

# Giving: The Problem of Priorities and Percentages.

## 1A. The Biblical Requirements for Giving:

### 1b. The standards of the Old Testament:

#### 1c. The tithe in the ancient world:

The ancients honored their pagan deities by offering them a tenth. The number ten represented totality and indicated total surrender.

#### 2c. The tithe before the Mosaic dispensation:

##### 1d. Abraham and the tithe: Gen. 14:17-20; cf. Heb. 7:4

Abraham's victory over the Mesopotamian invaders gave him access to much spoil. Of this he paid a tithe to the priest-king Melchizedik. It was a voluntary tithe of the booty of war and apparently a one-time thing.

##### 2d. Jacob and the tithe: Gen. 28: 20-22

Jacob was at a low point spiritually. He tried to bribe God with a tithe. God had promised Jacob His presence (v.15). Jacob, in unbelief, replies, "If God will be with me" (v. 20) then "I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (v. 22).

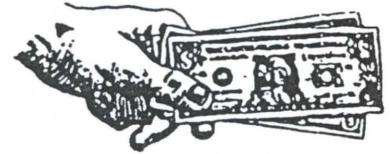
#### 3c. The tithe of the Mosaic Law:

##### 1d. The legal character of the tithe: Lev. 27:34, cf. vv. 30-33

##### 2d. The divine requirement for the tithe:

##### 1e. A tenth of all had to be given to the Levites: Lev. 27: 30-33

Israel was to support its theocratic rulers, God's vice-regents, with the tithe.



## Tithe



Prof. Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

2e. A second tithe ( a tenth of the remaining nine-tenth) was to be set apart for a sacred meal in Jerusalem: Deut. 12: 5-6, 11, 18

3e. Every third year another tithe was taken for "the Levite, . . .the stranger and the fatherless and the widow" (Deut. 14:29).

3d. The national relevance of the tithe:

Under the Mosaic Law the proportion was clearly specified and every Israelite was under obligation to give approximately 22% of his annual income.



John McArthur has well summarized the purpose of Mosaic tithing: "Tithing, required to fund the theocracy, was equivalent to our modern-day tax structure. The three tithes took care of government salaries, the social and religious life of the nation, and a welfare system. Tithes were not freewill gifts. The tithes didn't belong to the people, so how could they give them away? The tithe was the Lord's" (Giving God's Way, p. 72).

4c. The tithe in the present dispensation:

1d. The impossibility of Mosaic tithing: Mal. 3:6-11

Malachi 3

6 For I am the LORD, 'I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7 ¶ 'Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. "But ye said, Wherein shall we return? 8 ¶ Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In "tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

10 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.*

1e. The people who were commanded to tithe were Israelites: Mal. 3:6

2e. The place to which the tithe was taken was the temple: Mal. 3:10

3e. The procedure of paying the tithe limited it to the Jewish economy: Mal. 3:10

2d. The institution of a new economy:

1e. The elimination of the tithe:

Tithing was part of the Mosaic Law, given specifically to Israel, never to the Gentiles (Rom. 2:14). The law is expressly done away for the Christian (2 Cor. 3:7-11). With a change of the priesthood, there was a change of the law governing the priesthood (Heb. 7:12).

2e. The establishment of grace giving:

1f. Grace never compels, whereas the tithe was compulsory. The Israelite gave in order to be blessed. The believer gives because he has been blessed. The Christian is motivated to action by the blessings of God (Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 1:3).

2f. A new spirit permeates this age: The compulsory character of the law of tithing gave place to the spiritual grace of giving.

Law vs. Grace

2B. The standards of the New Testament:

1c. The significance of giving:

1d. The prominent place of giving:

1e. The references to giving:



The New Testament contains commands, practical directions, warnings, examples, and exhortations concerning giving: Christ spoke approximately five times as much about money and possessions than any other subject!

2e. The reprehensibility of greed:

The Scriptures denounce miserliness, greed and avarice but extol generosity, hospitality and charity.

3e. The recurrence of the theme of giving:

There are four central passages which set forth the principles of giving for the church: 1 Cor. 16: 1,2; 2 Cor. 8:1-12; 2 Cor. 9:6-8; Gal. 6:6-10

2d. The evidential nature of giving:

1e. The use of our possessions demonstrates our love for God.

Dr. Ryrie is absolutely correct when he states: "How we use our money demonstrates the reality of our love for God. In some ways it proves our love more conclusively than depth or knowledge [sic.], length of prayers or prominence of service. These things can be feigned, but the use of our possessions shows us up for what we actually are" (Balancing the Christian Life, p. 84).



2e. The love of God is linked intimately with gifts to our brother: 1 John 3:17

In commenting on this verse, Ryrie states: "How, then, can the believer in ordinary circumstances show that he loves his brother and thus God? The answer is simple: By giving money and goods to his brother. If he fails to do this, then he shows not only that he does not love his brother but also that he does not love God.



There is scarcely anyone who cannot give; therefore, all can show by this means the measure of their love for God. Giving of money and things is a manifestation and responsibility of a truly spiritual life" (ibid., pp. 84-85).



