

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding an open Bible. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the index finger pointing to a specific passage on the left page. The Bible is open, showing two pages of text. The pages are aged and yellowed. The background is dark and out of focus. The text "Giving: Biblical perspective" is overlaid on the image in a large, white, italicized font with a black outline.

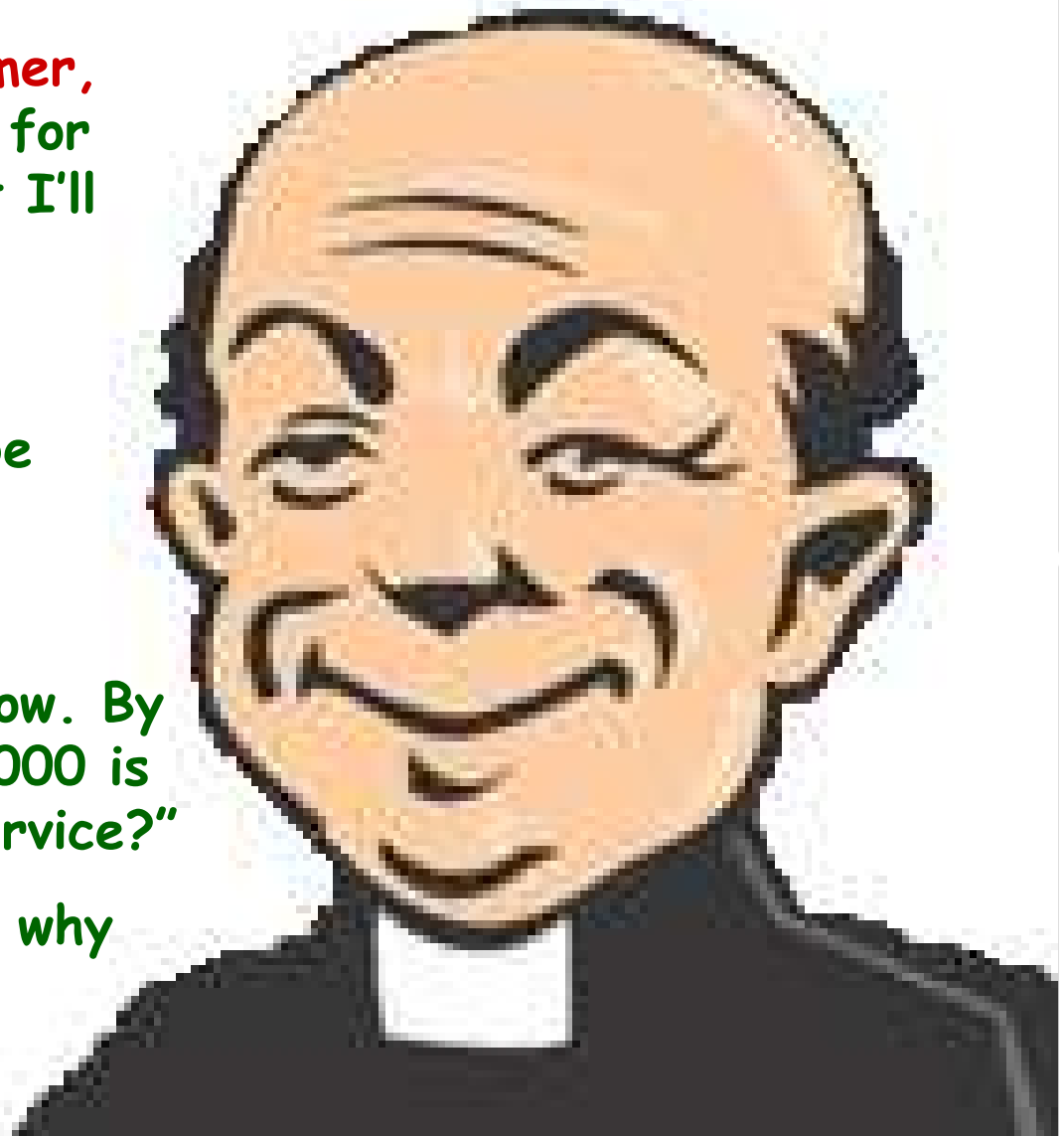
Giving: Biblical perspective

- ❑ A farmer named Muldoon lived alone in the Irish countryside except for a pet dog he'd had for a long time. The dog finally died and Muldoon went to the parish priest, saying "Father, the dog is dead. Could you possibly be saying a Mass for the poor creature?"

Father Patrick told the farmer, "No, we can't have services for an animal in the church, but I'll tell you what, there's a Protestant Church down the road. Now there's no telling what they believe in - maybe they'll do something for the animal?"

Muldoon said "I'll go right now. By the way, do you think £20,000 is enough to donate for the service?"

Father Patrick replied "Now why didn't you tell me the dog was Catholic?"



You are not your own

- ❑ For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. (1 Cor 8:6)
- ❑ You are not your own; you were bought at a price. (1 Cor 6:19-20)
- ❑ Jesus owns us both by virtue of creation and of redemption. He is the source of both our biological and spiritual lives...The practical implications of this truth should be evident... the creator has the rights of ownership. God... owns everything that he has made, and he made everything that is. This has tremendous ramifications for how we live... If human life is simply an accident arising from millennia of human history, then we are free agents, accountable to no one but ourselves. But if we were created, then our Creator has full rights of ownership over our lives... Either we are merely an accident of history and therefore completely at liberty to do whatever we want with our lives, or we are intentionally created beings who will be held accountable to our Creator.¹

¹ www.bible.org

Stewardship

- ❑ Stewardship is personal responsibility for taking care of another person's property or financial affairs or in religious orders taking care of finances... it is also used in a more general way to refer to a responsibility to take care of something one does not own... ¹
- Herein lies the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship... We own nothing. God owns everything; we are simply managers. The Bible says, "You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth." (Deuteronomy 8:17-18) ²
- ❑ Financial stewardship is based on the belief that God is the true owner of each person's possessions, and that one is accountable to God for the acceptable care and use of those possessions. ¹
- ❑ Stewardship pertains to all areas of our lives: money, resources, talents & ministry.

