

# The Bible's Teaching On Giving

## Introduction

This article is a sermon preached by a Pastor Dean Allen at a conference on Financial Stewardship. I shall share some extracts from the message that we might also learn the important biblical teaching on giving.

## Giving to God is Commanded in the Scripture

Giving money is voluntary, but it is not optional. We are commanded in Holy Scriptures to give, and we are to give willingly and proportionately. Until we have given willingly, we have not really obeyed the commandment to give. It follows that when we return our tithes of ten percent unto the Lord, we have not paid up to God our dues if we have not given our tithes out of a loving heart. 2 Cor 9:7 says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

A quick survey of the Bible will easily convince us that giving is a scriptural injunction. The Apostle Paul commanded the Corinthians in 1 Cor 8:11, "Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have," and in verse 24, "Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf." Paul was challenging and directing the Corinthians to prove the sincerity of their love towards God (v. 8) by following the good example of the Macedonians who had been giving sacrificially, willingly and out of their deep poverty (vv. 1-3).

In Acts 20:35, Paul told the elders of Ephesus, "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring 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." He exhorted them to follow his example to give than to receive as taught by the Lord Himself. Luke 6:38 says, "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."

Clearly giving is commanded in the Holy Scripture and is a privilege for all believers. Let us therefore obey the Scriptural injunctions by giving voluntarily and cheerfully to the building of God's home and His work.

## Giving to God is Encouraged in the Scripture

The Bible encourages us to give by showing us praiseworthy examples. Think about the examples of the Macedonians. Do we have their spirit who gave out of the depths of their hearts, whether it is much or little? They hardly needed to be asked. Do we need to be reminded always that the church has got some needs here and we should respond with practical love? The reason why the Holy Spirit has put the praiseworthy example of the Macedonians in the Holy Scriptures is that we might be encouraged to do good in giving. I share the same sentiment as the author that we should have a sense of holy

competitiveness in order not to lack behind any church in giving to the Lord's work. Though we may be small, we still can compete for God's blessings by giving liberally, in as much as we have been receiving abundantly. Let us give freely that the Lord will bless us with more to give. The Lord Jesus Himself taught us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. He showed us the example of the poor widow even out of her poverty. Though her two mites were less than any other, they were more than all the others. The Lord did not say to her that since she had so little money to make a living, she did not have to give. In fact the Lord praised her in front of all, that she had set a good example of devotion to God. He welcomed and accepted her giving sacrificially of her all substance. She is a godly model for us to emulate today.

Let us learn to put God first before our own concern (Col 3:1). Elijah told the starving widow who had just enough left for one little meal to feed him first. It was to teach the poor widow to put God's interest first and see Him work marvellous things (1 Ki 17:8-16). Let us seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Brethren, surely God is worthy of our trust and love and devotion. Let us put more faith in Him and honour the Lord with our time and substance. If we hold back in giving to the Lord, we just have to miss the great opportunity to experience how God works in our lives. There are laudable examples in the Bible that encourage us in giving to the Lord's work. Let us learn the lessons well and practise them.

#### Giving to God is Regulated in the Scripture

The Bible teaches us to give proportionately. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Give as God has prospered us. God is realistic and gracious. Although all that we have belongs to God, He does not expect us to put all in the offering bag. He knows we have needs to provide for our family and to support others who are need. So the teaching is proportionate giving, the principle taught in the OT; ie tithing or 10% of our income (Gen 14:17-20; Deut 12:10-11; 17-18). We do not give until we are broke, but we give until we are blessed. Give willingly according to our ability and as the Lord blesses us. The saved tithe belongs to the Lord. Let us honour God first in both substance and spirit.

The Bible also teaches us to give regularly. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store." Give every Sabbath when we gather for regular worship. There is to be systematic and purposeful giving, not haphazard. We still have to be sensitive to the Lord's prompting in giving.

The Lord requires us to give willingly, selflessly, honourably, and worshipfully. (Do we give God our loose cheque and notes when the offering bag comes around?) Giving, as in worship, is to be carried out with preparation. We need to plan to give. Do not wait till the offering bag is passed to us then we start digging into our pockets. If there is no plan, there is no conviction in the offering. Pray and consider our giving ahead of time so that we can give honourably to the Lord in holy worship. It is not enough just to give. We need to give from the heart. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt 6:21). When we give, let us give honourably and worshipfully and God is well pleased.

## Conclusion

Prov 3:9,10 say, “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” Let us take up the challenge from God. “Prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal 3:10). Do we rob God today or do we truly put God first in our lives in employment of our time, talent and treasure and stewardship of earthly possession. Let us be a blessing and a faithful steward of God’s resource. May the Lord help us to have greater faith in God and be faithful and responsible givers to His work. Let us joyfully practise the biblical doctrine of giving for His glory.

Preacher Tan Kian Sing  
Berean BPC

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