3d. The spiritual character of giving:

- 1e. Giving is called a fellowship: 2 Cor. 8:4

Giving is closely related to the believer's fellowship with his Lord.

- 2e. Giving is considered a spiritual gift: Rom. 12:8

This gift can be exercised by any believer, no matter what his financial status may be.

2c. The stewardship of giving:

1d. The definition of a steward:

- 1e. The biblical definition:

A steward in the New Testament as well as in the Old Testament was a man charged with the responsibility of managing another man's house.

- 2e. The ethical definition:

Man is not an owner but a trustee, managing another's goods, God being the one original and inalienable owner of all.

2d. The description of a steward:



- 1e. A steward is one who first gives back to God himself: 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 8:5

- 2e. A steward is not one who gives what he owns, but rather he gives back to God a portion of what God has entrusted to him.

3d. The deportment of a steward: Luke 12:42

- 1e. A steward is faithful and wise:

- 2e. A steward is Spirit-controlled:

The believer puts his time, treasure and talent at his Master's disposal.

3c. The sacrifice of giving:

The New Testament lists four "Christian sacrifices." Giving is one of these high and noble activities.

- 1d. The Christian's sacrifice of his body to the Lord: Rom. 12:1-2
- 2d. The Christian's sacrifice of praise to God: Heb. 13:15
- 3d. The Christian's sacrifice of well doing: Heb. 13:16
- 4d. The Christian's sacrifice of communicating or contributing: Heb. 13:16

4c. The sytem of grace giving: 1 Cor. 16:1-2

- 1d. Giving is paramount: "let everyone of you."

Grace does not make giving an option but a privilege and responsiblity of every believer.

- 2d. Giving is to be plenary: "let every one of you."

Every individual is responsible. Cf. 2 Cor. 9:7; Gal. 6:6-8

- 3d. Giving is to be periodic: "on the first day of the week."

Giving is not an erratic business but a regular and systematic stewardship.

- 4d. Giving is to be proportionate: "as God has prospered him." (Cf. 2 Cor. 9:7)

How much should the Christian give? As Ryrie says: "This may mean 8, 12, 20, 50 percent--any percent, depending on the individual case. It may also mean a variation in proportion suitable for one year will be satisfactory for the next. When prosperity comes, as it has for many Christians, it should be used to give more, not necessarily to buy more. Each time the Christian gives he is to reflect on God's blessing in his life and determine what proportion in return he will give to God" (ibid., p. 86).

- 5d. Giving is to be private: "lay by him in store."

This phrase suggests a private gift fund into which the believer places his proportionately determined gifts, enabling him to make contributions to specific causes.

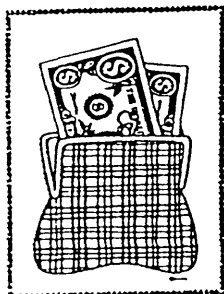
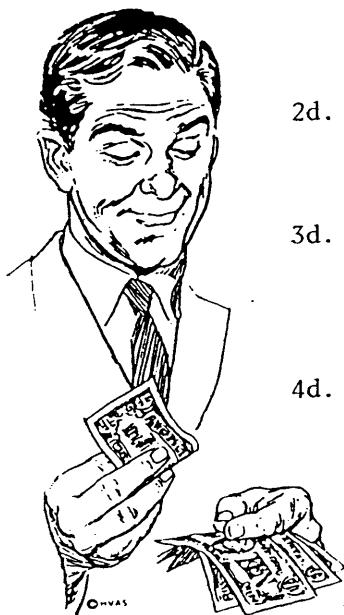
- 6d. Giving is to be purposeful: "that there be no gatherings when I come."

Prior determination and private deposit prevent the giving under pressure.

- 7d. Giving is to be perpetual: "all that are in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor. 1:2, Cf. 2 Cor. 9:2; Rom. 15:26)

5c. The spirit of grace giving:

- 1d. Giving must not be considered as the payment of a debt, rendered grudgingly: 2 Cor. 9:6-8



2d. Giving must be considered the demonstration of love based on past blessings:

1e. Giving is to be done cheerfully: 2 Cor. 9:7



The word cheerful (Greek hilarios), is akin to the word for mercy seat or propitiation. A cheerful giver is thus not one who gives boisterously but one who gives out of glad gratitude for his salvation.

"Love ever lives,  
And while it lives, it gives;  
For this is love's prerogative,  
To give, and give, and give."

2e. Giving is to be done willingly: 2 Cor. 8:12; Matt. 10:8

3e. Giving is to be done unselfishly: Luke 6:35

4e. Giving is to be done liberally: 2 Cor. 9:6

5e. Giving is to be done sacrificially: 2 Cor. 8:8

## 2A. The Proper Recipients of Giving:

### 1b. Introduction:

- 1c. The bewildering multiplicity of requests.
- 2c. The carnal commercializing of requests.
- 3c. The fleshly emotionalizing of requests.
- 4c. The proper priorities of giving.



