

WHAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GIVING

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The principle of truth Jesus taught his chosen apostles in Jno. 13:17 concerning humility and a willingness to serve others is applicable in other areas of the faith of Jesus Christ, including the service of giving as we have been prospered.
2. Applied to our present topic of giving, as Jesus said in Jno.13:17: “If ye know these things, happy (blessed) are ye if ye do them.”
3. First we shall examine the N.T. to learn what we should know about giving in order to be happy or blessed in doing them as the Lord taught in Jno.13:17.
4. To learn this, our study shall be subdivided into three sections as follows:
 - 1st : Encouraging examples of great givers of the Bible.
 - 2nd: Some scriptural particulars about giving.
 - 3rd: A practical point on giving.

II. DISCUSSION

A. ENCOURAGING EXAMPLES OF GREAT GIVERS OF THE BIBLE, FROM WHICH WE LEARN MUCH

1. God, Almighty, was, and is, a great giver.
 - a. Jno.3:16 – Consider this as to its greatness.
 - (1) “For God” (the greatest Being)
 - (2) “So loved” (the greatest thing or act)
 - (3) “the world” (the greatest number; all human beings)
 - (4) “that he gave his only begotten Son” (the greatest gift)
 - (5) “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish” (the greatest blessing, avoiding the greatest tragedy)
 - (6) “but have everlasting life” (the greatest reward)
2. The poor widow is cited by Jesus himself as an example of a great, unselfish, sacrificial, blessed giver, in contrast to the rich, hypocritical Jews who devour widows houses, Mk.12:38-44.

- a. They cast in much; but it was out of their abundance, out of their riches; it as no real sacrifice; nor was it giving as prospered on their part.
 - b. She by contrast cast in little – only two mites, or a farthing.
 - (1) A mite was the smallest coin in use among the Jews at that time.
 - (2) It was much less than any we have today according to Barnes Notes.
 - c. She went beyond giving as prospered; she gave of her want; out of her extreme poverty, she cast in all that she had, even all her living.
 - d. The Lord said, “That this poor widow hath cast more in, than they all.”
 - e. The Lord commended and blessed here for her sacrifice. Who am I to even think about suggesting she was foolish for such a sacrifice?
3. The early Christians, including Barnabas, at the time of Pentecost, are cited as examples of great and generous givers, when an extreme emergency arose, Ac.2:41-44; 4:31-37.
- a. First note what they did.
 - b. Note the occasion that brought about the need for this outpouring of such sacrificial love on behalf of their brethren.
 - c. Then from the infamous example of Ananias and Sapphira, which follows immediately in Ch.5:1-11, we learn that those of Ac.2 and Ac.4 were not commanded to do what they did.
 - (1) It was voluntary on their part.
 - (2) They saw a need. They supplied the need at great personal sacrifice!
 - (3) No wonder they are cited as an example of great and generous givers.
4. Another Bible example of great and generous givers is that of the Macedonian Christians of 2Cor.8:1-5, when a special need among the saints arose.
- a. Paul cited the Macedonians as an example for the Corinthian Christians to follow, Vv.1,7.
 - b. The Christians in Macedonia:
 - (1) Gave while under affliction, V.2.

- (2) Gave with abounding joy, V.2.
- (3) Gave with abundant liberality even while in “deep poverty,” V.2.
- (4) Willing of themselves, gave “beyond their power,” V.3.
- (5) Beseeched Paul with much supplication that their gift be received that they might have fellowship in this ministering to the needy saints in Jerusalem, V.4. Cf. 1Cor.16:1-3.
- (6) In their giving went beyond what Paul had hoped in their case and did so because, as he said, “first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by (through) the will of God,” V.5.

B. SOME SCRIPTURAL PARTICULARS ABOUT GIVING TO BE LEARNED AND PRACTICED.

1. Giving of our means is obligatory, required, 1Cor.16:1.
 - a. This phrase is equivalent to a command: “as I have given order” – Berry’s lit. trans: “as I directed” Cf. 1Cor.7:17.
 - (1) It is just as much a command as:
 - (a) “Go ye into all the world,” of Mk.16:15.
 - (b) “Repent and be baptized” of Ac.2:38.
 - (2) The word “order” (Gr. “diatasso – dee-at-as’-so) “to give orders to, prescribe, to appoint, to ordain”
 - (3) The original word employed here is not only used in reference to a command, but it means command plus “arrangement.”
 - (a) In other words, God has given a definite plan, order, and arrangement for the financing of his own work.
 - b. To answer the quibble sometimes offered that this only speaks of the local church raising and expending its money for its benevolent work.
 - (1) Yes, but other passages reveal that the local church expended its money for it other God-ordained works; such as: evangelism and edification.
 - (2) This is the only scriptural means the local church has for raising its money; it is not the only reason it has for expending it!

