

# THE MINISTRY OF GIVING

## “Christians Giving”

### I. Study Resources

#### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION – 1 Corinthians 16:2

##### *Textual Passage – New King James Version*

On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, . . .”

##### *Helpful Translations*

“On the first [day] of each week, let each one of you [personally] put aside something and save it up as he has prospered [in proportion to what he is given], . . .”  
*The Amplified Bible*

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, . . .”

*The Living Bible*

#### EXEGETICAL INSIGHTS

##### “Week”

**Sabbaton.** The Sabbath or day of weekly repose from secular avocations.

##### “As God has prospered him”

Paul does not indicate a definite amount or definite proportion of one’s income that is to be contributed; he leaves it to the conscience of each. Each should give ‘whatever he (or it) has been prospered.’ The subject of the verb is not expressed. AV supplies the word ‘God’; others ‘he’ or ‘his business’ (so NIV with *in keeping with his income*). The verb may be either present or perfect; either gives a good sense, and both point to a continuing state. The meaning is then that one’s giving should be in direct proportion to the way one prospers; it should be determined as a matter of principle, not something done on impulse. Paul wants *no collections* when he comes; he is not looking for a last-minute effort with emotional pressure.

*Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*—1 Corinthians, p. 233  
Leon Morris

#### CHARACTER ANALYSIS AND HISTORICAL SETTING

One of the most important ministries Paul had during his third journey was the gathering of a special “relief offering” for the poor believers in Jerusalem. He wanted to achieve several purposes in this offering. For one thing, the Gentiles owed material help to the Jews in return for the spiritual blessings the Jews had given them (Rom. 15:25-27). At the Jerusalem conference years before, Paul had agreed to “remember the poor,” so he was keeping his pledge (Gal. 2:10). Paul not only preached the Gospel, but he also tried to assist those who had physical and material needs.

Apart from keeping his promise and meeting a great need, Paul’s greatest motive for taking up the offering was to help unite Jews and Gentile believers. Paul’s was a missionary to the Gentiles, and this bothered some of the Jewish believers (Acts 17:21-25). Paul hoped that this expression of Gentile love would help to heal some wounds and build some bridges between the churches.

Even though this as a special missionary offering, from Paul’s instructions we may learn some basic principles that relate to Christian stewardship.

*Be Wise*, pgs. 160, 161, Warren W. Wiersbe

#### KEY OBSERVATIONS

The treasure, of course, is God’s grace. But Alcorn (*The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Joy of Giving*, by Randy Alcorn) says we discover that grace when we give as much as we can, as often as we can, to Kingdom work. Radical stewardship is the key to fully experiencing God’s grace. The joy of giving, he says, is a major component of discipleship and a fruit of the Spirit.

Americans are incredibly materialistic, Alcorn says, and Christians are not immune from the “affluenza” virus that has sickened our culture. “Think of all the reinforcement we have on a daily basis,” he observes. “All the commercials that say buy-buy-buy, appealing to our inner selves—that somehow we’re

missing out on life unless we have a certain product or use a certain service." In *The Treasure Principle* he writes, "Only giving breaks affluenza's fever. Only giving defies the spirit of entitlement. Only giving breaks me free from the gravitational hold of money and possessions. Giving shifts me to a new center of gravity—heaven."

*Christian Management*, June 2002, p. 5, John R. Throop

## II. Application Resources

### POSSIBLE TITLES

"Christian Giving, The More Excellent Way"

"The Treasure Principle"

"How Much Do You Have At The First Of The Week?"

### POSSIBLE OUTLINES

#### The Treasure Principle

- I. God owns everything and I'm his money manger.
- II. My heart always goes where I put God's money.
- III. Heaven, not earth, is my home.
- IV. I shouldn't live for the dot (our brief life on earth today), but for the line (our eternal life in heaven soon).
- V. Giving is the only antidote to materialism.
- VI. God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving.

John R. Throop, p. 6

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#### Christian Giving—The More Excellent Way

- I. Personally—"Let every one of you . . ."
- II. Proportionately—"As God hath prospered you"
- III. Periodically—"Upon the first day of the week . . ."