¹ Wikipedia

² www.bible.org

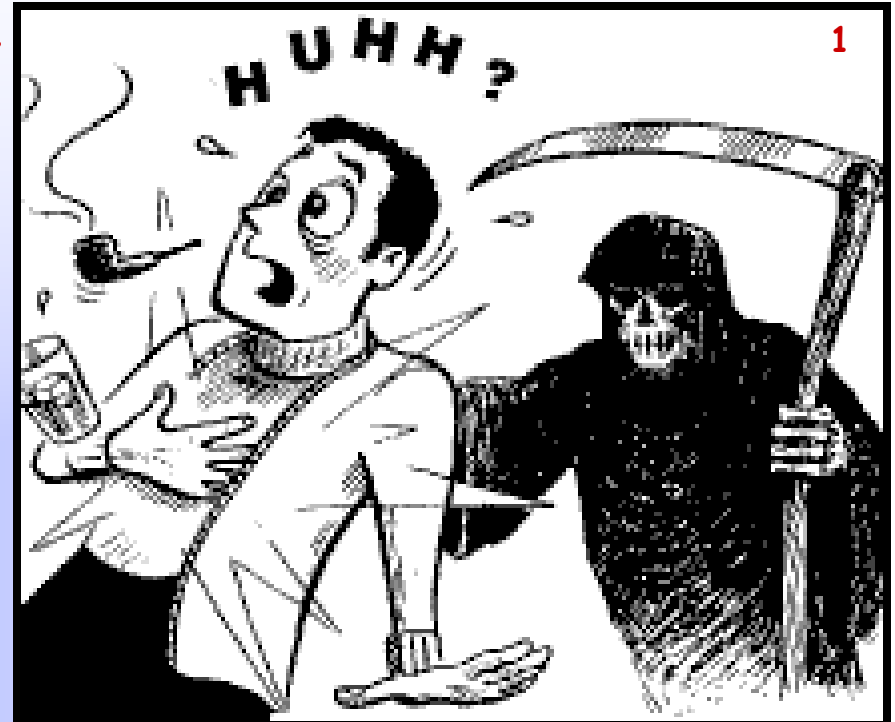
Stewardship

❑ We should not be engrossed in our possessions:

➤ 1 Cor 7:30-31 ...those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

❑ After telling the parable of the rich fool, Jesus refers to the fact that we are stewards:

➤ Luke 12:21 But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.



Stewardship

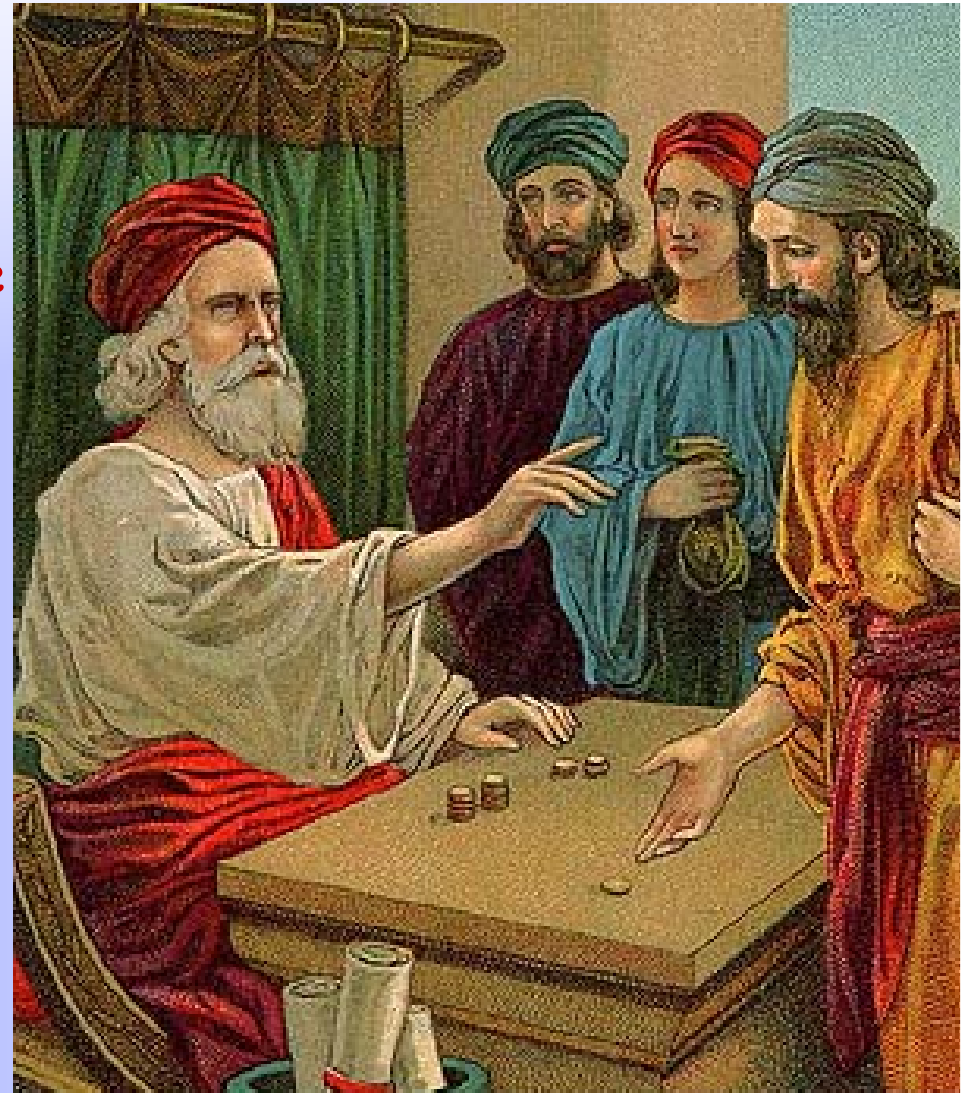
- ❑ Jesus uses the parable of the shrewd manager to emphasize our stewardship with regards to “our money”:
 - Luke 16:10-12 Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?
- ❑ Leaders are stewards. They manage multiple resources because they direct others in using their own resources. ¹

Judged on our stewardship

- ❑ Our money belongs to God and we simply administer it.
- Luke 12:42 The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 47 That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

God wants a return

- ❑ As God owns all we have and we are simply stewards, He expects a return on what he has entrusted to us. (Put his money to work).
- Matt 25:14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more."