The New Testament enables us to set priorities in our giving. Three passages related to giving permit us to catalog our requests in a descending order or urgency for the six areas of the believer's special financial concern (see the diagram of the three passages in the appendix).

- 1d. Destitute relatives: 1 Tim. 5:8
- 2d. Spiritual ministries: 1 Tim. 5:17-18
- 3d. Needy individuals: Gal. 6:10



### 2b. Destitute relatives: 1 Tim. 5:3-16

Two commands and one condemnation give special force to the area of priority. v. 8 "his own" and "his own house" are two levels of priority.

- 1c. The immediate family: 1 Tim. 5:4, 8, 16
- 2c. Indigent relatives:

- 1d. The believer is commanded to sustain all true widows:  
1 Tim. 5:5
- 2d. The believer is commanded to support all needy relatives:  
1 Tim. 5:8



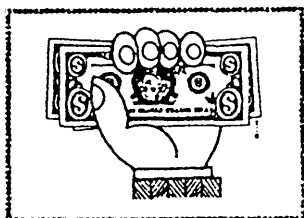
3b. Spiritual ministries: 1 Tim. 5:17-18

1c. Dedicated ministers:

This would include elders (1 Tim. 5:17-18); teachers (Gal. 6:6); evangelists (1 Cor. 9:14); missionaries (3 John 5-7).

2c. Deserving ministries:

- 1d. Unbelievers are never to be approached for support: 1 Cor. 8:1
- 2d. Pressure is never to be applied for support:  
"A willing mind" (2 Cor. 8:12)



Not with a grudging attitude produced by the necessity of the moment (2 Cor. 9:7)

- 3d. The giver is to be accented rather than the gift: Phil 4:17
- 4d. The funds are to be administered with care: 1 Cor. 16:3;  
2 Cor. 8:16-24

4b. Needy individuals: Gal. 6:10

1c. Fellow-believers: Rom. 12:13

2c. All men:

- 1d. The poor: Luke 10:33-37
- 2d. The travelers: Rom. 12:13b; 1 Pet 4:9
- 3d. The weak: Acts 20:35
- 4d. The orphans: James 1:27
- 5d. The widows: James 1:27

3A. The Present Regression in Giving:

1b. The primacy of the local church:

The local church is called "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tim. 3:15) which God has ordained as the instrument of world evangelism. If the local church is God's institution and instrument, then financial support belongs first and foremost to the local church, permitting it to carry on its God-ordained function.

2b. The problems in the local church:

1c. The dispersing of funds:

Much support is channelled to organizations which are unworthy of the believer's support because of their misuse of funds or their mistaken priorities.

2c. The dearth of funds:

Statistics bear out that the average fundamental church is supported substantially by only 18% of its membership.



Below are the stewardship statistics from an actual church with a membership of 175. The list of donations is that compiled by the financial secretary and represents those gifts for which a record for tax purposes was kept. The statistics speak for themselves.

## BAPTIST CHURCH GIVING FOR 1982

1. 5965	26. 1686	51. 785	76. 253	101. 55	126. 10
2. 5845	27. 1636	52. 725	77. 252	102. 54	127. 10
3. 5527	28. 1618	53. 710	78. 240	103. 40	128. 10
4. 5379	29. 1580	54. 705	79. 235	104. 35	129. 10
5. 4760	30. 1564	55. 701	80. 232	105. 30	130. 10
6. 4505	31. 1541	56. 699	81. 230	106. 30	131. 10
7. 3543	32. 1540	57. 682	82. 228	107. 27	132. 10
8. 3368	33. 1531	58. 675	83. 218	108. 25	133. 10
9. 3277	34. 1530	59. 675	84. 205	109. 25	134. 10
10. 3180	35. 1374	60. 658	85. 190	110. 25	135. 10
11. 3152	36. 1339	61. 623	86. 190	111. 20	136. 10
12. 3047	37. 1312	62. 600	87. 181	112. 20	137. 10
13. 3043	38. 1223	63. 598	88. 171	113. 20	138. 10
14. 2792	39. 1212	64. 585	89. 160	114. 20	139. 9
15. 2547	40. 1120	65. 546	90. 135	115. 20	140. 9
16. 2265	41. 1073	66. 530	91. 121	116. 20	141. 9
17. 2180	42. 1040	67. 522	92. 118	117. 20	142. 5
18. 2175	43. 1038	68. 495	93. 115	118. 20	143. 5
19. 2143	44. 977	69. 475	94. 100	119. 20	144. 5
20. 2100	45. 960	70. 460	95. 95	120. 19	145. 5
21. 2075	46. 880	71. 430	96. 95	121. 17	146. 5
22. 1854	47. 848	72. 395	97. 90	122. 16	147. 5
23. 1784	48. 832	73. 365	98. 86	123. 15	148. 4
24. 1779	49. 800	74. 350	99. 65	124. 15	149. 3
25. 1738	50. 799	75. 276	100. 61	125. 15	150. 2
					151. 1
					152. 1
					153. 1
					154. 1

## 3b. The promotion of giving:

## 1c. The part of the local church:

- 1d. Information about worthwhile objects of support as well as dangerous organizations.
- 2d. Intercession for legitimate persons and projects, keeping those ever before the people.

