anything; the first products of a man's work or endeavour.
    2. Our first bill due is God's cut.
  - E. Giving should be *proportional* from the *increase*. **PRO 3:9; 1CO 16:2.**
  - F. Give from current resources as able. **LUK 11:41; 2CO 8:11-12.**
  - G. Give willingly, generously and cheerfully. **1CO 16:3; 2CO 8:12; 9:6-7.**
  - H. Poverty is not an excuse to give nothing. **MAR 12:41-44; 2CO 8:1-4.**
  - I. Give without self-promotion (**1CO 13:3-5; MAT 6:1-4**). The lack of a tax benefit is a poor excuse to not give.
  - J. Giving is a sacrifice which pleases God. **HEB 13:16.**
  
- III. God commands us to give for:
  - A. the support of the ministry. **1CO 9:13-14; GAL 6:6; 1TI 5:17-18.**
  - B. the relief of the genuinely poor. **DEU 15:7-8; GAL 2:10.**
    1. Things "needful to the body" are our *obligation*. **JAM 2:15-16.**
    2. Charitable relief beyond that is *optional* at our discretion, governed by the law,

“...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (ROM 13:9).

3. Folly should not be subsidized. **PRO 1:32; 2TH 3:10.**
4. The order of priority in charitable relief is:
  - a. the needy within one’s own family. **1TI 5:4, 8.**
  - b. the needy within one’s own church, especially destitute widows and orphans. **GAL 6:10; JAM 1:27.**
  - c. the needy in other churches of *like precious faith*. **ACT 11:29.**
  - d. the needy outside the faith as opportunity is presented. **GAL 6:10.**
  - e. other godly support as wisdom and discretion direct.

IV. Avoid muddy thinking. Think according to the two great commandments. **MAR 12:29-31.**

- A. “I can’t afford to give.” *Ans.* You can’t afford not to give. Don’t accuse God of error.
- B. “I’d like to help him/her but I already gave my ‘tithe’ to the church.” *Ans.* Dig deeper, and consider Paul’s wisdom. **1CO 16:2.**
- C. “I just don’t think of my giving as an obligation.” *Ans.* Do you think of other obligations that way: mortgage, utilities, taxes, etc.?
- D. “Others will pick up the tab.” *Ans.* What if they think the same? This is covetousness.
- E. “God will just make things work out if I don’t give.” *Ans.* This is magical thinking, not the godly obedience of faith.
- E. Concerning ministerial support:
  1. “The pastor is supposed to follow Paul who opted not to receive support in **1CO 9:12-15.**”
    - a. It was his *option*, and one he later regretted (**2CO 11:7-8; 12:13**). He had deprived them of a blessing. **ACT 20:35.**
    - b. Paul had no wife or children to support.
  2. “The pastor is supposed to be prepared to work an extra job like Paul (**ACT 20:34**) so I should scale down my support.”
    - a. Maybe the pastor should work two or three other jobs and then you won’t have to support him at all?
    - b. Would you work for an employer who treated you this way?
  3. “The pastor seems to be getting ahead in life so I will cut back my support.”
    - a. What if the pastor has other revenue that he uses?
    - b. So you want to penalize sagacity and success?
    - c. Would you work for an employer who treated you this way?
  4. “The pastor’s wife works so I can scale back my support accordingly.”
    - a. Maybe if she worked two or three jobs you could stop support entirely?
    - b. Would you work for an employer who thought like this?
  5. “I support the pastor when I remember or feel like it.”
    - a. How does your mortgage or utility company feel about this approach?
    - b. Would you work for an employer who thought like this?

V. Failure in giving is generally owing to a lack of faith: one doesn’t genuinely believe the promises of blessing or cursing in this matter.

- A. God promises to judge those who fudge. **HAG 1:4-11; MAL 3:8-9; 2CO 9:6.**
- B. God promises to bless those who give. **MAL 3:10; PRO 3:10; MAT 6:33; LUK 6:38.**
- C. (**ISAM 2:30**) Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.
- D. (**2CO 9:15**) Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.