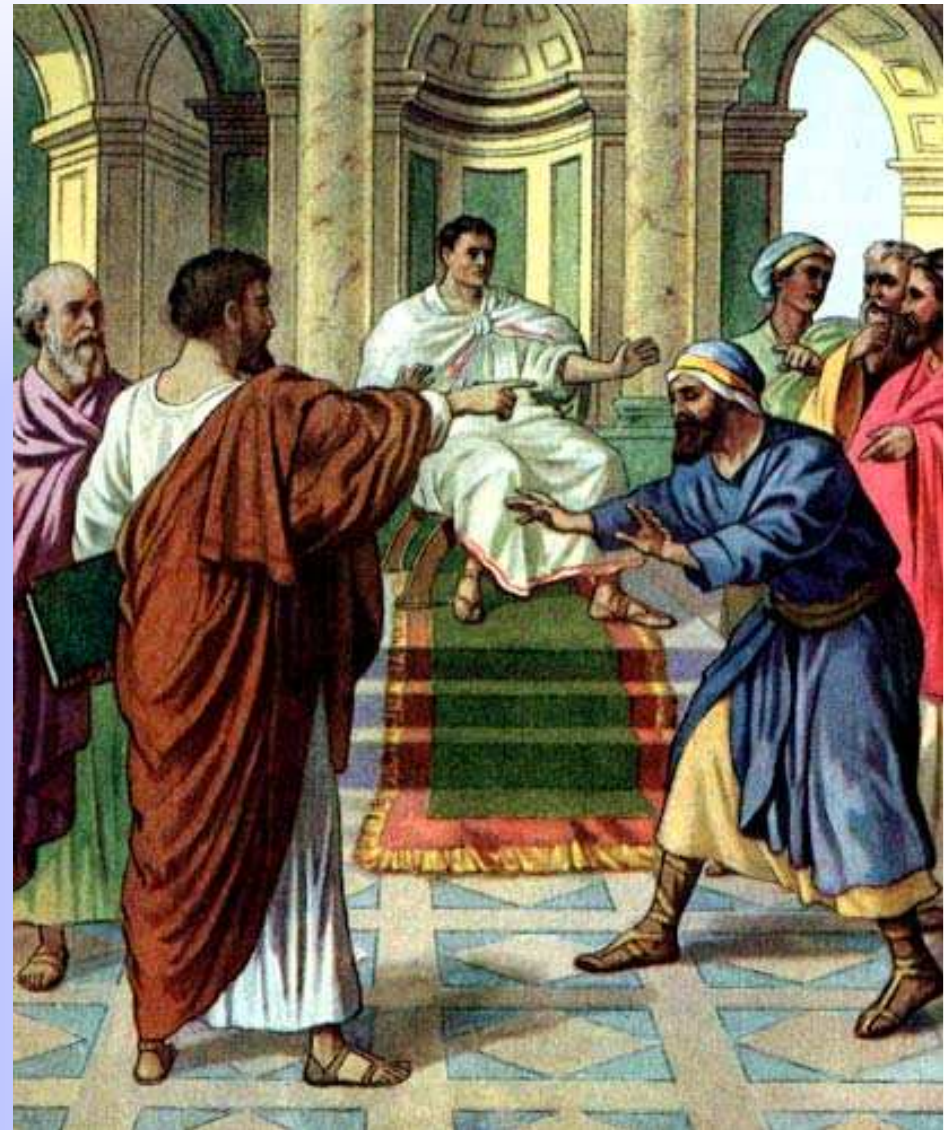
God wants a return

- Matt 25:18 "But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'
- 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'
- 22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'
- 23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"
- 24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 'So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

God wants a return

➤ **Matt 25:26** "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?

27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. **28** Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. **29** For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. **30** And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"



God wants a return

- ❑ Underlying the wicked, lazy servant's actions was his belief that God is not fair:
 - "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed."
- ❑ His master expected a return on what he had entrusted to the servant:
 - "... you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest."
 - 1 Cor 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (KJV)
- ❑ What are you doing with your:
 - money / resources?
 - Talents?
 - Time?

God wants a return

- ❑ When Jesus taught about his second coming, he drove home one important lesson: Only faithful stewards will be prepared for his return (Matthew 25:14-30). The parable he used to make this point involved three servants who each received a dizzying sum of money from his master before that master departed on a long journey. This is not just an act of generosity; this is an act of trust. The master gave each of these servants the opportunity of a lifetime. This was their chance to prove themselves, test their skills and possibly rise to positions of greater influence and responsibility.¹
- ❑ Upon his return the master discovered that two of the servants had invested the money, and that one had buried it. He took the greatest gift he would ever be given and buried it in a field, forgetting - or choosing not to believe - that the master would return.¹



¹ www.bible.org

God wants a return

- There are a couple of variables in this story. First, the master does not give each servant the same amount of talents. We don't have to look too closely to see that this is just the way things are. Some people have gifts that are publicly celebrated. Others have gifts that are quiet and unseen. Not everyone is gifted in the same way, and that needs to be okay with us. It would be foolish for the one-talent man to pout that he was only given one talent. A talent was equivalent to 15-years' salary! In a day when most people lived day to day, he ought to rejoice that he was given such a great gift. Jesus makes it clear that the size of the gift is not the important variable. The variable that matters is what each servant does with what he's been given. While the first servant is given more than double what the second servant is given, they are both commended with the exact same words: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness". In the final analysis, on the day of reckoning, the master will not ask why you didn't invest someone else's gifts. He won't ask what you did with what you didn't have. He will only be concerned with what you did with your gift. ¹

God wants a return

- When the servant who had buried the money began offering excuses, the master refused to accept them. Instead, he rebuked the lazy servant and punished him severely. Meanwhile, the faithful servants enjoyed the rewards they had received for their diligent labor. The master is generous beyond belief, but he is also going to hold his servants accountable. He will reward diligence and faithfulness; he will punish laziness. Here is perhaps the most sobering point of this parable: The third servant is not judged for doing bad things; he is judged for doing nothing. He did not lie or cheat or steal; he simply sat on his hands. ¹



¹ www.bible.org

God wants a return

- ❑ For some reason, we have gotten away from the idea that laziness is that bad. Historically speaking, however, sloth was listed as one of the Seven Deadly Sins. Solomon Schimmel points out that sloth is a uniquely Judeo-Christian sin - the only one of the seven not considered a vice by Greco-Roman standards. This is because the Judeo-Christian worldview understands human beings to be responsible to God.

Our lives are not merely concerned with self-preservation and self-promotion; we are stewards of what God has given us. To fail in this is a form of stealing from God. ¹



¹ www.bible.org

Tithing

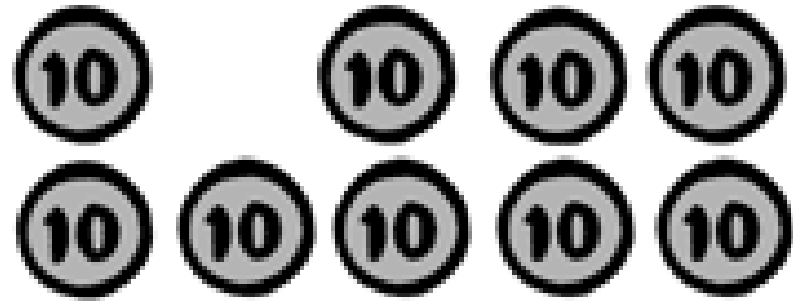
❑ Q: What is a tithe?

➤ A: A tenth

❑ Commanded in the OT

➤ Deut 12:8 You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, 9 since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you.

10 But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. 11 Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the LORD.



Tithing

- ❑ Q: Isn't tithing part of the Law?
- ❑ A: Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek years before the Law was given.
 - Gen 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.
 - Heb 7:6 This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.
- ❑ Jacob paid tithes before the Law was given:
 - Genesis 28:22 "And of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

Tithing

❑ Does the NT tell us to tithe?

