

## CHRISTIAN GIVING

### The Biblical Basis of Christian Giving:

In a world that merely revolves around 'getting', 'gaining' and 'grabbing' we as children of God are called to 'give', 'spend' and 'expend'.

Sometimes this area seems overly emphasized but this is one of the crucial areas where for many, a strange coldness has crept. We've compromised so much and have sinned. We feel, "Well, God is not bothered about my pocket money; how I spend it or how much I give; after all it's so scanty you see..."

Why should I give?  
Is giving optional or obligatory?

### ***Giving - Is not optional but a command in the word of God.***

- 2 Corinthians 8:7 says, "Excel in the grace of giving".
- Malachi 3:8 says, "Being unfaithful to God in this area amounts to robbing God."
- Ps 24: 1 says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it."

### ***Giving - Is Reflecting God.***

- "O Giving God, Gloriously wasteful. O Lord art Thou", says George Mac Donald.
- We need to give because He first gave. He gave His only Son, precious Son to give us redemption and life eternal. (2 Corinthians 8:9). He became poor so that we may be rich. He is the God of the heavens worthy of all glory and praise but yet He came to this earth as Son of a poor carpenter. He gave up so much, far than we could imagine or comprehend with our small human minds for a rather in-different, ungrateful humanity.
- In the Father-God and in Jesus Christ we see this self-less spirit of giving, giving without expecting anything in return, giving out of an abounding, overflowing love, giving till the last drop of blood.
- When we give, we reflect Christ.

### ***Giving - A Response of Love.***

- The heart of Christian giving is love. Our giving reflects the depth of our love towards the Lord. St. Paul said, "I am putting your love to the test." (2 Corinthian 8:9)
- The level of giving is more than a test of spiritual maturity. It is also an opportunity to show how much we love our neighbor.

### ***Giving - Shows my Priorities, Commitment, my honor toward s God.***

- A Bible commentator says - Airline Pilots and computer operators push test buttons to see if their equipments are functioning properly. Gods has a quick test button he can push to see the level of our commitment - our pocketbooks. Generous people aren't necessarily faithful to God. But faithful people are always generous. My giving shows my priorities, my commitment, and my trust on the Lord and how much I honor the Lord.

## II Giving - How, To Whom and How much?

### What Matters Most ...

Though outward actions reflect the inner attitude, outward superficial actions alone cannot satisfy God. He searches deep within, the motives and attitude behind every action. Hence the quality of our giving and the attitude that prompts our giving matters.

### Attitude Matters:

We see this evidently in the giving of Cain and Abel. (Gen 4:3 - 7) The Bible says Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of the flock. Cain brought gifts from his farm produce. God accepted Abel and his offering but He did not accept Cain and his offering.

Need to understand that for God the attitude of one who offers is important so as the offering. God cannot accept the offering alone, the one who offers also matters much. In this case we see that Cain's life was not pleasing to God so he did not accept him or his offering. God evaluates both our motives and the quality of what we offer Him.

Proverbs 21: 27 says, " God loathes the sacrifice of an evil person, especially when it is brought with ulterior motives."

### Quality Matters:

The quality of our offering matters much more than the quantity. Jesus seeing the poor widow said she has given more than all the others because she gave everything. God cannot be satisfied with large numbers. God does not perceive things in the way we see.

### HOW??

1. **Give Cheerfully** - Example - Israelites' gift towards temple construction.- I Chronicles 29: 3,4
2. **Give richly** - Example - Macedonian Believers (2 Corinthians 8: 2). Though they have been going through much trouble and hard times, their wonderful joy and deep poverty have overflowed in rich generosity.
3. **Give Willingly**
4. **Give Sacrificially** - Giving to God should cost me.  
In 1 Chronicles 21: 24 David says, "I cannot take what is yours and give it to the Lord. I will not offer a burnt offering that has cost me nothing!"
5. **Give in-secret** - Matthew 6:2-4
6. **Give Systematically** - Acts 16:2

### To Whom??

1. Give to God's Servants - Philippians 4: 16 - 18
2. Give to brothers and sisters in need. Acts 4: 32- 34
3. Give to orphans and widows. James 1: 27
4. Give for God's commission, the expansion of His kingdom. Matt 28:19.

### How Much??

The amount we need to give should be determined by the following:

1. By the Need 2 Corinthians 8, 9
2. By how much wealth God has blessed us with. 2 Corinthians 8: 12 - 15, I Corinthians 16:2, Deuteronomy 16:17, Matthew 10: 8, Acts 11:29

In the OT God commanded the Israelites to offer 10% of one's possessions. NT believers are however are under no such law. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:7 "Let each one give just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful

giver". Each Christian should decide in his own heart "how much" to give, to give it cheerfully. There are so many men of God who gave up to 50% or 70% of their income and yet lived satisfied, contented life. We need not limit ourselves to the 10%.

### III Why we seem to hesitate sometimes

#### 1. Lack of Knowledge and Trust.

We lack in Christian giving because we have not yet known or understood that - 'Everything belongs to Him'. The Bible says that - In Him we live, move and have our being.

He is the Lord of all the earth, the sea and the skies (Psalms 24:1). We belong to Him. We owe Him our everything.

We seem to believe unknowingly (or knowingly) that we live because of what we are earning. We feel life is so much dependent on the money we get. Everyday luxuries will appear as basic necessities. We need to remember that it is His grace that sustains each day. Economy may change, our sources of income may dwindle down but His mercies and grace will sustain us. When we have a God who has numbered all our hairs, who has our image in His palms, we can rest, assured that He will take care of all our needs. (Example - Elijah - Fed by meat when others were suffering in famine.)

#### 2. Conformance to the World.

Every year the amount we spend on our own selves keeps increasing. This affects our giving. Though its not wrong, we need to evaluate our desires, priorities in the light of the word of God. We need to ask God to give us wisdom, wisdom to distinguish between our needs and wants. The new age is suffocated with materialism. Our perspectives keep changing - luxuries taking the place of necessities. We need to live with eternity's perspective in view.

#### 3. Hearts set on the treasures of the earth.

A heart that is set on the treasures of this earth, seeks earthly securities. This affects ones giving (Colossians 3: 1,2).

### IV Tips for Sacrificial Christian Giving

1. Decide on the beginning of a year the amount you are going to set aside for God every month. Set aside that sum first whatever be the situation.
  2. Identify your needs and wants. Spend money for the things that you need and not on the things you want.
  3. Identify areas of sacrificial giving, motivated by love.  
Like skipping the usual coffee / tea / juice / evening snacks.
  4. Use your skill/talents.  
Making cards, toys etc., and selling to friends and giving the money to God.
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