

WHAT ABOUT OUR GIVING?
1Cor.16:1-4; 2Cor.8:11,12
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. As suggested by our title, this study pertains to our giving of our material means, or our laying by in store of our material means.
2. The purpose of the lesson is to examine some of the scriptural truths about our giving – some of the do's and don'ts of our giving.

II. DISCUSSION

A. WHO IS TO GIVE OR LAY BY IN STORE?

1. 1Cor.16:2 says, "...let every (each) one of you lay by in store..."
2. Each and every one of "you" is commanded to do so.
3. The "you" in this case refers to Christians, to members of the body of Christ.
4. Non-Christians are not expected to give. And we do not expect visiting non-members to contribute. So you need not feel obligated to do so, or feel bad if you do not do so!

B. WHEN AND WHERE ARE WE TO GIVE OR LAY BY IN STORE?

1. 1Cor.16:1-4; Ac.2:44,45; 4:34,35; 11:27-20 teach that we are to:
 - a. Lay by in store upon the first day of the week, 1Cor.16:1,2.
 - (1) That means "every" first day of the week. The natural import of the language used necessarily infers this.
 - (2) Cf. Exo.20:8 and the language concerning keeping the Sabbath day under the law of Moses: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."
 - (a) What is the natural import of the language here?
 - (3) Cf. Ac.20:7 and the language concerning the time when the disciples observed the Lord's Supper under Apostolic guidance (Ac.2:42): "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..."
 - (a) Again, what is the natural import of the language here? What is necessarily inferred by it?

- (b) Is it not the same as that in Exo.20:8 concerning keeping the Sabbath day holy?
 - (c) This is the “often” in “as often as” of 1Cor.11:26 – that’s how often we are to partake of the Lord’s Supper – every 1st day of the week.
 - (4) Thus our giving or laying by in store, like gathering to observe the Lord’s Supper, is to be done on the 1st day of the week, not the 2nd day, or the 5th day, etc.
 - (5) Other acts of work and worship may be done on any day of the week, but not our giving or our observing the Lord’s Supper. They are limited as to time – to the 1st day of the week.
- b. Lay by in store placing it into the local church treasury, 1Cor.16:1-4 (emp. “that there be no gatherings [collections, NKJV] when I come”)
- (1) There was to be no “laying by in store at home” with it being gathered up or collected when Paul came for their contribution for the needy saints in Jerusalem.
 - (2) It was laid by in store in the local church treasury.
 - (3) There is no record or and therefore no divine authority for laying by funds at home in one’s private treasury for which the local church is to use for its work, and then bringing it forth when a need arises.
 - (a) Besides, there is always a need if the local church is always fulfilling its mission in all areas of responsibility!
 - (4) Cf. Ac.4:34,35 which indicates a common treasury, a church treasury, when speaking of the funds contributed for the needy. It says: “And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”
 - (5) Ac.11:27-30 also indicates local church treasuries. For V.30, speaking of the funds sent from the Antioch church by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, as their messengers, says they “sent it to the elders.”
 - (a) What elders?
 - (b) Since it was sent as “relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea,” and not just unto needy brethren in Jerusalem, then the elders to whom it was sent had to

have been the elders of the churches in Judea where the brethren were in need, whose elders then made distribution of the funds to their own needy members.

C. WITHOUT GIVING THE LOCAL CHURCH HAS NO SCRIPTURAL MEANS OF RAISING ITS FINANCES WITH WHICH TO SUPPORT ITS GOD-ORDAINED WORK OR MISSION.

1. 1Cor.16:1,2 contains divine authority for and reveals how the local church is to raise its money.
2. 1Cor.16:1,2 does not exhaust divine authority for how or what the local church spends its funds in fulfilling its divine mission.
 - a. For its funds are to be used not only for its benevolent, as in this case, but for evangelism and edification and to provide for its public worship services.
3. There is no divine authority for the local church to raise money to support its God-ordained work of evangelism, edification, benevolence, and to provide for its public worship services except as its own members give or their means or lay by in store on the 1st day of the week!
 - a. If so where is it found in the Scriptures? Bk, Ch, and Verse?
4. The local church cannot scripturally:
 - a. Solicit money from non-members or local businesses.
 - b. Operated farms or other business enterprises by which or through which to earn money or for any other purpose.
 - c. Conduct bake sales, pie suppers, garage sales, etc., etc., to raise its money.
 - d. Put its members to work for it to earn money from which to finance the work and worship of the church.
5. I repeat, it's a Bible truth. Without our giving, our laying by in store, as commanded in 1Cor.16:2, the local church has no scriptural means of raising its finances with which to support its God-ordained mission and work.
6. Question: If we continually and habitually keep putting ourselves so far in debt that we cannot give according to the scriptural standard of giving, are we excused from our duty to give? Can we do that with impunity? That is, can we do that without being guilty of sin?