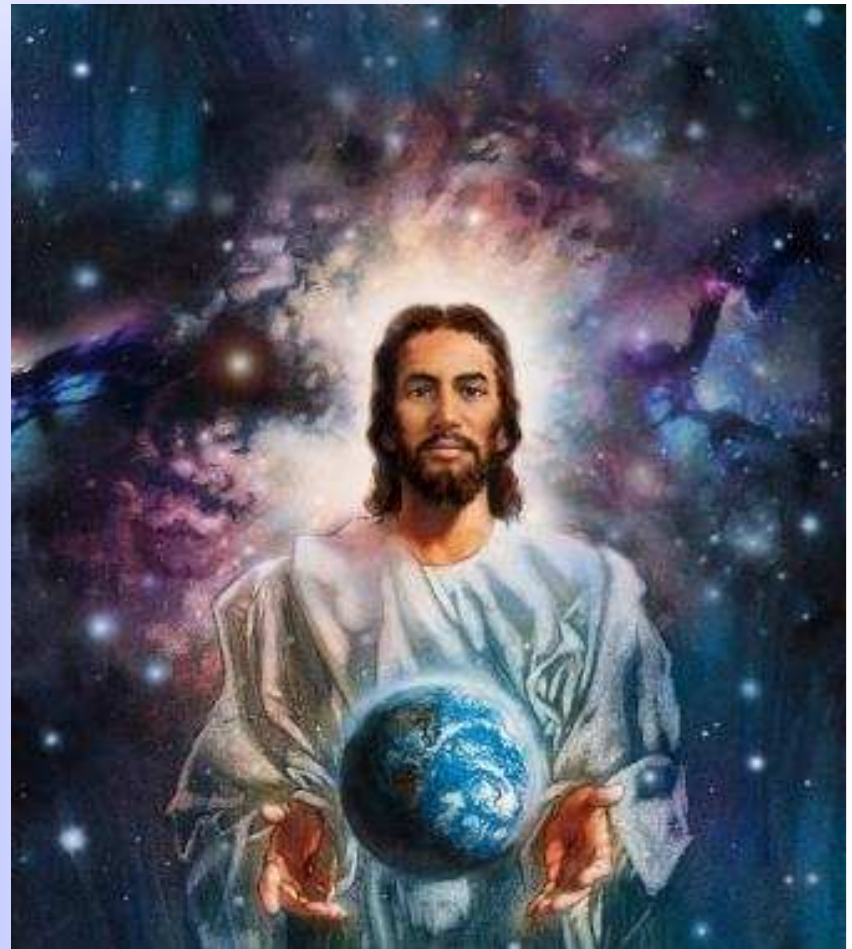
- Matt 23:23 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.
- Paul teaches about the financial support of God's work using commands from the Law as guidelines - 1 Cor 9:8 "Doesn't the Law say the same thing?"
- 1 Cor 9:13 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Q: Where did the Lord command this?

A: In the OT (yet Paul accepts it as a NT principle)

Does God need our money?

- ❑ Psalm 50:8 I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are ever before me. 9 I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, 10 for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. 12 If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.
- ❑ So if God doesn't need our money, what is the purpose of tithing?



Purpose

(1) SUPPORT GOD'S WORKERS

- ❑ In the OT the tithe was the inheritance of the Levites:
 - Num 18:21 "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting... 23 It is the Levites who are to do the work at the Tent of Meeting and bear the responsibility for offenses against it. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites. 24 Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the LORD. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites.'"



Purpose

(1) SUPPORT GOD'S WORKERS

- ❑ In the NT, Paul indicates that full time ministers are entitled to support.
- 1 Cor 9:4-14 Don't we have the right to food and drink?... Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."



Purpose

- Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought 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? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? ... Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.



Purpose - Support Missions

(2) SUPPORT MISSIONS

- A missionary, speaking of the need on the foreign fields, was to receive an offering to help out with the work. A man was sitting next to the aisle about halfway up. He had folded his arms and sat with a grim look, a scowl and a frown. He evidently didn't want to be there. Perhaps his wife had made him come. When the usher held the plate in front of him, he just shook his head. The usher jiggled the plate invitingly. Still the only response was the head shake.

The usher leaned over and whispered, "It's for missions, you know." Still the scowl and a mumbled sentence, "I don't believe in 'em."

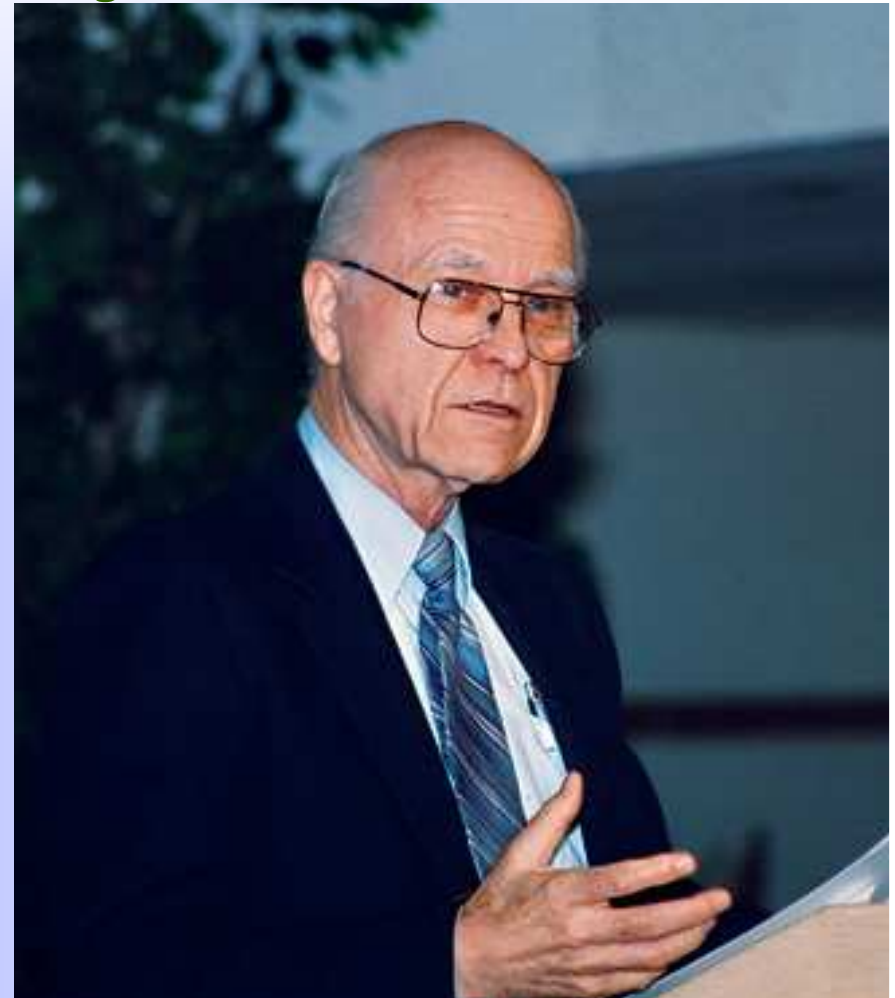
The usher leaned down and said, "Then you take some out. It's for the heathen, anyway."