## 2c. The part of the individual:

## 1d. Dedication:

## 1e. Personal dedication: 2 Cor. 8:5a

The Macedonians first gave themselves to the Lord.

## 2e. Spirit-led determination:

"They gave their own selves . . . unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 5:5b).

## 3e. Generous donation: 2 Cor 8:2

"Their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (2 Cor. 8:2).





Even impoverished individuals made generous contributions to a worthwhile project.

2d. Involvement:

1e. Through giving:

New Testament believers are an example of grateful, glad, generous givers.

2e. Through going:



The Lord still calls individuals into full-time ministry. While we cannot all go, we can all give.

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# Giving

under the  
Law of Moses

MAL. 3:7-10

7 ¶ Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 ¶ Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

10 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*.

under the  
Law of Christ

1 COR. 16:1-2

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.

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

## Spiritual Stewardship

"The

# 1/10

shall be Holy  
unto the  
Lord" --Lev. 27:30

### **The O.T. Tithe:**

**Jacob:**

**Abraham:**

**Moses:**

**People:**

**Percentages:**

**Place:**

*Temple, Not the Local Church*

### **N.T. Giving**

**The Rationale:**

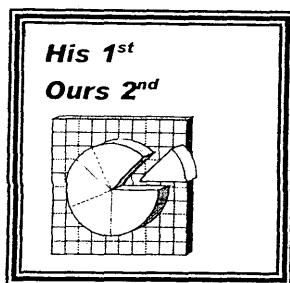
*Give Because You Have Been Blessed*

**The Recipients:**

**The Lord:**

**The Needy:**

1. *Destitute*
2. *Spiritual*
3. *Needy*



# Spiritual Stewardship

"The

# 1/10

shall be Holy  
unto the  
Lord" --Lev. 27:30

## The O.T. Tithe:

**Jacob:**

*A Tithe in Carnality*

**Abraham:**

*A Tithe of Booty of War*

**Moses:**

*A Three-fold Tithe*

**People:**

*Israel, Not the Church*

**Percentages:**

*22%, Not 10%*

**Place:**

*Temple, Not the Local Church*

## N.T. Giving

**The Rationale:**

*Give Because You Have Been Blessed*

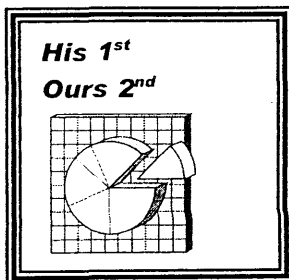
**The Recipients:**

**The Lord:**

*A Part of Regular Worship*

**The Needy:**

1. *Destitute Relatives*
2. *Spiritual Ministries*
3. *Needy Individuals*



# Giving

under  
Law of Moses

under  
Law of Christ

	PASSAGE	
	PURPOSE	
	PERIOD	
	PLACE	
	PARTICULARS	
	PERCENTAGE	
	PRIORITY	
	PARTIES	
	PROMISE	
	PROMOTION	

# Giving

under the  
Law of Moses

under the  
Law of Christ

<b>MAL. 3:7-10</b>	<b>PASSAGE</b>	<b>1 COR. 16:1-2</b>
<b>TO BE BLESSED</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>BECAUSE OF BLESSING</b>
<b>YEARLY</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>1ST DAY OF THE WEEK</b>
<b>STOREHOUSE</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>BY HIMSELF</b>
<b>PRODUCE AND ANIMALS</b>	<b>PARTICULARS</b>	<b>MONEY</b>
<b>22%</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>PROPOR- TIONATELY</b>
<b>NATIONAL TEMPLE</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>LOCAL CHURCH</b>
<b>POLITICAL THEOCRACY</b>	<b>PARTIES</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL COMPANY</b>
<b>PHYSICAL PROSPERITY</b>	<b>PROMISE</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY</b>
<b>WORK OF LEVITES</b>	<b>PROMOTION</b>	<b>WORK OF LORD</b>

