

Giving

In Acts 20:35, the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus said it is 'more blessed to give than to receive'. Jesus certainly modelled this as He gave the riches of heaven for the poverty of earth. The motivation of Jesus' giving was love.

As children of God, we should live lives of love, being willing to generously use everything that God gives us to be a blessing to others and to further the advancement of the gospel around the world.

In this study on giving, we will look at:

- 1) Everything belongs to God.
- 2) God expects us to manage what we have for His purposes.
- 3) How to honour God with all we have.

KEY VERSE: Matthew 6:33 *'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'*

CHAPTERS TO READ THIS WEEK: Psalm 1-7

1. EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD.

God created everything, so it all belongs to Him.

Genesis 1:1

¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Psalm 24:1-2

¹ The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; The world, and they that dwell therein. ² For he hath founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the floods.

Every good thing comes from God.

James 1:17

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

God will do what He wants with everything because it all belongs to Him.

Haggai 2:6-8

⁶ For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, And I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; ⁷ And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. ⁸ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION:

Do you understand that everything in this world and everything you have belongs to God?

2. GOD EXPECTS US TO MANAGE WHAT WE HAVE FOR HIS PURPOSES.

1 Timothy 6:6–11

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Contentment

- A wealthy person is the one who is content with God and what God gives him (v.6).
- We can't take any of the possessions of this world with us (v.7).
- If we have food to eat and clothes to wear, we should be content (v.8).
- Those who live to be rich end up getting themselves in trouble (v.9).
- Loving money leads to all kinds of evil and sorrow (v.10).
- Those who believe in God should run from covetousness and run after more valuable things like righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness (v.11).

1 Timothy 6:17–19

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Humility (v.17)

- We who have a lot in this world should not be proud or trust in our riches.
- Instead, we should trust in God who gives us all these things to enjoy.

Give (v.18)

- We who have a lot in this world should do good, be rich in good works, be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate (share with others).

Invest in Eternity (v.19)

- Instead of hoarding our possessions and saving up here on earth, we should be investing in eternity.

Matthew 6:19–21

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

- Our heart follows our treasure. If we are focused on heaven, we will invest in heavenly things. If we are focused on this earth, we will invest in earthly things.

Matthew 6:24–34

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. ²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? ²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? ²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? ²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: ²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? ³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. ³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Seek first God's kingdom

- We cannot serve God and mammon (wealth, riches). We are serving one or the other (v.24).
- We are not to worry about the physical things of this world such as food, clothes (v.25-32).
- Instead we are to seek first the things of God and trust Him to provide everything else (v.33-34).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How content are you with what God has given you?
- Where are you focused on laying up treasure - heaven or earth?

3. HOW TO HONOUR GOD WITH ALL WE HAVE.

Proverbs 3:9–10

⁹ Honour the Lord with thy substance, And with the firstfruits of all thine increase: ¹⁰ So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, And thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

a. Acknowledge God's blessings by giving a portion of all God gives us back to Him.

Genesis 14:17–24

¹⁷ And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. ¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. ¹⁹ And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: ²⁰ And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. ²¹ And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. ²² And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou

shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: ²⁴ Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

- Abraham was victorious over those who attacked and carried off his nephew Lot.
- He gave a tenth (a tithe) of all that he had to Melchizedek, God's priest who came out to bless him.
- Abraham gave this tithe as a way to acknowledge that everything in heaven and earth belongs to God.

Genesis 28:18–22

¹⁸ And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. ¹⁹ And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. ²⁰ And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, ²¹ So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: ²² And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

- Jacob wanted the Lord to bless him.
- He promised to give back a tenth of all God would give him.

Numbers 18:21–24

²¹ And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. ²² Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. ²³ But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. ²⁴ But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

- Under the law of Moses, the people of Israel were required to give a tenth to support the priesthood and God's place of worship and atonement.
- The law of Moses is not something Christians are expected to obey, but the principle of giving is continued in the New Testament.

