



CONNECT

FIRST STEPS - LESSON 10: GIVING



Objectives

- New believers to have a correct understanding about giving to the Lord.
- New believers to have the right attitude in giving according to the Bible.
- New believers to understand the Biblical principles of giving.
- New believers to realise the value and blessings of giving.

Introduction

Two men were stranded on an Island. One man paced back and forth worried and scared while the other man sat back and was sunning himself. The first man said to the second man, "Aren't you afraid we are about to die?". "No," said the second man, "I make \$100,000 a week and tithe faithfully to my church every week. My pastor will find me."

Friends, Christian giving is more than just giving a tithe (a tenth of our income) back to God, it is a spiritual matter that reflects our relationship with God. Giving is an essential part of Christian living. It challenges us to yield our possessions to God's ownership. In fact, all things in this world belong to God.

'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the Lord Almighty.

Haggai 2:8

The parable of the poor widow (**Mark 12:41-44**) beautifully outlines the attitudes of giving: we give because we love God and want to honour Him. God wants to see the proportion we are willing to give based on what we are given.

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

Mark 12:41-44

Biblical Principles Of Giving

1. Realise that God is the owner of everything

We must realise that God is the owner of everything and He gives us material blessings so that we will be good stewards who will properly manage them.

Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12

2. Realise that everything comes from God and He holds us responsible

Once we understand that all we have is God's, then the question becomes one of stewardship. Stewardship means being responsible for the things that God has entrusted us with. What are we going to do with that money? We give to His church for the benefit of His work.

But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

1 Chronicles 29:14

3. We give, as we have been given

Jesus instructed his believers to give.

"Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

Matthew 22:21

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.

Malachi 3:10a

God does not expect us to give what we do not have. Each Christian's giving is a very personal matter—based on his or her financial ability.

Why Should We Give To The Lord?

1. Giving shows our love for God and trust in God

Giving serves as a practical reminder that God is the owner of everything you have. We can give even in our lack because we love Him and trust that He will provide (e.g., the poor widow).

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Luke 21:1-4

2. Giving honours God

Giving is a privilege and responsibility for those who have received from God the gift of eternal life. We give because God has first given to us and we want to honour Him.

Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10

3. Giving acknowledges God's grace in our lives

In **2 Corinthians 9:11-14**, Paul commended on the lifestyle of generosity of the Corinthians. Not only did the givers benefit from generosity, but the recipients benefit as well. Through their generous giving, there was an overflowing of thanksgiving to God. It was evident that God's grace was at work in their lives (the givers), and ultimately bring glory and honour to God.

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

2 Corinthians 9:11-14

4. Giving helps us to have reverent fear towards the Lord

Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always.

Deuteronomy 14:22-23

5. Giving is a key to receive God's provision

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

Malachi 3:10

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Luke 6:38

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

6. It is a way to financially support God's full-time workers (e.g. church staff and missionaries)

Our giving enables our church staff and missionaries to be employed for God's work. The local church is God's ordained means for evangelism and discipleship, thus, those who labour at preaching the Word are worthy of financial remuneration (wages). The church is to support workers sent out to evangelise and plant new churches in places where the gospel has not yet penetrated.

In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:14

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.¹⁸ For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

1 Timothy 5:17-18

How Should We Give?

1. We give with a cheerful heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

2. We give with a generous attitude

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

2 Corinthians 9:11

3. We give with faith

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.
2 Corinthians 8:3a

4. We give with a worshipful spirit

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:1-2

5. We give because we dedicate our lives to the Lord

He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the Lord. As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the first fruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the Lord their God, and they piled them in heaps.
2 Chronicles 31:4-6

6. We give with a sacrificial spirit

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.
2 Corinthians 8:2-3a

7. We give willingly

Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.
2 Corinthians 8:3b-4

8. We give faithfully

That there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales.
Acts 4:34

Where Should We Give?

1. We give to the local church

This giving to the local church will support God's full-time servants, the rental cost of the worship building, the pastoral ministry, church administration, and various other ministries of the church. God's Word teaches us to give 10% of our income to the local church and where we receive spiritual care.