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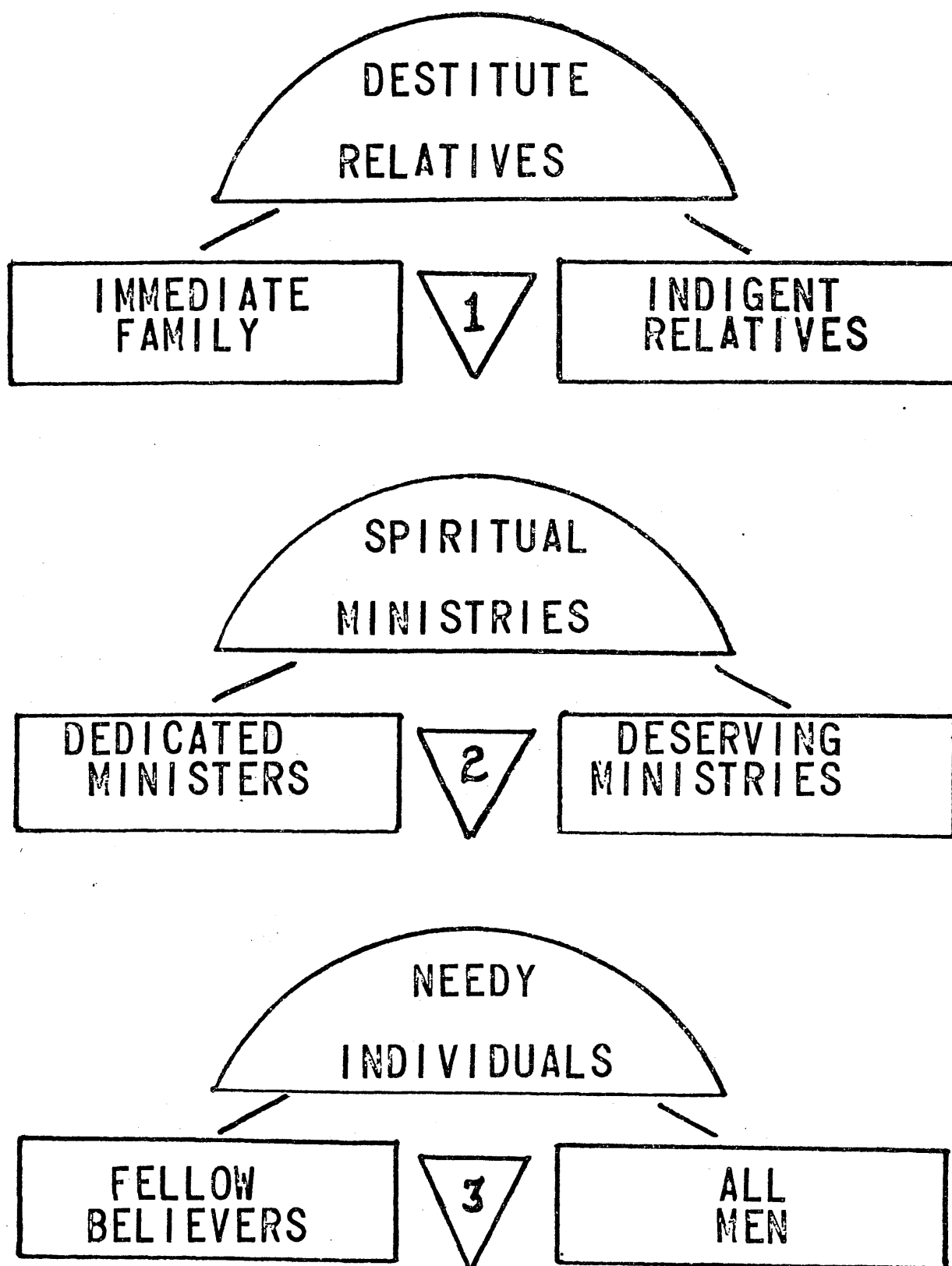
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# PRIORITIES IN CHRISTIAN GIVING



## 1 TIMOTHY, 6.

Of widows. Of servants.

2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. C. 2 Tim. 2. 26.

C ~~6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.~~

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

A. D. 65.

1 Or, kindness.  
b Matt. 15. 4.  
Eph. 6. 1, 2.

2 Or, delicately.

3 Or, kindred.

4 Or, chosen.

c Acts 16. 15.  
d Gen. 18. 4.  
e Luke 7. 38.  
f Heb. 6. 4-6.  
g 2 Thess. 3. 11.

h 1 Cor. 7. 9.  
i 2 Sam. 12. 13.

j Dan. 6. 4.  
k ch. 6. 1.  
l 5 for their railing.

m Gen. 47. 12.  
n Matt. 15. 4.  
o Rom. 12. 8.

p Gal. 6. 6.  
q Phil. 2. 29.  
r Deut. 25. 4.

s Deut. 24. 14.  
t Luke 10. 7.  
u 6 Or, under.

v Tit. 1. 13.  
w Deut. 13. 11.

x 7 Or, without prejudice.

y o ch. 4. 14.  
z 2 John 11.  
aa 1 Pet. 3. 8-16.

ab Tit. 2. 9.  
ac 2 Sam. 12. 14.

ad Isa. 52. 5.  
ae Col. 4. 1.

af 1 Or, believing.

ag 2 Or, a fool.

ah 1 Cor. 8. 2.  
ai 3 Or, sick.

aj 4 Or, Gallings one of another.

ak e 2 Tim. 3. 8.  
al f Tit. 1. 11.

am g Rom. 16. 17.  
an h Ps. 37. 16.

ao Luke 12. 31, 32.  
ap i Eccl. 5. 15.

aq j Gen. 28. 20.  
ar k Matt. 13. 22.  
as l Ex. 23. 8.

at 5 Or, been seduced.  
au m Deut. 33. 1.  
av n Zech. 10. 5.

aw Eph. 6. 10-18.  
ax o Phil. 3. 12.  
ay p Heb. 13. 23.  
az q John 5. 21.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

## CHAPTER 6.

1125

1 Of servants  
10 On love  
Timothy.

LET as masters under the name of not blasphemers, let them cause they do them self faithful and the benefit. exhort.

