

THOUGHTS & PRINCIPLES ON GIVING¹

“SEVEN PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE IN NON-HYPOCRITICAL GIVING”²

- (1) **“GIVING FROM THE HEART IS INVESTING WITH GOD...** (Luke 6:38 ‘*Give & it will be given you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over...*’)
- (2) **“GIVING IS TO BE SACRIFICIAL.** David *refused to give to the Lord that which cost him nothing* (2 Sam. 24:24). **Generosity is not measured by the size of the gift itself, but by its size in comparison to what is possessed** cf. the widow who gave two mites... (Mk. 12:41-44)
- (3) **RESPONSIBILITY FOR GIVING HAS NO RELATIONSHIP TO HOW MUCH A PERSON HAS.** **A person who is not generous when he is poor will not be generous if he becomes rich.** He might then give a larger amount, but he will not give a larger proportion... Lk. 16:10 ‘*He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much...*’) ...Giving is not a matter of how much money one **HAS** but of how much **LOVE** and **CARE** is in the **HEART**.”
- (4) **MATERIAL GIVING CORRELATES TO SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.**
- (5) **GIVING IS TO BE PERSONALLY DETERMINED...** (2 Cor. 9:7 ‘*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.*’)

“Righteous giving is done from a righteous & generous **HEART**, not from legalistic *percentages or quotas*. The Macedonian Christians gave abundantly out of their deep financial poverty because spiritually they were rich in love (2 Cor. 8:1-2). The Philippian believers gave out of the spontaneous generosity of their hearts, not because they felt compelled (Phil. 4:15-18).

- (6) **WE ARE TO GIVE IN RESPONSE TO NEED.**... [cf. with the giving to the destitute believers in Jerusalem who were ostracized by their families, had undoubtedly lost jobs & business b/c of trusting Christ, etc.]

REGARDING CHARLATANS: “A Christian has no responsibility to support such people & should take reasonable care to determine if & when real need exists before giving money... (2 Thess. 3:10 ‘*If a man will not work, neither should he eat.*’)

- (7) **GIVING DEMONSTRATES LOVE, NOT LAW.** The NT contains no commands for specified amounts or percentages of giving. The percentage we give will be determined by the love of our own hearts & the needs of others.” (Mac, pp. 358-359)

BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR GIVING:

PRACTICES THAT JESUS CONDEMNS IN REGARD TO GIVING:

- Giving to be seen & praised by men (“*Look at Me*”) – 6:1-2
- Giving, expecting reciprocation i.e. something in return – cf. Lk. 14:12-14
- Giving from an overflow & overabundance i.e. unsacrificially – Mk. 12:41-44

THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING: TITHING. Mal. 3:8-10 but cf. vv. 11-12

- **Gen. 28:20:** “Giving a tenth, or tithe, was common among Semitic peoples and was an act that acknowledged the superiority of the one to whom it was paid. cf. Gen. 14:20.” (Ryrie, NASV, p. 52)

¹ Compiled & written by Mike Edwards, Madison, Ohio, May 2019. Material in brackets, as well as bolding, underlining & colorizing has been added by me. –mwe

² From John MacArthur, *New Testament Commentary: Matthew 1-7* (Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 1985), pp. 358-360

- **Lev. 27:30-33:** “One-tenth of the increase of the land, trees, herds, and flocks had to be given to the Lord as His tithe. Part of the tithe could be substituted for with money (plus the usual 20% additional), except in the case of animals.” (Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, p. 204)
- **Double tithe: Deut. 12:17-18:** “The tithe had to be taken to the central sanctuary. This referred to what was known as the second tithe. (cf. Mal. 3:8 & Deut. 14:22-29)...**Deut. 14:28-29:** “Every third year, the second tithe was not brought to the sanctuary but kept at home and used to feed the Levites and the poor.” (Ryrie, *ibid*, p. 291 & 294)
- **Neh. 10:38-39:** “The Levites had to tithe the tithes given to them in order to support the serving priests, porters, and singers.” (Ryrie, *ibid*, p. 727) cf. Neh. 13:10.
- **Mal. 3:8:** “Two tithes were required: an annual tithe for the maintenance of the Levites (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21) and a second tithe brought to Jerusalem for the Lord’s feast (Deut. 14:22). Every third year, however, the second tithe was kept at home and used for the poor (Deut. 14:28). **One’s use of money is often a barometer of his spirituality** (cf. **1 John 3:17**).” (Ryrie, p. 1434)
- **Matt. 23:23:** “The tithing of various herbs was based on Lev. 27:30. **Though tithing of grain, fruit, wine, and oil was demanded** (see also Num. 18:12; Deut. 14:22-23), **the scribes had expanded the items required to be tithed to include even the smallest of herbs.** Cummin = a seed resembling the caraway. ‘without neglecting the others.’ i.e., without neglecting the proper normal tithing.” (Ryrie, p. 1488)
- **Heb. 7:4** – “By taking the role of the one who tithed and the one who received the blessing (v. 1), **Abraham, to whom God gave the promises, doubly acknowledged his inferiority to Melchizedek.**” (Ryrie, p. 1844)

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING: GRACE GIVING – 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15; Rom. 15:25-27

- Christ is our supreme example in giving – 2 Cor. 8:7-9; 9:15
- Giving is an opportunity to help others in God’s family & they may us in the future – 2 Cor. 8:13-15;
- Give *what you have*, not what you don’t have – 2 Cor. 8:12
- Give *Willingly* – 2 Cor. 9:2, 5
- Give *Bountifully*, not sparingly – 2 Cor. 9:6
- Give *Sacrificially* – 2 Cor. 8:1-4
- Give *Joyfully* – 2 Cor. 9:7
- Gracious giving *proves our love for God and those in the body of Christ* – 2 Cor. 8:24; 9:12
- Generous giving *lines us up for further blessing from God’s hand* – 2 Cor. 9:8-11
- Giving glorifies God before men – 2 Cor. 8:21; 9:12-14

“**As in every area of righteousness, the key is the HEART, the inner attitude...** Jesus himself is our supreme & perfect example. He preached...in public, He performed His miracles...in public. Yet He continually focused attention on His heavenly Father, whose will alone he came to do (John 5:30; cf. 4:34; 6:38)

“When we give our alms...in secret, lovingly, unpretentiously, & with no thought for recognition or appreciation, our Father who sees in secret will repay us. The principle is this:

“**If we remember, God will forget; but if we forget, God will remember...** Leave the bookkeeping to God, realizing that *‘we have done only that which we ought to have done’* (Luke 17:10).

God will not miss a single reward *‘There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open & laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do’* (Heb. 4:13)... It’s not unspiritual to expect & anticipate those rewards, if we do so in a spirit of humility & gratitude—knowing that God’s rewards manifest His grace to the undeserving... we can never truly earn them...

“**The greatest reward a believer can have is the knowledge that he has pleased his Lord.** Our motive...should be the anticipation of casting [those] crowns before the throne (Rev. 4:10-11).” (MacArthur, p. 360)