For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because whoever ploughs and threshes should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?

1 Corinthians 9:9-11

2. We give to evangelistic ministries and other missions

The Philippians gave generously towards Paul's church-planting ministry. Similarly, we should participate in special giving for the planting of churches and the work of bringing the gospel to all nations.

Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.

They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Philippians 4:14-18

3. We give to Christian brothers and sisters who are in need

They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

2 Corinthians 8:4

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Acts 2:45

What Should We Give?

1. Tithes

Tithing is a biblical principle commanded by God. Abraham practised tithing even before the Laws of Moses. God instructed Moses to make it part of the Law (**Leviticus 27:30-34**). Jesus affirmed its practice in the New Testament.

“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd’s rod—will be holy to the Lord. No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.” These are the commands the Lord gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

Leviticus 27:30-34

Christians should tithe to the Lord. We are God’s stewards who are taking care of everything He has given to us in this world for Him. Tithing means to give 10% of our income back to God, who is the real owner of all the money in this world.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Matthew 23:23

*And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.”
Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*

Genesis 14:20

2. Special giving

Besides the tithe, we also give special offerings to the Lord for some special ministries in our church. For example, we give money for the purchase of land for the church or to build the church building, to assist missionaries, to buy equipment for the church office or to help the needy.

All who cross over, those twenty years old or more, are to give an offering to the Lord.

Exodus 30:14

3. Giving materials

And everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewellery of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord. Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or the other durable leather brought them. Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the Lord, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it. Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun—blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. And all the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair. The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece. They also brought spices and olive oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord through Moses had commanded them to do.

Exodus 35:21-29

They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning.

Exodus 36:3

This lesson focuses on giving financially, but it should not be limited to it. In addition, we can:

4. Devote ourselves to serve the Lord and other Christians

You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters,

1 Corinthians 16:15

5. Sing praises to and dance before the Lord

Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp.

Psalms 149:3

Reflection Station

1. Do I have peace and joy when I give unto the Lord? Have I made a resolution to tithe regularly and faithfully?

Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

Some practical steps:

- Draft a budget of our income. Set aside 10% of it for tithing, and spend/save the remaining 90%.
- Start now! Do not wait until we have more disposable income. We should honour God regardless of the amount we are earning.
- Tithe regularly and systematically. Since we know the value of honouring God, it is not good enough that we just agree with this biblical principle. Faithfulness is when we discipline ourselves to practise this all the time.

Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10

Mentor Chat

1. **If I give generously to charity, and I often buy things for my life group, can that be a substitution for tithing?**

God placed believers in different churches with the purpose of building those churches up. Therefore, as members of a local church, our prime responsibility is to ensure that God's work in our church is well funded through our tithes. Other ways of giving, also important, is not a substitution for tithing.

2. **If I do not earn an income, should I tithe?**

Tithe is a tenth of what we receive. If I do not have an income, but an allowance, I tithe a tenth of what I receive. If what I receive is “zero”, a tenth of it is “zero”. The spirit is to honour God in whatever we have.

Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God.
Exodus 23:19a

“The house of the Lord” refers to the place where we worship, which is our local church. God will use our tithe to fulfil the mission He has entrusted to our local church. On the other hand, if we withhold tithes to our local church, her work will be hampered. Therefore tithing is equivalent to working with God to see his purpose accomplished.

Conclusion

All good things come from our heavenly Father. As stewards of God, we have the privilege to take part in giving to demonstrate our love to God. God is no man's debtor. Everything in the universe is God's in the first place. It is wrong to place God under obligation to us, especially when we give. It is in His nature that He provides everything we need by grace. Having said that, when we choose to give, God will delight in our obedience.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Luke 6:38

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

A lack of generosity refuses to acknowledge that your assets are not really yours, but God's.

Timothy Keller

As a response to God's greatest gift for us: our salvation, we give.

Memory Verse

ONE PERSON GIVES FREELY, YET GAINS EVEN MORE;
ANOTHER WITHHOLDS UNDULY, BUT COMES TO POVERTY.

PROVERBS 11:24



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