

GIVING GOD'S WAY
2 Corinthians 8:1-24
9/18/05

Few things say more about you and me than how we spend our money.

Though Jesus never solicited money for Himself, we find that 16 of His 38 parables deal with how you and I use our money.

Jesus knew that what we do with our money is a good indicator of our spiritual health.

What we do with our money reveals our internal value system.

Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12:34)

The Bible does not condemn our possessing money, but it does forbid our loving it.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

The love of money causes people to compromise their convictions, ignore the needs of others, and steal from God.

The love of money causes people to lie, cheat, steal, and gamble.

The Bible not only warns us about the love of money and how we go about acquiring it, the Bible also us guidelines in how we are to use our money.

We are to pay our debts and provide for the needs of our families. (Romans 13:8; 1 Timothy 5:8)

Which includes saving for the future. (Proverbs 21:20; 30:25)

We are to give to further the kingdom of God.

We are to help others meet their basic obligations.

Our passage this morning is talking about a collection being taken to help the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem.

Paul begins by recounting the generosity of the Christians in Macedonia and then he encourages the Corinthians to follow suit as they had previously promised.

Our passage illustrates a number of principles regarding Godly giving.

1. **The Ability And Motivation To Give Are Indications Of God's Grace 8:1**

The ability

All that we have has ultimately been given to us by God.

Both the ability and opportunity to work.

The motivation

One of the affects of saving faith is the willingness to give generously and sacrificially to those in need.

Even the news media has taken note of this in the recent disaster in New Orleans.

The giving of the Macedonians was an expression of the grace of God working through His people.

2. **Godly Giving Is Sacrificial Giving. 8:2**

Great affliction

Tremendous pressure and persecution

Their giving transcended their difficult circumstances.

Their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality

They gave generosity and sacrificially despite their poverty.

It cost them dearly, yet they were willing to give up meeting their own needs so that the needs of others might be met.

True sacrifice is giving that affects our living.

Jesus uses the example of a poor widow who gave her last two coins to the temple treasury.

Mark 12:43-44 . . . He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

What impressed Jesus about her offering was not what she put in, but what she had left over.

Her offering was a genuine sacrifice.

It was also an expression of her deep faith and genuine worship.

3. **Godly Giving Is Joyful Giving. 8:2**

The Macedonians rose above their pain, sorrow, and suffering to joyfully give to others.

They experienced the truth that the giver is more blessed than the receiver. (Acts 20:35)

4. **Godly Giving Is An Expression Of Faith. 8:3a**

Beyond their ability

They didn't allow their poverty to stifle their generosity.

They trusted God to supply all their needs.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 37:25 I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread.

George Muller- The 33 Laws Of Stewardship pp. 19-20

The Macedonians refused to worry.

They took to heart what had Jesus said

Matthew 6:31-34 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

5. **Godly Giving Is Voluntary. 8:3b-4**

3b They gave of their own accord

It was not coerced.

There was no mandatory amount or percentage.

Only voluntary giving means anything to God.

Only voluntary giving demonstrates our love and trust in God.

Only voluntary giving is truly worship.

For this reason we have a policy at UBC

No pressure, no manipulation, no coercion

No one will come to your door

No one will check up on you to make sure you are giving a certain percentage of your income.

Only voluntary giving is meaningful to God.

4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation

My grandsons, Nathan, and Ian eagerly gave their toys and clothes to the victims of hurricane Katrina.

There are three kinds of givers.

Grudge givers give because they feel like they have to.

Duty givers give because they think they ought to.

Thanks givers give because they want to.

The Macedonians viewed giving as a privilege, not an obligation.

They knew that the God who parted the Red Sea, fed the 5,000, and raised Jesus from the dead didn't really need their help.

But that He had given them the privilege to be stewards and partners in what He was doing.

6. Godly Giving Is An Act Of Worship. 8:5a

They first gave themselves to the Lord.

The supreme act of worship is not giving money, attending church, or singing worship songs.

The supreme act of worship is giving yourself to God.

After a Christian youth gathering, the offering was being counted. At the bottom of the offering, the money counters

found a picture of a teenage girl. On the back of the picture was written, "*I have nothing to give, but I give myself.*"

Romans 12:1

7. **Godly Giving Is An Act Of Love. 8:5b-8, 24**

v. 5b They gave themselves to us

cf v. 8, 24

1 John 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

8. **Christ Is Our Example Of Sacrificial Giving. 8:9**

Philippians 2:6-8 although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

9. **Godly Giving Faithfully Fulfills Promises. 8:10-11**

It is a lie to make a promise and not fulfill it.

It is most serious if you lie to God. cf Ecclesiastes 5

It is to our advantage to fulfill our promises to give.

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure -- pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

10. **God Cares More About Your Desire Than The Amount. 8:12**

Stewardship is not measured by the size of the gift, but by the heart of the giver.

11. **God Desires For His People To Share What He Has Given Them. 8:13-15**

God didn't make us equal and self-sufficient.

He has given us different gifts, abilities, and resources so that we are mutually dependent upon one another.

We are responsible to provide for one another's needs.

We are to be continually looking to see how others might need what He has entrusted us.

Russia

Equality vv. 13, 14

12. Giving Is To Be Handled With *Integrity*. 8:16-24

Carefully and openly

With cross checks and accountability

Two unnamed brothers were chosen to go along with Paul and Titus in order that there be no question of impropriety.

This protected Paul and Titus from any false accusations.

They wanted to be above suspicion. v. 21

We at UBC also seek to be above reproach in the matter of finances.

I never touch the money or see who gives what.

Two money counters voted upon by the membership must both sign off on the deposit slip.

Those who write checks are separate from the money counters.

The treasurer who does the books does not handle the deposits.

He is responsible to post a financial statement each month.

We recently paid to have a full audit done of our books.

All of this to ensure that the money people give is handled with integrity.

Points To Ponder

- a. **Our giving is an expression of our love for *God* and *other*.**

It is a spiritual check up.

It reveals the condition of our heart.

It indicates who and what we really love and care about.

- b. God set the example of sacrificially giving.

John 3:16

Romans 5:8

1 John 4:9-10 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.