

10 for 10

TEN WEEKS OF ENHANCED GIVING: WEEK 7

Why Give?

Is Life about Giving or Getting?

The answer to that question depends on whom you ask. With a Starbucks in one hand and a gift card or credit card in the other, we live constantly in a culture that makes it easy to answer, “Life is about getting what you need and what you want.” The message of advertisers is to persuade you to buy and then buy some more.

The Gospel message answers with a radically different message. With the debt of sin paid in full on a cross and God’s Son now sitting again at his right side, believers now live understanding, “Real giving is God’s giving.” Jesus, God’s gift to us, once said, “It is more blessed to give, than to receive” (Acts 20:35). That is so like Jesus because he was about giving. He gave his whole life on earth. And in his death he gave his life for us. The glory of the Gospel message is the fact that is nothing but GIVING.

We give a gift to our grandchildren and exchange them at seasonal holidays and to celebrate special moments of life. We give a gift to church. Perhaps one of the best gifts to consider giving is to ask Jesus to use us as channels of his love and mercy to others.

The implication of Jesus’ words is clear, “My life is about giving!” May the Lord richly bless you as his blessings flow to others through you!

A Look At Proportional Giving

Who Gives the Most?

Think of all the different scenarios that take place during a Sunday morning offering. You place a check for \$50.00 in the offering plate. A 7th grader sitting behind you tosses in 50 cents. The person in front of you puts in a check for \$300.00.

The question begs to be asked: Who gave the most? Who gave the most back in Jesus’ day when the rich men tossed handfuls of gold coins into the temple treasury? Can you picture the poor widow quietly dropping her two copper less-than-pennies into the treasury? Who gave more?

We ask the question. Jesus answers it. “I tell you the truth, he said, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on” (Luke 21:4).

The point? God doesn’t measure our gifts by the amount we give, but by the proportion we give. The proportion of our gifts is directly connected with the heart’s attitude. God knows the condition of our heart. He also knows the condition of our pocketbooks. He knows the bottom line of each and every bank account. When we give our offerings, he knows what we are keeping for ourselves.

Going back to our original scenario, mathematics teaches that the person who gave \$300.00 gave the most. Certainly \$300 is greater than two quarters given by the 7th grader! God, however, teaches that the 7th grader with the 50 cents may have given a far more substantial gift

Questions to Ask God about Giving

Q: Why do I want to hold on to my wealth? Am I trying to prove something? What am I trying to prove—and to whom? Is it pride? Power? Prestige? Selfishness? Insecurity? Fear? Am I a control freak? Or is it just because possessiveness is normal in our society, and I’m merely going with the flow? Do you want me to go with the flow or do something different—maybe radically different?

Q: Am I living to hear others say of me, “He or she is a great success” or to have you say to me, “Well done, my good and faithful servant?”

(Adapted from Alcorn, p. 220)

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“That bread which you keep belongs to the hungry; that coat which you preserve in your wardrobe, to the naked; those shoes which are rotting in your possession to the shoeless; that gold which you have hidden in the ground, to the needy. Wherefore, as often as you are able to help others, and refuse, so often did you do them wrong.” – Augustine

World Missions

Our prayers and offerings support our synod’s world mission outreach efforts, as they bring the light of God’s Word to the world through evangelism efforts, church planting, training national workers, and providing religious materials in foreign languages.

Many of our missionaries and brothers and sisters around the world sacrifice their time, modern conveniences, and even personal well-being and security.

Yet trusting in God’s promises, they take the treasure of Christ’s love and share it with a world that will be lost without it.



than the person who gave \$300. If the 50 cents is given from a grateful heart and represents a generous proportion of the student’s income, the gift pleases God. A gift of \$300 could sadden the Lord if it is given without faith, is given as an afterthought, or is a mere pittance of hundreds-of-thousands of dollars that are available to be used. Jesus said, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked “ (Luke 12:48).

The widow loved and trusted in Jesus. She was therefore willing to give everything she had. She knew that Jesus would provide for her. May God give us the faith of the widow so that we also can give proportionately, generously, and even sacrificially. As our relationship with Jesus grows, so will the proportion of what we give him.

Learning from the mistakes of others

How Not To Give

The Situation

Tony is a young college grad and deeply in debt. He is so far in debt, that he doesn’t

“have two dimes to rub together—let alone give one of them to church.” He figures that it would give people a bad impression to stop his car payments. He also thinks that it would be bad stewardship to sell his car at a loss. “God wants me to be smart, doesn’t he?”

The Problem

Tony hasn’t been smart. In purchasing a car well beyond his ability to pay, he positioned himself into robbing God so that he could pay for a car he couldn’t afford. Lifestyle is so important to Tony, that he is consistently borrowing to live beyond his means. He is spending money he doesn’t have on possessions he doesn’t need. He is unwilling to lose several hundred dollars on selling his over-priced car, even though it would position him to give more to God and free him from a significant portion of his debt.

Tony is acting as if he is the owner of God’s possessions rather than the manager of God’s possessions. Sadly, Tony’s actions make it seem like God, the church, and area charities should pay for his not-so-smart choices.

(Freely adapted from Alcorn, p. 191)

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

God’s Turn to Teach

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. (NIV)