2. Giving of our means is specific, relative to time, 1Cor.16:2a.
 - a. “Upon the first day of the week,” KJV; ASV.
 - b. The original Gr. text is literally: “Every first day of the week.”
 - c. Williams translation: “On the first day of every week.”
 - d. Our course, this is implied even in the KJV and ASV by the natural import of the language. Cf. Ac.20:7; Exo.20:8
 - e. The 1st day of the week is the day early Christians assembled for worship. Cf. Ac.20:7.
 - f. It was the Lord’s day: the day the Lord arose from the dead to die no more.

3. Giving of our means is to be personal, 1Cor.16:2b.
 - a. “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store.”
 - b. This by principle and application refers to every member of every local church, every baptized believer making up the membership of the church.
 - c. Every Christian has as much responsibility to give of their means on every first day of every week as they do to partake of the Lord’s supper on every first day of the week.

4. Giving of our means is to be deliberate, 1Cor.16:2.
 - a. The text says, “let every (each) one of you lay by him in store.”
 - b. “The Greek word employed here is titheto, which is the present active imperative, and means ‘I set, or I place.’ The imperative mood signifies the obligatory nature of the matter, and the present tense stresses the continuous action prescribed.

“So, the rendering might be: ‘Keep on setting aside.’ ‘Let him set it apart; let him designate a certain portion; let him do this by himself, when he is at home, when he can calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity. Let him do it, not under the influence of pathetic appeals, or for the sake of display when he is with others; but let him do it as a matter or principle, and when he is by himself.’”

-- Neil Richey, Article, What Should I Know About Giving? , Power, Feb., 2007, Vol. 16, No.2.

(Note: Not lay by in store “at home” but “when he is at home let him determine such matters, purposing in his heart before hand.)

5. Giving of our means is to be proportionate, or as prospered, 1Cor.16:2: “As God as prospered him.”
 - a. Our giving must be properly proportionate to our material blessings – our income.
 - b. 2Cor.8:7 adds this thought: “Therefore, as ye ***abound*** in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.”
 - (1) To abound carries the idea of “be plentiful; be rich; flourish; be well supplied; overflow with.”
 - (2) Cf. 2Cor.9:6,7.
 - c. This sacred principle is set forth in the following passages: 2Cor.8:11,12; Lk.12:48.
 - d. With the proper understanding, attitude of heart and mind, love for the truth, and the work of the local church, why should it be difficult to decide how much I should give? How much is liberal?
6. Our liberal contribution on the first day of the week is to be placed into the local church treasury, not laid by in store at home, 1Cor.16:2: “that there be no (no need for) gatherings when I come.”
 - a. Early on the local churches had a church treasury. Cf. Ac.4:34,35; 6:1-6; 11:27-30.

C. A FINAL PRACTICAL POINT ON GIVING OF OUR MEANS

1. Neglecting to give as we have prospered, among other things, means we are guilty of the sin of robbing God. Cf. Mal.3:8.
2. Neglect is detrimental to the soul, Heb.2:1-3.
3. When and if through neglect we rob God, we are making several value statements about ourselves. If I am guilty, I am saying:
 - a. “I am ungrateful for what you have done for me Lord.” Cf. “but where are the nine,” Lk.17:17.
 - b. “I haven’t reached the proper understanding of how important it is to my soul and to the work of the local

church, and to the Cause of Christ to give as I have prospered.”

- c. “My material benefits realized even if I must rob God to enjoy them are justified in my sight.”

III. CONCLUSION

1. Our purpose in this study has been to emphasize what Christian should know about giving.
2. First, we cited four encouraging examples of great givers of the Bible which teach us.
 - a. God, Almighty, was, and is, a great giver, Jno.3:16.
 - b. The poor widow is cited by Jesus himself as a great, unselfish, sacrificial, blessed giver, in contrast to the rich, hypocritical Jews who devour widow’s houses, Mk.12:38-44.
 - c. The early Christians, including Barnabas, at the time of Pentecost, are cited as examples of great and generous givers when an extreme emergency arose as in Ac.2:41-45; 4:31-37.
 - d. The Macedonian Christians are cited as an outstanding example of generous giving when a special need among the saints arose, 2Cor.8:1-5.
3. 2nd, We examined some scriptural particulars about giving to be learned and practiced.
 - a. Giving of our means is obligatory, required, 1Cor.16:1.
 - b. Is specific, relative to time, 1Cor.16:2a.
 - c. Is to be personal, 1Cor.16:2.
 - d. Is to be deliberate, 1Cor.16:2.
 - e. Is to be proportionate, or as prospered, 1Cor.16:2.
 - f. Is to be placed into the local church treasury, not laid by in store at home, 1Cor.16:2. If we neglect to give accordingly, we are guilty of robbing God.
5. Let us learn and practice these truths to the saving of our souls and those of others through the work of the local church promoted by faithfulness in giving as prospered.
6. Remember this: There is and always will be a need for monetary means in the performance of the work of the local church.