Purpose - Support Missions

- "A person must overeat by at least \$2 worth of food per month to maintain one excess pound of flesh. Yet \$2 per month is more than what 90% of all Christians in America give to missions. If the average mission supporter is only 5 pounds overweight, it means he spends (to his own hurt) at least 5 times as much as he gives for missions. If he were to choose simple food (as well as not overeat), he could give 10 times as much as he does to missions and not modify his standard of living in any other way!"

(Ralph Winter ¹)

¹ The U.S. Center for World Mission was founded by Dr. Ralph D. Winter and Roberta Winter in 1976, headquartered in Pasadena, California.



Dr. Ralph D. Winter (1924-2009)

Purpose - Support Missions

- "Some retorted upon me, 'There are heathen at home; let us seek and save, first of all, the lost ones perishing at our doors.'" We must evangelize our home front first, before we worry about the rest of the world. Aren't there millions of sinners living all around us? Isn't it logical and right to preach to them first?' "This I felt to be most true, and an appalling fact; but I unfailingly observed that those who made this retort neglected those home heathen themselves. They would ungrudgingly spend more on a fashionable party at dinner or tea, on concert or ball or theatre, or on some ostentatious display, or worldly or selfish indulgence, ten times more, perhaps in a single day, than they would give in a year, or in half a lifetime, for the conversion of the whole heathen world, either at home or abroad."

(John G. Paton - Missionary from Scotland to the South Sea Islands)



John Paton (1824–1907)

Support Missions

- ❑ "God is not glorified when we keep for ourselves (no matter how thankfully) what we ought to be using to alleviate the misery of unevangelized, uneducated, unmedicated, and unfed millions." (John Piper)
- ❑ "No one can do everything, but everyone can do something; and together, we can change the world." (Ron Sider, Author of Rich Christians in An Age of Hunger)
- ❑ "Jesus will judge us not only for what we did, but also for what we could have done and didn't." (George Otis)
- ❑ "Today Christians spend more money on dog food than missions." (Leonard Ravenhill)
- ❑ "If God wills the evangelization of the world, and you refuse to support missions, then you are opposed to the will of God." (Oswald J. Smith)



Purpose

(3) UPKEEP OF THE HOUSE OF GOD (A TITHE OF THE TITHE)

- Neh 10:38... the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. 39 The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms where the articles for the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay. "We will not neglect the house of our God."



Purpose

(4) HELPING NEEDY CHRISTIANS

- ❑ 2 Cor 9:12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.
- ❑ Acts 11:27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Priorities - Where is your heart?

- ❑ A husband and wife were attending a county fair where, for R100 per person, a man was giving rides on an old biplane. The couple wanted to go up but they thought the price was too steep. Consequently, they tried to negotiate a lower price. "We'll pay you R100 for both of us," they said to the pilot. "After all, we'll both have to squeeze into that tiny cockpit that was built for only one person."

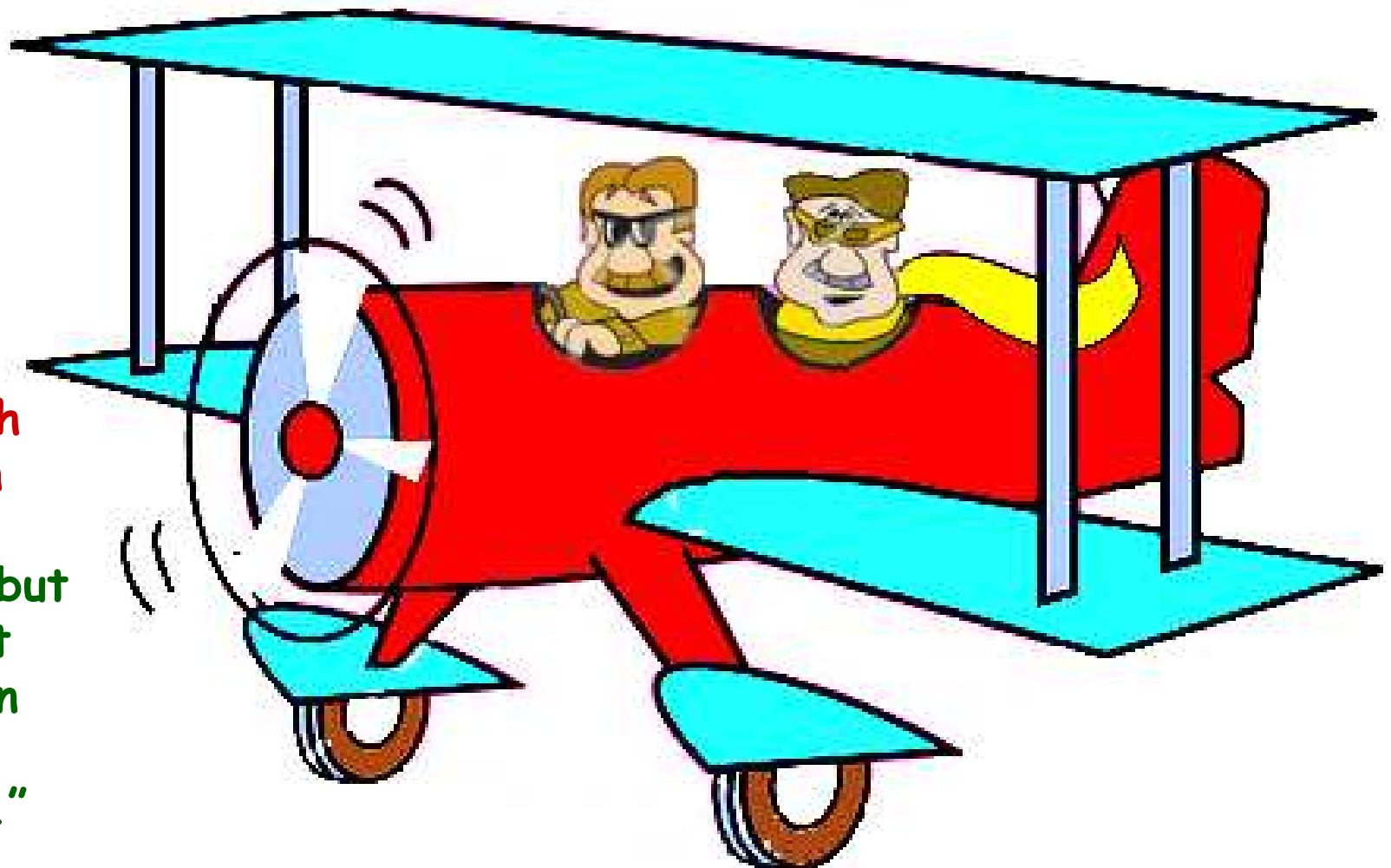
The pilot refused to lower his price, but he made a counter-offer. He said to the couple, "Pay me the full price of R200 and I'll take you up. And if you don't say one word during the flight, I'll give you all your money back."

