

A LESSON IN GIVING

I always find it amazing how that people read the bible, but only apply “One-two-pick a few” of the verses to make a particular point. Many times if we would continue to read, we would see a little more. As is in the case of “Giving” in a church; is it possible to “Over give?” Should I be giving more because I have more? Does my last bit of money go to my family or the house of the Lord first? Giving foolishly?!?!? Is there even such a thing?

Surely we’ve all been condemned at some point in time because we didn’t feel as though we “Gave enough.” I’ve been there; it seemed like every time there was a special offering for the church, or a passing through minister, I was strapped for cash. Yes, though I did feel bad, it made me wonder sometimes though, “Why am I always broke?” If I continually “Pay my tithe” and “Give my offering,” then how come I still have no money after many years of being a faithful Christian? Ever wonder about that, I know I did. That part just never made since to me; the preacher taught it, we lived it, and believed that God would truly bless “A Cheerful giver.” But why did it always seem like the sinners were better off than I was? Could it be that they were actually saving money for their future and had money put aside to take vacations, buy cars, and clothes. Is it possible that they took their hard earned money, and put it to the test by opening a business establishment that produced an ample amount of dividends? Hey, I know what it was; because the wife also worked along with her husband, there was money enough with plenty to spare for the “Fun” (bad word, please forgive me) things of life. Yes, this made since because... well no it didn’t because if we are Gods people, then even if the husband just worked, then that means God would make up the difference financially. But many times I personally found myself without money, food, and adequate transportation, even while trusting in God, even while managing my money, even while paying my tithe, even while giving in the offering, but why? But the pastor, oh, he was living reeeaal goood, but not me.

This is real stuff here people, and there is a real answer as to why bad things happen to good people, and why the sinner is seemingly allowed to prosper (at the expense of the Christian) while the Christian seemingly fails to do so. It is very unfortunate if you should find yourself later on in years without the proper financial means necessary to survive. Although you can plan on a church taking care of you, don’t bank on it, think ahead and make the appropriate provisions for your future while there is still time to do

so. These days it seems as though Gods “People are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Here we serve the wisest God of all, and yet, we still can’t differentiate the difference between “Giving to God” and being “Taken by a church.” Lest move on to some scriptures:

Mark 12:38-44 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. 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.

In this passage we see two types of people; one of great wealth, and the other of great poverty. As we examine the two characters in this setting, we notice that they both gave of their finances, but one thing in particular differentiates them. Those who were rich gave much, because they had much to give, and much to spare. However, the one who was poor, had nothing to spare, but she gave what she had anyway.

Now surely there is a lesson to be learned here, but what is it? Is the lesson a message for the Christian believer to give everything until they become poor? Well that makes no sense, because once they are poor and give all, then there won't be a second time around of giving. Perhaps the lesson here is more towards the rich; that one of great wealth should constantly put large amounts of money into the offering plate. Maybe it's showing us that if you have an abundance of money left after giving, then clearly you are a hoarder, and God never sees your giving until you repent and give everything, down to the last red cent. Could it be that it's biblical to stay broke, and be in a constant state of scrounging? Or maybe it's neither' perhaps Jesus was teaching the disciples that it's not all about giving the most, but having a heart that is willing to give.

I believe that Jesus was showing the Christian that “Giving” is as much a spiritual endeavor as it is a physical one. The widow woman gave more; not in the physical, but in the spiritual. Her mind was set on giving, to receive a blessing for doing her part. In essence, she didn’t give because she had to (forced) but she gave because she wanted (willingly) to. She realized that these two coins represented her very livelihood, and once gone, there was no going to a banker to get more. This woman’s faith is indeed one to marvel at, because she truly believed that something good would come out of it. I wonder how many people continue to give to the church, but still feel uneasy afterwards about it. God may be trying to show you something, it would behoove you to listen.

The moment someone starts checking on you, and regimenting how much you give, then you as a believer has ceased to give to God and His work; it all goes directly into someone else’s pocket who will misappropriate the funds. If you are constantly being begged and solicit for “Cash” then that’s all you are, a “Cash cow.” If you go to church and give willingly of the amount you feel led to give, then you have brought an “Offering” as unto the Lord.

So, how do we know if the church we are in cares more about the money than it does our soul? It’s easy, what gets talked about the most. When churches are greedy for mammon, everything said and done is carried out to the constantly tune of giving, pledging, and offerings. If you find that your monthly income is sufficient to support yourself and or your family but you keep coming up short every month because of the amount you give, then something has to change in your giving. There is nothing wrong with giving, but to give till it hurts (your family) is flat out wrong. Now we all know that there is a blessing in giving, but it’s not being “Broke.”

There has to be a proper balance in everything we do as Christians, and giving is no exception to that rule. As a believer, you would be a fool not to save your money for “Your future,” because no one else will, and I promise you that. So if someone tells you to give like the widow woman in the bible, now you know how she truly gave. Remember, she was poor to begin with, and the bible never advocates that anyone should go from a state of prosperity to poverty, because when you give your all, you also take away all from your family’s wellbeing. Remember, a proper balance is essential when giving, and if you give it all today, what will you have tomorrow. Do you really think that the church will take care of you when you are stricken with age?

