

Words of Truth

What Does Your Giving Say About You?

By: Brian A. Yeager

The inspired Apostle Paul penned these words: *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 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”* (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Herein, Christians find that God expects us to give upon the first day of the week. Our giving ought to reflect our prosperity. God’s work in this is in His blessing us with the abilities we use in obtaining gainful employment (Deuteronomy 8:17-18; cf. I Peter 4:11). We should want to give not only because we’re commanded to, but also because we realize all that we have ultimately is because of our Creator.

The instruction and reason to give is not just good enough for some. People take the instruction to give in I Corinthians 16:1-2 and twist those verses to excuse themselves from giving. Some have concluded that those Scriptures mean that if they have not received a paycheck this week, then they do not have to give. Does the text you read say: *“if you prospered this week...”*? Of course it does not. Besides that, our prosperity is not measured just by what we’ve *“brought in”* this week, but includes what we have in storage (banks, barns, investments, etc.) as well (Proverbs 3:9-10). Others have excused their bad giving habits by saying: *“I’ll give when the treasury is down to nothing since the church has enough now to do what is needed”*. Did Paul write a command to give on the first day of the week only when the Lord’s money is depleted? Again, the text did not say that either. In fact, Paul wanted to be sure there were funds ready to do the Lord’s work so that there was not a collection when he came to take those funds to those in need. Read the text again, that is the simple truth. We do not need to give based on what is in the treasury, but because we’re prosperous. In addition, we do not want to *“store up”* our funds here on earth, but invest in spiritual work to have treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21).

Besides the excuses people find by twisting the Scriptures, there are also those who simply like to give as little as possible. Some do not realize this is a heart problem. Others almost have to be forced to give. They do not realize that their giving is not right with such a mindset. Notice what the Scriptures say about giving too little and also about giving grudgingly: *“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”* (II Corinthians 9:6-7).

There are many excuses that people use to avoid the command to give on the first day of the week. We certainly are not aiming to deal with all of those excuses. What we do want to examine is that, regardless of the excuse, the way we give to the Lord does say something about us. Our giving may reflect how much we love the Lord and the work the local church is to do. On the other hand, our giving could reflect the exact opposite. Additionally, how little we give or how much we give is not necessarily what makes our giving right or wrong either. Our study will continue, as we all should reflect on what our giving says about us.

Our Giving Does Say Something About Us!

There was a certain widow who showed the proper mentality toward giving. In this example, you will see that Jesus says our giving says something about us. Notice how Jesus spoke about giving in relation to this certain widow: *“And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living”* (Mark 12:41-44).

In the example above you have a widow who gave two mites. Easton’s Lexicon says that a mite is the equivalent of about one half of a penny. Smith’s Bible dictionary says a mite is the equivalent of about one fifth of a penny. Others say that a mite is the equivalent to a penny. Regardless of what a mite actually was, the widow gave very little in amount in comparison to what others gave. What she did different than those who gave much is one of the big lessons though. Those who gave much gave out of their abundance. She gave all she had. Even in deep poverty, a real Christian will give to the Lord and His work (II Corinthians 8:1-4).

Outside of the widow and her two mites, we can find an Old Testament example to consider next. Notice this text: *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation”* (Malachi 3:8-9). I know we are not under the Old Law now and thus we do not “tithe” (Romans 7:1-6, Ephesians 2:11-17, and Hebrews 9:15-17). However, the point is still there as we can learn principles from the Old Testament (Romans 15:4 and I Corinthians 10:1-11).

In Malachi 3:8-9 we find that God views those who do not give to Him as thieves. Listen, rather than seeking to gain funds by withholding what is due to God, we should work harder to “make ends meet” (Ephesians 4:28). Stealing is not something we want to be doing (Romans 13:9). This is especially true when it comes to funds that are due to Him (Acts 5:1-10). If you withhold what you should be giving to God, your lack of giving says you’re a thief.

Conclusion

Now, we all have to reflect upon our giving (II Corinthians 13:5). We have to ask ourselves what our giving or lack thereof says about our love for God and the work He’s assigned to the local church. We all have to consider how the Lord became poor that we might spiritually be rich (II Corinthians 8:9). In considering that fact, we have to ask ourselves what we can learn about giving from the example our Lord showed us when He gave up the comforts of Heaven to come and die in this world.

Do you find it is better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)? In the context that I just cited, Paul is talking about supporting the weak. However, the principle is certainly part of the study we’ve had in this article. Are you a giver or a taker? We are all willing to receive all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). We are willing to accept all of what it means to be redeemed (Titus 2:11-14 and I Peter 1:18-19). Is it such a large task to give back to the Lord what He blessed us with seeing as how we’re so willing to take all He provides? Our giving should say “THANK YOU”! What does your giving say?