D. WITHOUT OUR GIVING OR LAYING BY IN STORE AS COMMANDED IN 1COR.16:2, THE LOCAL CHURCH THEREFORE HAS NO FINANCIAL MEANS BY WHICH TO CARRY OUT ITS

DIVINE MISSION OF EVANGELISM, EDIFICATION, BENEVOLENCE, AND/OR TO PROVIDE FOR ITS PUBLIC WORSHIP SERVICES.

1. Therefore, without our giving the local church organization exists but cannot function. *All of this is true because:*
2. Its work of evangelism requires it to financially support preachers of the gospel, 1Cor.9:1-14; 2Cor.11:8,9; Phil.1:3-5; 4:14-17.
 - a. This is support of preachers of the gospel that is identified as “wages”, not benevolence nor charity!
3. Its work of edification and providing for its public worship services requires a meeting place that requires finances for buildings, utilities, teaching materials, and other necessary supplies.
4. At times it may have needy saints of its own members whose needs are to supplied from its treasury. Cf. 1Tim.5:16.
5. Also, it may even be called upon to come to aid of and have need of supplying financial help to needy saints in other local churches in other areas of the country, 1Cor.16:1-3; 2Cor.8; 2Cor.9; Rom.15:25-27. See also Ac.11:27-30.

E. SOME OTHER TRUTHS ABOUT OUR GIVING.

1. We are to give as God has prospered us, 1Cor.16:2; Cf. 2Cor.8:11,12, which is parallel to 1Cor.16:2 – teaching the same truth.
 - (But how do we determine if and when God has prospered us?)
 - a. If we are able to house, feed, clothe, and educate ourselves and our family, then God has prospered us.
 - b. If we are able to afford reasonable means of transportation for ourselves and for our family, then God has prospered us.
 - c. If we are able to finance even a small amount of recreation and personal pleasure in some form or forms for self and family, then God has prospered us.
 - d. If we are able to enjoy and finance a short vacation once-in-awhile, then God has prospered us.
 - e. If we are in a position to plan for any kind of future earthly retirement for work, then God has prospered us.
 - f. If any of these or other similar things can be true in our case, then there is no excuse for our failure to give according to God’s standard of giving to support the work of the local church of which we are members! And we sin if we fail to do so!

2. We are to abound in the grace of giving just as we are to abound in faith, utterance, knowledge, all diligence, and in love; that is, we are to give bountifully, generously, liberally, 2Cor.8:7-9; 2Cor.9:5-7,12-13.
 - a. But what is bountiful, generous, liberal giving?
 - b. If 99% of every dollar I earn is used for me and mine, and only 1% is given to the Lord by laying by in store, is that liberal giving?
 - c. If \$99 out of every \$100 I earn is continually and habitually spent on me and mine for whatever reason, and \$1 of every \$100 earned is given for the work of the Lord's church, can I honestly say that is giving bountifully, liberally, sincerely?
 - d. What about the ratio of \$98 for me and mine, and \$2 for the Lord? Giving liberally? \$96 to \$4? \$95 to \$5?

3. Another obvious truth: Our giving according to the standard that God requires of us will depend upon our first giving ourselves to the Lord as did the Macedonian Christians, 2Cor.8:5 (Cf. Vv.1-5).

F. FINALLY, WHEN I DETERMINE FROM A SINCERE HEART HOW MUCH I SHOULD GIVE TO MEET GOD'S STANDARD OF GIVING ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, WHAT PORTION OF THAT SHOULD I GIVE INTO THE TREASURY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH OF WHICH I AM A MEMBER?

1. All of it or just a part of it? What do the Scriptures indicate? Take a close, serious look at what the N.T. says about this matter!
2. Do the Scriptures indicate that we can divide up our contribution and give a part of it into the local church treasury and give part of it to something else or someone else on our own no matter how worthy we might deem the cause?
3. Suppose one of the Bible classes in the local church decides to do a work on its own, then take up a collection from its members to finance that work. Can its members use a portion of their contribution for that work and contribute the remaining portion into the local church treasury?
4. Does a Bible class have the scriptural right to by-pass the local church with a project supported by a portion of its members' contribution?
5. Suppose each member of the local church decided to use a portion of their contribution to support some work, as individuals or otherwise, no matter how worthy they might consider the work to be.

- a. If this should happen, what would happen to the local church's ability to finance its God-ordained work of evangelism, edification, benevolence, and providing for its public worship services?
6. Do the members of the local church have the scriptural right to by-pass the local church with a portion of their 1st day of the week contribution and carry out their own individual work?
7. When visiting another congregation on the 1st day of the week, where should I give my contribution?
 - a. At my home congregation, of course! That's the spiritual family of God I'm obligated to support.
 - b. Either leaven my contribution or bring it back when I return.
 - c. The same as when out of town away from my physical family and home. All obligations continue, bills, etc.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Are these things to which I have called your attention really Bible, scriptural truths, or mere human opinions?
2. If one or more of these is a mere human opinion, which one is it?
3. If they are truly scriptural truths, then are we not scripturally bound to believe, teach, obey and faithfully practice them?