From a radio message on the *Old Fashioned Revival Hour*,  
Charles E. Fuller

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- I. Giving is an Act of Worship
- II. Giving should be Systematic
- III. Giving was Personal and Individual
- IV. Giving is to be Proportionate

Warren W. Wiersbe, pgs. 161, 162

## ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Giving is all about sacrifice.

A wealthy lady who was active in her church learned that the church was in a building program, she handed the pastor a check for \$50 and said, "I hope this helps." The Pastor, said, "I'm certain it will if it represents a sacrifice for you."

She told him to give her the check and she huffed away in disgust.

The next Sunday she gave him a check for \$500. The Pastor said, "That's fine if it's an illustration of what's in your heart." She took the check and went home.

The next Sunday she brought a check for \$5,000. The Pastor said, "If it represents a sacrifice for you." She was furious.

By Friday of that week the Holy Spirit gripped her heart and Sunday she had a new attitude. After the morning service she approached the pastor and said that God was saying something to her. She handed the pastor an envelope and said, "This represents a sacrifice and I want Jesus to be blessed."

After she left, the Pastor opened the envelope and found a check for \$50,000.

Sacrifice is the issue.

*Great Stories*—April/June 2002, p. 8, David Sylvester, Editor

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The eye of an ostrich is bigger than its brain. When we are overcome by materialism we are not unlike the ostrich . . . our eyes are bigger than our brains.

The next time you walk through a mall, take a few ostrich struts just to remind yourself that materialistic desires can cause us to look as ridiculous as a bug-eyed, flightless bird.

† † †

Years ago, a monk came to the aid of a needy traveler. He opened his small pouch of belongings and offered the man a precious stone worth a small fortune. The monk had previously found it and was now giving it away. The traveler was amazed at his good fortune and quickly left to sell the valuable stone. Surprisingly, the man returned a few days later with the jewel. He placed it in the monk's hand and said, "Now please give me something much more precious than this stone. Please give me that which enabled you to give it away." Giving begins in the heart, not the wallet.

*God's Vitamin "C" for the Spirit*, p. 271  
Kathy & Larry Miller

**III. Worship Resources**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Wondrous and Generous God, You have blessed us with gentle rains, glorious sunsets and sun-warmed days. You bless us with loving families, kind friends and a caring fellowship of believers. Let us receive these gifts with thankfulness and humility. We cannot earn nor do we deserve such generosity but we graciously open our hearts and hands to receive.

Forgive us when we are hard-hearted and tight-handed, when we don't let Your goodness flow through us, when we hid our talents and turn away from the needs of the world.

Help us to have the same love and liberality that Your Son had in giving Himself for the world.

**RESPONSIVE READING**

Leader: What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

Response: As men of old their first fruits brought  
Of orchard, flock, and field  
To God the Giver of all good  
The Source of bounteous yield;

Leader: I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

Response: So we today first fruits would bring—  
The wealth of this good land,

Of farm and market, shop and home,  
Of mind, and heart, and hand.

Leader: O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou has loosed my bonds.

Response: In gratitude and humble trust  
We bring our best to thee  
To serve thy cause and share thy love  
With all humanity.

Leader: Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

Response: O Thou who gavest us thy self  
In Jesus Christ thy son,  
Teach us to give ourselves each day  
Until life's work is done.

**OLD TESTAMENT READING**

II Kings 4:1-7

**CONGREGATIONAL SONGS AND HYMNS**

- "What shall I do my God to love" 55/129
- "Give me the faith which can remove" 720/503
- "Bring your tithes into the storehouse" 920/363

**Our Gifts To Thee**  
(Tune: The Unveiled Christ)

Lord, we thank Thee for Thy love,  
For Thy blessings from above,  
For the gifts Thou dost bestow.  
So we give our love to Thee,  
Pledge to serve Thee faithfully,  
And we bring our gifts to Thee,  
Loving Christ of Calvary.

As we bring our gifts to Thee,  
Loving Christ of Calvary,  
Take and use them, Lord, we pray,  
Bless and use us, Lord, each day,  
We return but what is Thine,  
Own Thee as our Lord Divine,  
So we bring our gifts to Thee,  
Loving Christ of Calvary.

Verna M. Davis  
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**SPECIAL MUSIC**

"To Live For Christ"  
*Sing PRAISE*, Volume 5  
The Salvation Army U.S.A. Southern Territory