The couple agreed and got into the plane. Up they went and the pilot proceeded to perform every trick he knew, looping and whirling and flying upside down and lots more.

Priorities - Where is your heart?

- Finally, when the plane had landed, without even turning around the pilot handed the money over his shoulder and said to the husband, "Congratulations! Here's your R200; you didn't say a single word."

To which
the man
replied,
"Nope, but
I almost
did when
my wife
fell out."



Purpose

(5) PREVENT MONEY FROM BECOMING A GOD

- ❑ Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."
- ❑ You can judge a man's priorities by:
 - What he spends his time doing.
 - What he talks about most.
 - Where he invests his money or what he spends his money on.
- ❑ "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21)
 - Where is your heart?

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:20-21

The gift of giving

- ❑ We mustn't let the excesses of the prosperity message detract from the fact that God does bless some materially so that they can have a special gift of giving:
 - Rom 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift... is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously...
 - You cannot give generously unless God has given you the financial means.
- ❑ After having warned Timothy about the dangers of "the love of money" Paul the gives this instruction showing that there were also some wealthy Christians in the Ephesian church:
 - 1 Tim 6:17-19 Command those who are rich ... to be generous and willing to share.
 - God doesn't bless us to increase our standard of living, God blesses us to increase our standard of giving.

The gift of giving

- ❑ Paul shows that when God blesses us financially it is so that we “can be generous on every occasion” i.e. it is not so that we can self-indulge in extravagant lifestyles, but for “supplying the needs of God’s people” and helping the poor.
- 2 Cor 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work... 10-12 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich 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 God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men 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.

Are you a thief?

- Mal 3:6 "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.

"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

8 "Will a man rob God?
Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'

"In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse - the whole nation of you - because you are robbing me."



Are you a thief?

- ❑ An old preacher was dying. He sent a message for his banker and his lawyer, both church members, to come to his home. When they arrived, they were ushered up to his bedroom. As they entered the room, the preacher held out his hands and motioned for them to sit on each side of the bed. The preacher grasped their hands, sighed contentedly, smiled, and stared at the ceiling. For a time, no one said anything.

Both the banker and lawyer were touched and flattered that the preacher would ask them to be with him during his final moments. They were also puzzled; the preacher had never given them any indication that he particularly liked either of them. They both remembered his many uncomfortable sermons about greed, covetousness, tithing and giving that made them squirm in their seats.

Finally, the banker said, "Preacher, why did you ask us to come?"

The old preacher mustered up his strength and then said weakly, "Jesus died between two thieves, and that's how I want to go."

Are you a thief?

- ❑ In 1983 U.S. churchgoers donated \$21.5 billion. But if they had donated 10% of income, they would have given \$134 billion. ¹
- ❑ Increasingly, those with lower incomes give a higher proportion of their income to charity than higher income individuals.
 - Percentage of personal income the poorest households in America gave to charity in 1992: 5.5 %. Wealthiest households: 2.9 %. ²
 - It's not what you do with the million if fortune should ere be your lot, but what are you doing at present with the dollar and quarter you got.
- ❑ Persons 65-74 years of age donated the largest percentage of their income (3.1 %) and those 18-24 the least (0.6 %). ³

¹ www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/giving.htm

² Youthworker Update, quoted in Signs of the Times, March, 1993

³ The U.S. Department of Commerce statistics on American churches, clergy and church schools (Church Law & Tax Report).

Are you a thief?

- ❑ Sobering Statistics on Finances Spending & Giving: (Barna Research, Empty Tomb Surveys and The Treasure Principle)
 - 17% of Americans claim to tithe
 - 6% actually do tithe
 - 23% of “born again” believers give nothing to church
- ❑ Church giving percentages:
 - The average per-member giving percentage in 1933 (during the Great Depression) was 3.3%
 - The average per member giving in 2000 was 2.6%
- ❑ Who gives to the church on a monthly basis?
 - Seniors = 68%
 - Boomers = 58%
 - Busters = 36%

Are you a thief?

- ❑ Survey of “Evangelical” Christians:
 - 40% say they overspend each month
 - 60% state serious marital problems are money related
 - 40% pay \$2,000 per year in credit card interest
- ❑ The “Average” American:
 - Spends 6 hours a week shopping but only 40 minutes a week playing with their children
 - Gave 1.12% of their income for charitable purposes in 2003
- ❑ In 90% of divorce cases, arguments about money played a prominent role

Sow sparingly or generously

❑ In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul uses the principle of sowing and reaping to refer to a material harvest:

➤ 1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?

❑ Likewise in 2 Corinthians 9, Paul uses the seed analogy when collecting money to help the struggling church in Jerusalem.

➤ 2 Cor 9:5-6 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.



Sow sparingly or generously

❑ In 2 Cor 8-9 giving was:

- Church centered (8:1)
- From the heart (8:2-9)
- Proportionate (8: 10-15)
- Handled honestly (8:16-24)

❑ and it:

- Blessed others (9:1-5)
- Blessed the giver (9:6-11)
- Glorified God (9:12-15) ¹

¹ Lloyd Perry, *Getting the Church on Target*, Moody, 1977.