Acts 2:41–46

⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all that believed were together, and had all things common; ⁴⁵ And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. ⁴⁶ And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

- They shared everything they had with one another.
- They used what they had to meet the needs of others.

Acts 4:32–37

³² And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. ³³ And with great power gave the apostles witness of the

resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, ³⁵ And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. ³⁶ And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷ Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Their giving went well beyond the tithe.
- They were giving very generously to one another and for the Lord's work.

APPLICATION

Take some time to thank the Lord for all He has given you. Maybe make a list of the things God has blessed you with.

Make a decision about giving back to God and His work from the blessings He has given you. Consider giving at least a tenth of all your income like many other followers of God have done in the past. A tenth or a tithe is a great place to start.

b. Look for opportunities to abound in the grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 8:1–7

¹ Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; ² How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. ³ For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; ⁴ Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. ⁶ Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. ⁷ Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

- The church of Macedonia were an example to the Corinthians in how they gave (v.1).
- Despite their poverty and trials, they were still very generous (v.2).
- They gave beyond their ability (v.3).
- They pled with Paul for the opportunity to give and help others because they were totally committed to the Lord and to others (v.4-5).
- The challenge is to mature in the area of giving just as we mature in other areas (v.6-7).

2 Corinthians 8:8–15

⁸ I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. ⁹ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. ¹⁰ And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. ¹¹ Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. ¹² For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. ¹³ For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: ¹⁴ But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: ¹⁵ As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

- We prove how much we love the Lord and others by how much we give (v.8).
- Jesus is an example of radical generosity (v.9).
- They had made a promise of what they were going to give, and Paul was challenging them to follow through on their promise (v.10-11).
- We should give out of what we have and in proportion with what we have (v.12-15).
- This 'faith promise' offering sets a pattern for other offerings many churches make for missions and other projects. They pray and trust God for a certain amount to give to the project or need.

APPLICATION

Begin to pray and ask the Lord for opportunities to give.

Instead of seeing giving as something you have to do, see it as a privilege and opportunity.

Pray about giving an amount above and beyond your tithes for the work of world evangelism. This can be given specifically to the missionary fund at the local church, which helps to send missionaries around the world.c. Give generously, willingly, and cheerfully.

2 Corinthians 9:6–11

⁶ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. ⁷ Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: ⁹ (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. ¹⁰ Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) ¹¹ Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

- We reap in proportion to how we give (v.6).
- Each of us should give as we feel led to give by the Lord (v.7).
- We should give cheerfully and joyfully (v.7).
- As we give, God will prosper and provide for us to keep on giving (v.8-11).

APPLICATION

Be excited to give. Look forward to the opportunity and the rewards that will come from it.

Giving is not about losing but about investing. Just as a seed sown produces fruit, our giving produces spiritual fruit and blessing.

d. Give proportionately and consistently.

1 Corinthians 16:1–2

¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. ² Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

- They were to give on the first day of the week (when they met together as a church).

- All of them were to give.
- They were to plan and prepare to give.
- They were to give as God prospered them.

APPLICATION

Take your giving seriously. Prepare to give. Include your giving in your budget.

Don't be haphazard and careless in your giving. Make careful preparation to give.

As the Lord prospers you, see that prosperity as a resource to invest in others and the Lord's work.

e. Give to reach the world with the gospel.

Ezra 1:1–6

¹ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, ² Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³ Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. ⁴ And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. ⁵ Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem. ⁶ And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

- When God called His people to go rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, some went and others helped them financially.

Acts 1:8

⁸ But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

- In order for the world to be reached with the gospel, missionaries must be sent out to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Philippians 4:15–19

¹⁵ Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. ¹⁷ Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. ¹⁸ But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. ¹⁹ But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

- The Philippians continued to help Paul with His ministry.
- As they gave to help him, they would share in the spiritual fruit of his ministry.
- And, as they gave, they had the promise that God would meet their needs.

APPLICATION

Make sure that you are giving to reach the world with the gospel as well.

God has a heart for the world and channels His resources for world evangelism through us.

As we give to support missionaries, they are able to take the gospel to the world and we are blessed to have a part in their ministry.

Nothing is more exciting than investing in the work of world evangelism!