Just because you bring in a generous salary on a monthly basis, does not mean you are required by God to support everything going on in your local church. “Fasting” because you have no money to buy food is not spiritual, and is not of God. Getting food stamps because you gave everything you had to the church, is not spiritual, nor is it

biblical. Eating “Food Bank” meals everyday isn’t a blessing from God if you have the resources to provide otherwise but can’t because you gave it all to the church. Buying your pastor new \$300.00 shoes and an \$1100.00 suit is insanity if you have brothers and sisters in the church who live at the thrift store. Speaking of, if you buy 99% of your belongings from a thrift store when you have money enough to buy it new, and once again, you gave it all to the church, you just flat out “Stupid.”

Here you are walking around in grave clothes and shoes that have been overwhelmed with athlete’s feet; so not only do you smell funny, you also look funny. I know, yea! You got an awesome deal on “Two for Tuesdays,” but.... And of course we’ve all visited a thrift store at various times for this or that, but to go there because you never have any money is just shameful. I understand things happen to people (We’ve been in a food line many times when we got kicked out) but you can and must do better; especially if you’re shopping there because you continually give all your finances to the church. But I dare say there are many who exclude the wellbeing of the children in favor of making their pastor look good, and “Give till it hurts.” Funny, the only cure I ever found for this is credit card debt, and bad credit.

2 Cor. Chapter 9 Verse 5-9 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up before hand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. 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. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

Yes, I realize that this scripture says not to sow sparingly, but it still isn’t insinuating to give everything you have. The bible clearly shows us that there is a blessing attached to our finances when we give to the house of the lord, but extortion is another thing entirely; God gets no glory from anything remotely close to “Thieving from the

members.” And when God gets no glory; they that labor, labor in vain. I wonder if these scriptures could also pertain to something other than money; just a thought.

It's very evident that whenever you give: #1 it should be according to what you as an individual has deemed necessary. Also, let it be known that the cure for “Covetousness” isn't giving everything to the church, but in everything you give, do it willingly, as unto the Lord. #2 it should be done cheerfully. Once again, if someone is stalking me, harassing me, or forcing me to pay my tithe or give more in an offering, then it's “Not of God. If you were short on your tithe by a few dollars, and the pastor or his associate crony confronts you about it, well... that's just plain covetous and evil. #3 you should have sufficient of everything in your life; a plenty that can be shared with others should the need present itself. God will make is so the storehouse has no lack. A sure sign that something is wrong with your giving is that there never seems to enough. That shortage can come about because the individual failed to give correctly (as God led him or her) or, because the church (leaders) have caused a curse to befallen upon the peoples finances. God shall not supply all the needs when monies are being misappropriated. For those of you who have wonder why you just can't seem to get ahead, I mean, you've put your house in order, and there is plenty of finances coming in, but...I hate to break it to you, it's the church and it's leaders that have caused you not to prosper adequately. In HOPCC, hasn't anyone ever noticed that every time you get “A blessing from God,” the pastor has something to do with it (A vehicle, place to live, spouse)? And by you letting him put his hand in every facet of your life, that very same leprosy that he has, you now have; and everything has now become “UNCLEAN.” Creepy huh? No, it's called a “Spiritual warfare” that we are involved in, so if you continue to look with these physical eyes, don't expect to see anything except for the pastors smirk and hand snake (smile and hand shake).

Tip: when paying your tithe to a church, just round up to the nearest dollar or two, and you'll never forget. Side note: I never could understand putting change in an envelope and paying tithe to the exact dollar; that's just being cheap! The even weirder thing is; then that same person will turn around and give all kinds of cash for a missionary, or radio station pledge.

Have you ever thought about God blessing you financially so that you can help, let's say, the poor? Or maybe he just wants you to be able to help a faithful brother by giving them money (not lending and waiting for a return). If you give all your money, then how are you going to help a friend if they need a new tire, shoes, or pants for their children? People don't think about helping others anymore these days, it's all about giving to the church first. Have you ever purchased a burger and fries for a homeless

person? Ever pay for someone's groceries who wasn't affiliated with your church? Ever walk up to that child in front of the vending machine and put in a quarter so they can get a rubber ball? That's just stupid right? Well, let me tell you what's even more stupid! God put things on Christians hearts all the time, but they never listen because they are so locked in to "Well pastor said to give to the house of the Lord first."



**IM A CHRISTIAN
I REALLY AM!**

However, most so called Christian still have no idea what God really expects of them as a giver. Many consider themselves a "Good brother" because they paid for someone else's plane ticket to conference. But my question is, did they even need to go first off, and secondly, what happened to their money if they are a faithful brother in the church? I've seen it over and over throughout the years, churches forcing the members to spend money they don't have, some pastors have even gone as far as telling the members to just put it on a credit card, and "God will work it out." No He won't! And the proof is; how long have they been listening to the same garbage year after year, and you just keep doing what they say even after you continually get the same confusing results. Just how long do you think God will bless such ridiculous advice? Thank you for your giving!