Sow sparingly or generously

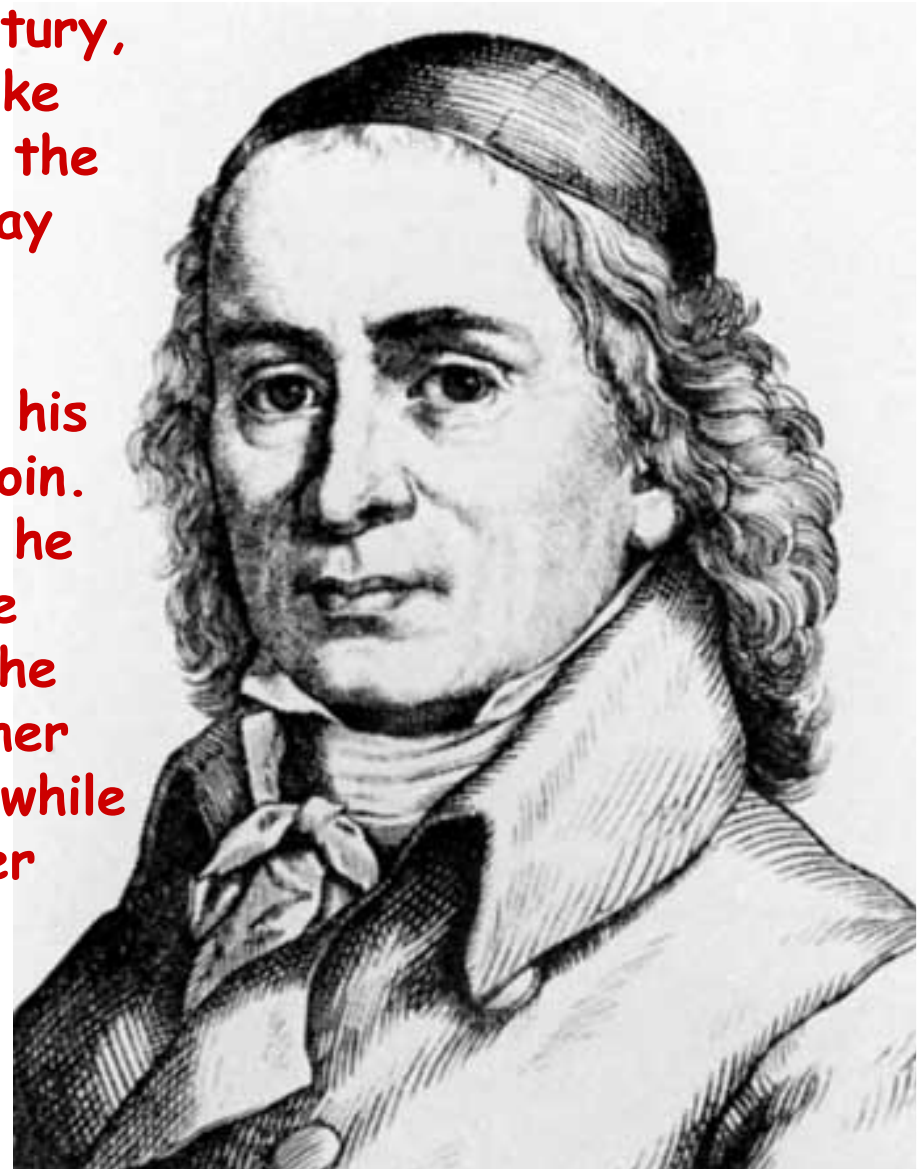
❑ Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving. ¹

➤ W.A. Criswell tells of an ambitious young man who told his pastor he'd promised God a tithe of his income. They prayed for God to bless his career. At that time he was making \$40 per week and tithing \$4. In a few years his income increased and he was tithing \$500 per week. He called on the pastor to see if he could be released from his tithing promise, it was too costly now.

The pastor replied, "I don't see how you can be released from your promise, but we can ask God to reduce your income to \$40 a week, then you'd have no problem tithing \$4." ²

Sow sparingly or generously

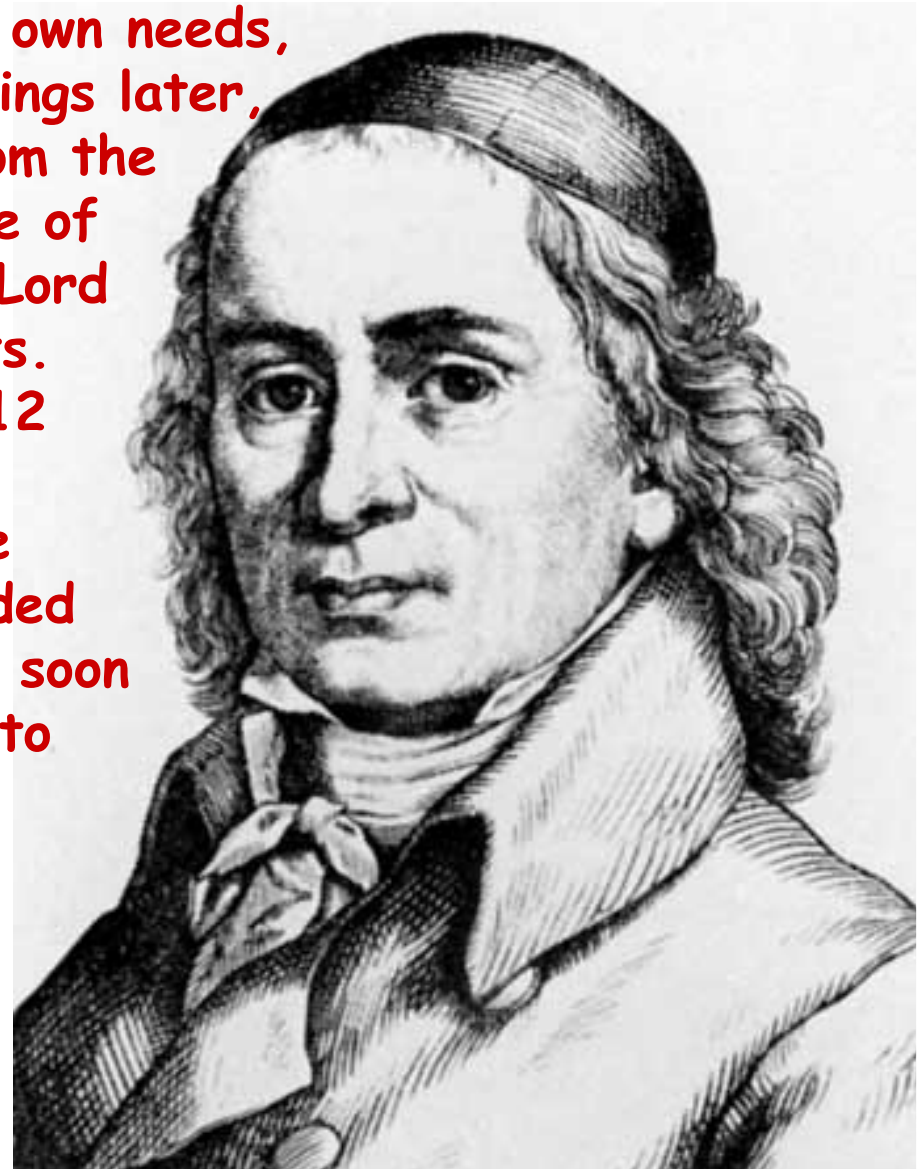
- ❑ In the latter part of the 17th century, German preacher August H. Francke founded an orphanage to care for the homeless children of Halle. One day when Francke desperately needed funds to carry on his work, a destitute Christian widow came to his door begging for a ducat—a gold coin. Because of his financial situation, he politely but regretfully told her he couldn't help her. Disheartened, the woman began to weep. Moved by her tears, Francke asked her to wait while he went to his room to pray. After seeking God's guidance, he felt that the Holy Spirit wanted him to change his mind.



