

**Greatly Giving
Wonders of Worship
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Introduction

An old farmer had dropped a shilling in the collection plate instead of a penny. Noticing his mistake he tackled the elder at the end of the service. "It would be sacrilege, Sandy, to take it out now." the elder said, "Well, I'll git credit for it in Heaven," replied the farmer. "No, no; you'll only git credit for a penny, for that was all you intended to put in."—Church Business.

“Give” is used in the Scriptures in some 1868 verses. To define properly, according to dictionary.com, “give” has several meanings. To present voluntarily and without expecting compensation; bestow: to hand to someone: to place in someone's care. Understanding what the word itself means let us move on to the text at hand. 1 Cor 16:1–2- “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

Each 1st day of the week, of which every week on the calendar has a 1st day therefore every Lord’s Day or 1st day of the week, a collection is to be taken from what we have set aside from our income as to be used for the work of the saints. The collection has many areas in which it works to further the cause of Christ. In some areas it works as benevolence, others in purchasing literature, as well as paying the utilities so that we may sit in comfort. The delegation of these funds is entrusted into the hands of the elders of the individual congregation for them to disperse as they see need.

Lets look at the text. Several things pop out as one considers the instruction. This commandment was given to multiple congregations which in turns means that it is not limited to one and only one. Paul commanded this to Galatia as well as Corinth which in turn perpetuates it to Marshall or any other congregation of the Lord’s body wherever they meet. Paul was evidently traveling and taking up this collection in order to fill a specific need. This particular collection was being taken to support the poor saints in Jerusalem who were suffering because of their obedience to the Gospel and leaving Judaism. In what communication Paul relayed this information to the Galatians is unknown but he did tell them Gal 6:10- “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” As noticed earlier the instruction was to conduct this taking up of a collection on the Lord’s Day, 1st day of the week, every week as every week has this 1st day and was to be done before Paul presented himself to the brethren there. This serves as our example and

pattern as one of the implements of New Testament prescribed worship. Also previously described are the various needs in which the church must take up a collection in order to conduct day to day operations as well as insuring the security of the flock. The finances required are to be given of a free desire, from an attitude and intent of willingness. This varies somewhat from the giving in the Old Testament times as the “tithing,” which was commanded to the THEM that some individuals practice today, in which they were to give a tenth of EVERYTHING. Not just their income, but of everything they brought in and acquired. Today, according to this instruction, we give according to our means, what we deem appropriate. I personally feel as though 10% is a good place to start and work up from there. But that is not a binding principle. Every person must decide for themselves what is appropriate.

In this study we will investigate 3 points of exhortation from this passage. We have noticed several various points that are open for discussion but today we will open our minds to these. In order to “Greatly Give” we must understand that this instruction is:
Apostle Commanded
To Lay Aside
As Prospered

Apostle Commanded

When the issue of giving to the work of the church enters the discussion many brethren will bristle up at the thought of releasing what they see as “theirs” into the hands of someone else. This mentality and attitude has at its core a sense of pride and selfishness. This is the danger of money if it is viewed improperly, therefore, Paul said **1 Tim 6:10- “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”** This develops within man an attitude of self reliance, to which Paul also described **2 Tim 3:2- “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.”** Money, not the use of, nor the possession of, is not inherently evil or wicked. There are individuals who are very wealthy but work to humble themselves in such a way that no one knows it and readily give liberally of those means to help others. However, there are also those who hoard it. Put their trust in the money instead of in God. By this means they become unholy and unthankful. This “unthankful mentality” is seen in multiple facets. Notice Paul’s words to the Romans, **Rom 1:18, 21- “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”** Attitude in giving is the first and foremost point to understand.

Another important point to emphasize in the area of giving is that this instruction is from the pen of an apostle. In order to understand how this is a divinely authorized commandment one must understand what the apostles had in their hands, hearts, and minds. **2 Pet 1:20–21- “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”** If the instruction is to be accepted as a divine command one must comprehend that the human pen that was used to record the instruction was directed by the Holy Spirit. **2 Tim 3:16–17- “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** If it is Scripture then it came by the breath, inspiration, of God. How then can a “man” be allowed to give instruction as though it came directly from God? Because Jesus said **Matt 16:19- “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”** I.e., the things that the inspired writers “bound” were not bound by them as though they had the authority to create instruction of their own accord, but, that they were bound already in Heaven. So then, when the instruction came from the Spirit to the hand of the inspired writer, He brought the message from on High and gave to the man beneath, an instruction which was already given before the writer ever received. The binding was done long before Paul ever received the guidance to record it. Accompanying this knowledge is

the fact that the instruction did not originate with the pen of Paul but with the pen of Luke in recording the words of the Master. Luke 6:38- "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

This instruction is given by Paul, an apostles of Jesus Christ Eph 1:1- "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God..." Through the inspired hand delivered the instructions from God 1 Cor 14:37- "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." With those instructions being the commands of God in the area of giving he proclaimed 1 Cor 16:2- "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." Evidently the attitudes that we face in the area of giving today are not new. The mentality of cheerfulness in our giving would also be addressed 2 Cor 9:6-8- "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." I.e. if it makes one upset or angry to give or the reason and drive behind our giving is because "we have to" rather than because "we want to" then we might as well discontinue what we are doing because God wants you give out of your desire and love for Him and for the work of the church.