3 If any man consent not even the word Christ, and according to 4 He is proud but dotting stripes of envy, strife.

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

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.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of

## GALATIANS 6

A. D. 58.

6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

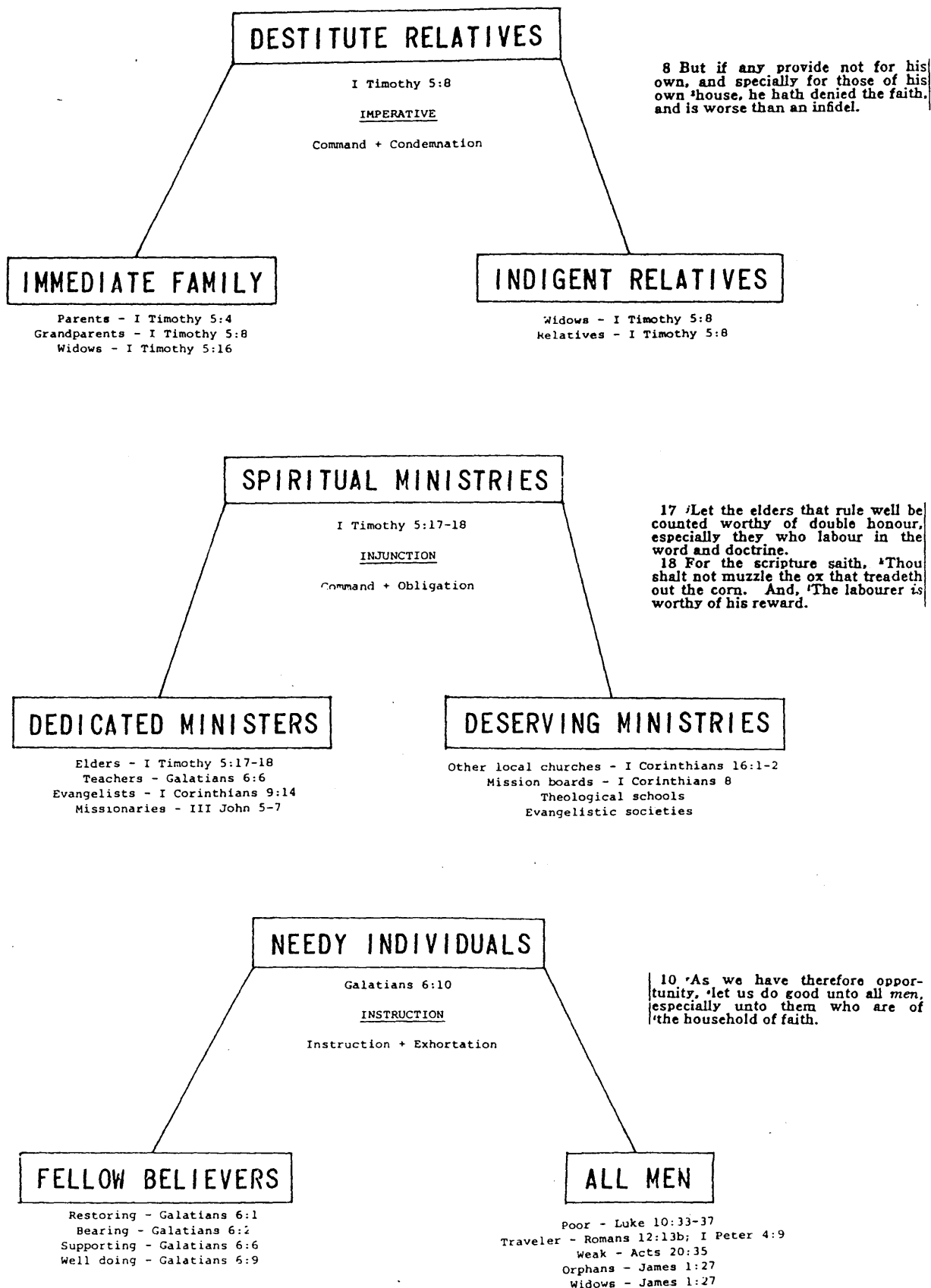
8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

# PRIORITIES IN CHRISTIAN GIVING



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"Holding Forth the WORD of Life."  
Phil. 2:16  
*First Baptist Church*

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*The Prisoner's Broadcast*

**CARE**

# the new testament doctrine of giving



By David Jeremiah

**M**ANY modern-day Christians are existing under the assumption that Christian giving is a necessary evil which must be endured if one is to be a faithful disciple. It is tragic that such an attitude has been unknowingly communicated by those who are responsible for teaching proper attitudes toward Christian stewardship. For example: Many Baptist churches have two governing boards—the board of deacons and the board of trustees. And most of these churches have very high spiritual standards which must be met if one is to become a member of the deacon board. The same churches, however, will allow almost anyone to serve as a trustee, providing he is a Christian and knows something about business. One church I know of takes the spiritual rejects of the deacons' slate and automatically adds them to the list of nominees for trustees.

