

Giving, as Taught in the Bible

Giving has always been a subject which many reflection on God or His Word, but rather a have misunderstood. Today, in our materialistic reflection on our study of this all important world we need desperately to know what the subject. The Bible is very clear as to what God Bible says about giving. The Bible speaks more desires concerning our giving. Hence, we need to about giving than it does about the Lord's supper, faith, grace, and even the organization of the church. study what the Bible says. Even though many do not understand what the Bible says about giving, it is not a reflection on God or His Word, but rather a reflection on our study of this all important subject. The Bible is very clear as to what God desires concerning our giving. Hence, a need to study what the Bible says.

Giving as Taught in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God's people were commanded to give a tithe (i.e., a tenth). There is a lot of speculation as to when tithing began, but in all probability it most likely began with Adam. If not then what was God's reason for punishing Cain? It had to do with his attitude in giving. But whenever tithing began it is certain that it did not begin with the Jewish age, for we find that Abraham and Jacob give tithes (Gen14:20; 28:22).

During the Jewish age, there -ere three different tithes which they were commanded to give. The first was a tithe given to the Levites (Lev. 27:30-33). The second tithe was the festival tithe (Den. 14:22-23). And the third tithe was known as the poor tithe (Dan. 14:28-29). Thus, the Jews gave twenty-three and one third percent. Also, it should be noted that these three tithes did not include their free will offerings.

Giving as Taught in the New Testament

In the New Testament we learn that God has not commanded Christians to give a tithe as it was given in the Old Testament. However, the Hebrews writer speaks about the fact that we live under a better covenant. Since we live under a better covenant should it not stand to reason that we should give better than they did who lived under an inferior covenant?

We are taught, that "Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store" (1 Cor. 16:2). "Within this text we learn four things: (1) We are told when to give: "On the first day of the week." (2) We are also told who is to give: "Let each one of you lay by him in store." This simply means that each person has an obligation to give as the Lord has blessed him. If two people in the same family have an income, then each might give a proportion of his/her income. (3) There is a definite proportion: "As God has prospered him." Many people pay all of their bills, and do this or that with their check and then give what is left to God. However, God must come first in our budget. God demands the first and best of everything. (4) There is also a reason: "That there be no gatherings when I come." The reason is so that the funds will be there when needed.

The New Testament also says that we are to give willingly (2 Cor. 8:3-12). We are told to give cheerfully: "For God loveth a cheerful giver" (1 Cor. 9:7). Furthermore, every Christian is to give bountifully: "and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also

bountifully” (1 Cor.9:6).

B. A. Hungerford said, “It is not altogether unlikely that a wrong attitude toward money stands between more people and their right relationship to God than any one thing.”

Let us learn to give, as God would have us to give. *Johnie Seaggs, Jr.*

REJOICE AND BE HAPPY!

Every Christian faces various problems in life. There are many trials and disappointments. There will be times of sadness, sorrow and heartaches. At times, there will be clouds instead of sunshine. Jesus faced similar problems. In His life there were, no doubt, trials and disappointments. There were times of sorrow and sadness.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was sorrowful and his heart was very heavy, but His disciples who were with Him went to sleep while He was praying. A little later Judas betrayed Him! While Jesus was being “tried”, all the disciples forsook Him and fled! Peter denied that he had been with Jesus or even that he knew Him. (See; John 11:35; 12:27; 13:21; Mtt. 26:36-75). In spite of these things Jesus, no doubt, rejoiced and had peace. (See Luke 10:21; John 15:11; 14:27). Over all, Jesus was a happy man! He had joy and peace!

In spite of the fact that we face problems and disappointments and have times of sadness, sorrow and heartaches, over all, we should rejoice, have peace and be happy!

The Psalmist said: “But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.” (Psalms 68:3).

Solomon said: “Happy is the man that feareth always...” and “...he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” (Proverbs 28:14; 29:18).

Jesus admonished His disciples to “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad...” when they were persecuted. (Mt. 5:12; Also see John 15:11; 16:22).

We learn from Galatians 5:22 that joy and peace are fruit of the Spirit. In Romans 14:17 that apostle Paul declared that “...the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Also read carefully Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:11 and Hebrews 10:34).

The apostle Peter teaches us to be joyful and happy! In I Peter 4:13-14 he said: “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you...” (Also see I Pet. 3:14; 2 Peter 1:6-8).

We are commanded to rejoice!

Paul said: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord...” and “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 3:1; 4:4; also see Romans 12:15).

We should rejoice and be happy because of the abundance of material blessings God has given to us (see James 1:17) and because of the many spiritual blessings provided for us in Christ! (See Eph. 1:3).

Are you happy? You can be! (CR5)