August H. Francke (1663-1727))

Sow sparingly or generously

- ❑ So, trusting the Lord to meet his own needs, he gave her the money. Two mornings later, he received a letter of thanks from the widow. She explained that because of his generosity she had asked the Lord to shower the orphanage with gifts. That same day Francke received 12 ducats from a wealthy lady and 2 more from a friend in Sweden. He thought he had been amply rewarded for helping the widow, but he was soon informed that the orphanage was to receive 500 gold pieces from the estate of Prince Lodewyk Van Wurtenburg. When he heard this, Francke wept in gratitude. In sacrificially providing for that needy widow, he had been enriched, not impoverished.



August H. Francke (1663-1727))

Blessing

- This is the only case where God says we may “test” Him.
 - Mal 3:10 “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 you will not have room enough for it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.



Blessing

- Phil 4:10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength. 14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 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; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and even more; 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. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Blessing

- ❑ Acts 20:33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'
- ❑ "A generous man will himself be blessed" (Proverbs 22:9).
- ❑ "I have tried to keep things in my hands and lost them all, but what I have given into God's hands I still possess."
(Martin Luther)



Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)

How are we to give?

(1) IN SECRET

- ❑ Mat 6:1 Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

How are we to give?

(1) IN SECRET

- ❑ Charles Spurgeon and his wife, according to a story in the Chaplain magazine, would sell, but refused to give away, the eggs their chickens laid. Even close relatives were told, "You may have them if you pay for them." As a result some people labeled the Spurgeons greedy and grasping. They accepted the criticisms without defending themselves, and only after Mrs. Spurgeon died was the full story revealed. All the profits from the sale of eggs went to support two elderly widows. Because the Spurgeons were unwilling to let their left hand know what the right hand was doing, they endured the attacks in silence.



How are we to give?

(2) CHEERFULLY

- ❑ 2 Cor 9:1 There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. 2 For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. 3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be... 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver...



How are we to give?

(3) MOTIVATED BY LOVE

- ❑ 1 Cor 13:3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.
- ❑ 2 Cor 8:6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.
- ❑ 2 Cor 8:23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. 24 Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

How are we to give?

(4) WITH A SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

- Matt 5:23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.



How are we to give?



(5) NOT SELF-RIGHTEOUSLY OR IN AN ATTEMPT TO "BUY" FAVOUR

Luke 18:10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men - robbers, evildoers, adulterers - or even like this tax collector.' 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God..."

How are we to give?

(6) EXERCISE GOOD GOVERNANCE TO AVOID CRITICISM (Safety in numbers)

- ❑ Neh 10:38 A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes...
- ❑ 1 Cor 16:1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

How are we to give?

(6) EXERCISE GOOD GOVERNANCE TO AVOID CRITICISM (Safety in numbers)

- ❑ 2 Cor 8:17 For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. 18 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. 19 What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. 21 For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

How are we to give?

(7) SACRIFICIALLY

- ❑ It's not how much you give that matters, but how much you keep.
 - 2 Cor 8:11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. 13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, 15 as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."
- ❑ "If you give what you do not need, it isn't giving." (Mother Teresa)
- ❑ "He who gives what he would as readily throw away, gives without generosity; for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice."
(Sir Henry Taylor, quoted in New Beginnings)

Sacrificially

❑ The example of the Macedonians sacrificial giving:

- 2 Cor 8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

❑ The sacrificial giving by Jesus is our example:

- 2 Cor 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. 10 And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.

Sacrificially

- ❑ For God, tithing is not only about a percentage. Tithing has more to do with one's heart during the act of giving than the actual amount given to God. The Bible offers this story: "As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'I tell you the truth,' 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 her poverty put in all she had to live on'" (Luke 21:1-4). The woman gave two copper coins - what amounted to a fraction of a penny. This seems a trivial amount. However, God viewed her trivial amount with more regard than the large offerings of the rich. Why? By giving all she had, the woman showed utter devotion to God. She was willing to offer everything she possessed to show love to God. ¹



¹ www.allaboutgod.com/biblical-stewardship.htm.

How are we to give?

□ (8) SHREWDLY

Luke 16:1-9 "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

"The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg - I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

"So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

"'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.'

"Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

"'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly."

How are we to give?

- ❑ This perplexing parable appears at first glance to encourage dishonesty. But Jesus enjoins us to mimic the steward's shrewdness, not his dishonesty. Jesus commends the man's ability to use his present and temporary power and resources to make preparation for what was coming. ¹
- ❑ Stewards are expected to realize the maximum possible return on the resources which the master has entrusted to their care.



Shrewdly - maximum possible return

Church dollars accomplish far more than television dollars.

- Robert Polk, director of the Cooperative Program Promotion for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, came to this conclusion after analyzing the 1986 expenditures of leading TV ministries as compared to the Southern Baptist Convention. First, he studied how the \$684 million given to six leading TV ministers was used. Beside paying for TV time, he discovered that the donations supported 4 schools, 1 hospital, 3 churches, 2 ministries to needy children, 1 ministry to others in need, and 1 home for unwed mothers. He then studied how the \$635 million given to the Southern Baptists was spent. The contrast is startling! For the Baptist donations supported 52 children's homes, 48 hospitals (including 23 overseas), 67 colleges and universities (enrolling over 200,000 students), and 33 nursing homes; it also supported 3,756 foreign missionaries, 3,637 missionaries in the USA, and ministries to students on 1,100 campuses. These funds also supported six seminaries (enrolling a fifth of this country's seminarians), and the ACTS television network carried on cable in many cities. ¹

¹ www.sermonillustrations.com

How are we to give?

(9) THE BEST PART (FIRSTFRUITS)

- ❑ Num 18:26 "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the LORD's offering... 29 You must present as the LORD's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.'"
- ❑ Prov 3:9 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.



20% interest & useless sacrifices

- ❑ Under the Mosaic Law, if you delayed in giving your tithe, you had to add 20% to the value when you paid it:
 - Lev 27:30 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. 31 If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it.
 - E.g. if you earned R1000, your tithe would be R100. If you delayed the giving you would have to pay R120.
- ❑ God wasn't to be given a useless sacrifice:
 - Lev 27:32 The entire tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the LORD. 33 He must not pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If he does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.

Lame sacrifices

- ❑ Mal 1:6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name.
"But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'
7 "You place defiled food on my altar.
"But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'
"By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. 8 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.
9 "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the LORD Almighty.
10 "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands."

Lame sacrifices

- ❑ Mal 1:11 "My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.
12 "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.' 13 And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty.
"When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. 14 "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations."

Useless sacrifices

- ❑ 2 Sam 24:18 On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. 20 When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. 21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" "To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped." 22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. 23 O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you." 24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

Lame sacrifices - Leftovers

Leftovers are such humble things,
We would not serve to a guest,
And yet we serve them to our Lord
Who deserves the very best.

We give to Him leftover time,
Stray minutes here and there.
Leftover cash we give to Him,
Such few coins as we can spare.

We give our youth unto the world,
To hatred, lust and strife;
Then in declining years we give
To him the remnant of our life.

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