The idea that is communicated by such action is obvious. The deacons' business is spiritual business; the business of finance is not! One who has arrived at this conclusion, however, has lost all Biblical perspective in the matter of stewardship.

That the Word of God puts great im-

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Six  
vital  
principles  
for  
our  
consideration.

portance on money and its place in the Christian's life can be demonstrated in many different ways. "Money is not carnal or worldly...a subject to be spoken of only after 'more important' matters have been considered."<sup>1</sup>

If there were no division between chapters 15 and 16 of 1 Corinthians, one would be able to observe more readily how easily Paul moved from the deep doctrine of the resurrection of Christ to the practical matter of the collection for the saints. Without so much as a breath he says, "Now concerning the collection..." (16:1). Apparently Paul did not see a great chasm between these two areas of truth.

Dr. John Walvoord has made an interesting discovery which places giving in a very high and noble category. In his unpublished notes on the subject of Christology, he points out that there are four "Christian sacrifices" in the New Testament. These sacrifices are:

1. The Christian's sacrifice of his body to the Lord (Rom. 12:1, 2).
2. The Christian's sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13:15).
3. The Christian's sacrifice of doing good (Heb. 13:16).
4. The Christian's sacrifice of communicating or contributing (Heb. 13:16).<sup>2</sup>

One of the words that is used by New Testament writers for the grace of giving is the word *koinoneo* (Gal. 6:6; Heb. 13:16; 2 Cor. 8:4). This is the same word that is used to describe the believer's relationship with the Lord and clearly underlines the character of spiritual giving.

In the list of spiritual gifts found in chapter 12 of Romans, giving is included as one of these God-given abilities for service. This does not mean that only certain ones have been granted the ability to give. It simply means that some members of the body have this gift in a special way. To say it another way, "They are more gifted in giving than the average man." The point here, however, is that this divine enablement is included in the same category as teaching, prophecy, faith and exhortation.

God has given definite revelation concerning Christian giving. He has given every evidence that He considers it part of the holy life of the believer. It is here, as perhaps in no other area of our Christian experience, that we can tell where we stand in our relationship with God.

How we use our money demonstrates the reality of our love for God. In some ways it proves our love more conclusively than depth of knowledge, length of prayers or prominence of service. These things can be feigned, but the use of our possessions shows us up for what we really are.<sup>3</sup>

There is no attempt on the part of any of the New Testament writers to avoid the subject of giving or the mention of money. It seems to have been natural for the New Testament Christian to involve himself in the financial aspects of the ministry (Acts 2:41-47; 4:34-37). As one reads through Acts and the Epistles he begins to realize that the Christian was responsible for the financial security of certain individuals and groups. The following list represents some of the recipients of Christian giving in the early church:

1. Missionaries (3 John 5-7).
2. Elderly and sick (Acts 20:35).
3. Those in financial difficulty (Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 9:12).
4. Widows (Acts 6:1; 1 Tim. 5).
5. Elders, i.e., pastors (1 Tim. 5:17).
6. Those who teach the Word (Gal. 6:6-10).
7. The poor in one's family (1 Tim. 5:8-16).

Many New Testament passages mention money and its place in the life of a believer. There are four basic or central passages, however, which set forth general principles of giving for Christians of today. These passages are 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-12; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Galatians 6:6-10.

### The Principle of Personal Responsibility

All of the four central passages listed above emphasize the personal responsibility of every believer in the matter of giving. Stedman points this out vividly:

...One may search in vain throughout the entire New Testament for a single divine command or even entreaty addressed to the church as a whole. It is always the individual believer that is in view. It ought not to be said, then, that the church is responsible to give to the Lord's work. To think in such a vein makes it all too easy for individual members, when the annual church benevolent report is read, to take smug satisfaction in the total amount expended by "their church," though they themselves have scarcely contributed a penny. Unfortunately for them, Scripture gives no assurance that God reads the annual reports.<sup>4</sup>

First Corinthians 16:2 speaks of "every one" giving as "God hath prospered him." Second Corinthians 8:5 emphasizes the personal aspect of their giving by pointing out that the Macedonians first "gave their own selves to the Lord" and then gave their gift. Second Corinthians 9:7 specifically states that "every man" was to give as he "purposeth in his heart." Galatians 6:6-8 abounds with personal references:

Let *him* [italics mine] that is taught in  
MARCH, 1974

the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For *he* that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but *he* that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Personal responsibility means that the individual and not the church stands responsible before God in the matter of giving. Personal responsibility also means that each and every Christian is responsible to God in this important area; it matters not what his circumstances or income may be.

### The Principle of Prior Consecration

Under the New Testament plan for giving, much more is demanded of the individual than was demanded under the Law. God is never satisfied with the believer's money alone. He demands complete control of the believer himself. It is logical to assume that when God has control of the Christian, He will have control of the purse. In 2 Corinthians 8:5 we read of the Macedonians who went beyond the Apostle's expectation in that they "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." Lenski comments: "To give of oneself when one gives a gift is the highest form of Christian giving....No gift can please God as much as that."<sup>5</sup>

This principle of prior dedication is in harmony with the New Testament doctrine of stewardship. The Christian has been purchased by God (1 Pet. 1:18, 19). All that he has has been given or entrusted to him by God. Thus God has every right to demand that the Christian and his goods be dedicated to the ministry of the gospel.

