

# THE CALVARY WAY

## *A STUDY ON STEWARDSHIP*

As people everywhere are feeling the effects of double-digit inflation and economic recession, the subject of our giving to God may seem to be badly timed. But not really. Consider the words of Haggai the prophet:

“Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.” Haggai 1:5-6

Wow! That sums up the experience of many of us, right? What was the cause of this condition? Let's listen in on Haggai's Prophecy once more:

“Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home I did blow on it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.” Haggai 1:9

You see, our failure to give to God in attempting to “stretch the dollar” really leads to disaster. On the other hand, our giving to God is actually the most prudent investment one will ever make. For no one can out give God. God will not be a debtor to any man. Consider when Jesus borrowed Peter's boat to preach from. After He was through, He told Peter to “launch out into the deep and let down your nets...” They hauled in so many fishes their nets began to break and their boat began to sink! (Luke 5: 1-7). You just can't out give God!

ow, the Bible has more to say about the stewardship of money than it says about many other aspects of our Christian walk.

God wants His people to give. For in giving they become more God-like. "For God so loved the world, that He gave..."<sup>1</sup> As we give, we become more like our Father.

As we give, we give away a part of our selfishness.

As we give, our heart is more closely knit with God. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."<sup>2</sup> If your treasure is with IBM or U.S. National Bank, that's where your heart will be. If your treasure is in God and God's work, then that's where your heart will be.

Now, there are four degrees of Biblical giving.

## **SYSTEMATIC GIVING**

"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." 1 Corinthians 16:2

Every Christian is to come each Sunday already prepared to give. It is to be according to how God has prospered him. Now, in the Old Testament we are told that means tithing, or giving ten percent of our weekly income.

One may protest saying, "Tithing is the Old Testament law and we're free from the law." Wait a minute! Abraham paid tithes before the law was ever given? (See Genesis 14:18-20.)

It would seem that the tithe (ten percent) is clearly God's minimum standard in systematic giving. The tithe is God's! And failure to give it to God is actually robbing God.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. but ye say, wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Malachi 3:8-9

Yet in this passage, God goes on to promise blessing for those who do tithe. Listen to the only time in the Bible that God asks men to prove, or test, Him.

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” Malachi 3:10

## **SPONTANEOUS GIVING**

The second degree of giving deals with our giving to God above and beyond the tithe as a spontaneous expression of our appreciation and devotion to Him. It's an act of worship and praise.

Mary Magdalene gave in this way when she anointed the head of Jesus with very costly ointment (Matthew 26:6-13). The disciples said, “What purpose is this waste?” Hold on! Even though the ointment was worth a year's salary, it wasn't waste. Nothing given to Jesus is ever a waste.

Yet, spontaneous giving is often viewed by the world as being a waste or as being foolish. But that's not the way our Lord Jesus views it.

## **SACRIFICIAL GIVING**

This is giving to the point of it really hurting. Few of us know sacrificial giving; but those who have given sacrificially know the truth of Jesus' words, “It is more blessed to give than receive.”<sup>3</sup>

Consider David whom Scripture declares was, “A man after God's own heart.”<sup>4</sup> In giving to the Lord he declared:

“Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.” II Samuel 24:24

Consider also the widow who gave her last penny to God (Mark 12). Jesus saw and commented to His disciples:

“Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.” Mark 12:43-44

I guarantee that the widow is enjoying eternal dividends that would make the fortune left by Howard Hughes look like peanuts!

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal...” Matthew 6:19-20

## **SPIRITUAL GIVING**

The deepest level of giving is actually a spiritual gift listed in Romans 12 as the Gift of Giving. This is when you are used by God in making money to give back to the work and purposes of God.

This giving is a full-on-ministry. Maybe God has given you the ability to make money and perhaps is even now showing you this is your spiritual gift, to give back a high percentage to him.

Also, spiritual giving deals with praying money in for the purpose of giving it out. And you simply become a channel through which God's riches flow. (Be careful of sticky fingers however!)

In all your giving, don't give begrudgingly or half-hearted. God does not need your money.

“For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills...for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof.” Psalm 50:10-12

He tells us to give for our blessing, maturity, and prosperity. If you can't give happily, don't give at all for, “The Lord loves a cheerful (The Greek actually means hilarious!) giver!”<sup>5</sup>

(1) John 3:16

(2) Luke 12:34

(3) Acts 20:35

(4) Acts 13:22

(5) II Corinthians 9:7

We are located on Long Lake Rd. (18 Mile) and John R on the NW corner.  
Service Times: 10 am on Sunday, 7:00 p.m. Wednesday  
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