Along with instruction the inspired writer would also give appreciation for and encouragement of the avenue of giving of our means. Paul told those in Philippi Phil 4:15- "Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only." Just prior to this exhortation he relayed some of the struggles that he went through as a preacher of the Gospel. The life was not one of ease but rather wrought with difficulty. His comfort was in Christ. His consolation was in Christ. His ability to continue and obtain the blessings he needed to survive were in Christ. Therefore he declared Phil 4:13- "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He praised the Philippian brethren for attending to his needs. They made proper use of the prosperity over which they had been made stewards. "Guy L. Morrill, in his book, Stewardship Stories, tells of a Sunday school class of boys, who for a number of weeks had studied stewardship. As they came to the end of their study of this subject, their teacher asked them to write out what they thought stewardship meant. One boy wrote this: "Stewardship means that life is a great ship, loaded with a rich cargo of many things to be delivered to many peoples in many places. God is the owner, but I am the captain of the ship." How do you think of yourself? As owner or as captain of the things you possess? Are you delivering the goods?"

Lay Aside

As people we often overlook the many blessings bestowed upon us daily. There is a song we tend to sing about counting our blessings. Quickly realized is that we cannot put a number on the blessings received on a daily basis. Quite likely the same holds true if we tried minimize the time frame. I dare say we could not accurately number them if we narrowed the view to an hour or even a minute. We ought to be grateful for the things with which we have been blessed. The same form of gratitude ought to be utilized with “laying aside” that with which we have been blessed. 1 Th 5:18- “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Do you mean to say, that I am to be thankful for the opportunity to give up what I worked so hard to obtain? Uh, yeah...that's exactly what our attitude ought to have in consideration. Everything we have is a blessing, a part of James 1:17- “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” How then can one begrudge God of that which belongs to God in the first place? Yes, when the subject turns to giving of our means we should have enough foresight to set a certain part of that income aside and give it over to the work of the church with gratitude Eph 5:20- “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” with a heart of cheerfulness 2 Cor 9:7- “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

We should also keep in mind that nothing should be caught between. Sometimes when we suffer a loss or tragedy or maybe even find ourselves in a predicament of our own doing, spending money we don't have, we allow our giving to suffer. We will say things like “well, I will just have to give less to the contribution” or the like. In a decision like this is not considered the fact that the bills and responsibility of the local congregation do not change. The funds doled out by a responsible eldership have individuals dependent on them for their survival. Such as preaching students and missionaries. When the contribution falters, so does their support. If their support falters they will well find themselves in the same situation as Paul when writing to Philippi. Shame on us if we be the cause of their suffering. “Bearing the Loss A benevolent man was planning \$100 to the Lord's work, but before it was paid he suffered a disaster by a destructive hailstorm. "I met him," says the narrator, "and was again invited to call and receive his donation. While walking toward the house he said: `I had intended to give this time \$100, but in view of this calamity I shall be obliged to reduce it to \$60.' I said nothing, but followed him into his dwelling. He gave me a seat and then called his wife out; and after an absence so long as to excite my wonder he returned and handed me his check for \$100. Thinking it possible that it was so written by a slip of the thought, I said: "So you meant this for \$100?" `Yes,' he replied, `my wife and I have talked it over a little and we have concluded it best to bear the loss ourselves, and not charge it to the Lord.' "—*The Illustrator*

As Prospered

When contemplating the funds that we drop into the collection place each Lord's Day there are a few thoughts to keep in mind in reference to giving as we have prospered. These words do not indicate that one is to give only in times of exceptional prosperity but of whatever fruits were the result of his labors (Lipscomb GAC 1Cor p.250)

To aid in this concept one can keep in mind that he is placed in the position of stewardship over something that does not belong to him in the first place. 1 Chr 29:13-14- "Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You." As such, 1 Cor 4:2- "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." We need to remember that the things over which we are placed as stewards are not belongings of our own. Psa 50:10-12- "For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness." "Little girl told an older friend that she was going to give her papa a pair of slippers for his birthday. "Where will you get your money?" asked the friend. She opened her eyes wide and said, "Why, Father will give me the money." For a moment the friend was silent as he thought that the father would buy his own birthday present. And the father loved the little girl and appreciated the gift, even though he paid for it himself. We have nothing of our own to give to God."

Gifts in the first century typically referred to the gifts of the Spirit that were used to invoke belief in the non believer. Peter made reference to this in 1 Pet 4:10- "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." The gifts that we receive today are some different in that our gifts are our daily blessings. Our daily blessings come by the grace of God over which we are stewards so the same principle still applies as to the context of 1Peter 4. Showing one another the love that we have for each other. Notice the context 1 Pet 4:7-9- "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling." The giving of our means, be it because it supports those working in the vineyard or it is used as a benevolence for our brethren right here, it is a show of love, 2 Cor 8:24- "Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf."

Some may think to themselves that the things said here today are not true or do not apply to them. However, we need to keep in mind the end result of failure. To willingly not give of our means to the work of the church is equivalent to robbing from God. Mal 3:8-10- "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with

a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.” When our focus is shifted off the target and we begin to think we are above that which is Holy and that the commandment from the hand of the apostle which came from the breath of God is something that does not apply to me, Hag 1:6- ““You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.””

However, if we put God first in our lives. If we put Him first in our sustenance, nothing will be lacking. Matt 6:33- “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Luke 6:38- “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”” If you want to bring it in, put it in...2 Cor 9:6- “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

Conclusion

The late George Horace Lorimer, for many years editor of The Saturday Evening Post, once wrote these words: "It is a good thing to have money and the things that money can buy; but it is good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things that money can't buy."The things that money can't buy would make a long list—here are some of them: Money can't buy real friendship — friendship must be earned. Money can't buy a clear conscience—square dealing is the price tag. Money can't buy the glow of good health—right living is the secret.

Greatly Giving is a giving of our best to God Mal 1:8- "And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the Lord of hosts."

Did God give anything less than the best of Heaven for you? How then should we honor God in this regard?

"We don't talk about giving until it hurts, we talk about giving until it feels good" (Scott Cain)