### The Principle of Proper Motivation

This principle, more than any other, elevates New Testament giving far above giving under the Law. It makes each Christian responsible not only for what he gives, but also for his attitude in giving. Second Corinthians 9:7 sums up the proper attitude and motivation in giving. The Christian is to give "not grudgingly, or of necessity." He is to give "cheerfully."

Commenting on the first two phrases, Lenski says:

In the whole matter of Christian giving, nothing is ever to be done from grief; no one is to be sorry about letting anything pass out of his hands; no one is ever to say, "I am sorry I gave so much." These negatives imply their corresponding positives. Thus the first implies, "I am glad I give; I wish I could give more." Nothing is ever to be given from compulsion, from a feeling that one is forced to give, that he is being robbed. No one is to think, "They

took advantage of me; they shall not do it again." The feeling is ever to be, "I am happy I gave; I really should have given more." Paul wants nothing but voluntary gifts for his great collection. Here he sets forth *voluntariness* as being the only true motive and principle of Christian giving.<sup>6</sup>

The positive attitude of the believer to the matter of giving is described here as "cheerful giving." Not a few expositors have pointed out that this word is from the Greek root "*hilaros*." The inference is readily seen. Stedman quotes the editor of *Revelation* magazine in pointed opposition to this application:

At times the Editor has shuddered when he has heard chairmen of meetings, ministers or laymen tell an audience that the Lord loved a *hilarious* giver, making a sad and ignorant pun on the meaning of the Greek word "*hilaros*." When it is understood that "*hilarious*," in the sense of boisterous joy, has been in use less than a hundred years, and when it is understood that the Greek word is akin to the word for propitiation, the mercy seat, it will be readily comprehended that the kind of giver which the Lord loves is not one who spends like a drunken sailor....<sup>7</sup>

The words of Paul concerning the rich would certainly apply to the attitude of every Christian. He told Timothy, "Charge them that are rich in this world....That they do good, that they be rich in good works, *ready* to distribute, *willing* to communicate [italics mine]." The attitude of each individual Christian is to be one of readiness and willingness to give to the Lord's work.

### The Principle of Proportionate Return

Paul told the Corinthians that they were to give "as God hath prospered." If we give as God has prospered us, we will increase our percentage in giving as our income increases.

It is quite clear from various passages of Scripture that the tithe was intended to represent the reasonable standard of giving. If reasonable during Old Testament days, why not still reasonable? The Bible nowhere indicates that a man cannot give more than a tithe. It represents merely the minimum standard for those who belong to God....<sup>8</sup>

Charles Ryrie has an interesting suggestion for avoiding the ten percent rut:

Proportionate giving is giving as God hath prospered. If someone felt, after prayer, that the right proportion for him should be ten percent, I would suggest that he give nine or eleven percent just to keep out of the ten percent rut. A person who is giving nine or eleven percent will find himself much more sensitive to the Lord's changing his proportion than if he were giving ten percent."

One of the reasons behind our failure to preach the doctrine of proportionate giving stems from our fear of losing support. In the back of our minds is the idea that if Christians feel no set obligation, they will lessen their proportion instead of increasing it. It is quite possible, however, that the reverse might be true.

Years ago, the late R. C. Campbell said that a certain pastor preached a missionary sermon and appealed to his people to give not less than \$2,000 in a special offering. Following the service one of the laymen said to him, "Pastor, I am ashamed of you." The preacher said, "Why?" The layman replied, "You asked us to give only \$2,000. Why I could give that much myself." The pastor said, "If you could, then you should." The layman departed but about the middle of the week he called his pastor and asked to see him. Seating himself in the pastor's study he said, "Do you remember what I said to you last Sunday?" The pastor said, "I do." The layman said, "And do you remember what you told me when I said that I could give \$2,000 myself?" "Yes," replied the pastor. "I told you that if you could, then you should." His layman said, "I couldn't get away from that. I couldn't get my mind on my work. I could not sleep. My wife and I have prayed and talked it over. Here is a check for missions." The pastor took it expecting to see a check for \$2,000, but it wasn't. It was made out in the amount of \$200,000.<sup>10</sup>

It is no doubt true that many churches have short-changed their ministries because they have not challenged their people to proportionate giving.

Proportionate giving may mean 12, 20, 50 percent, any percent, depending on the

individual case. It may mean a variation in proportion from year to year, for there is no reason to believe that the proportion suitable for one year will be satisfactory for the next. When prosperity comes, as it has for many Christians, it should be used to give more, not necessarily to buy more. Each time the Christian gives he is to reflect on God's blessing in his life and determine what proportion in return he will give to God.<sup>11</sup>

### The Principle of Periodic Giving

According to the New Testament, the money which we give is to be given on the first day of every week. "The first day of the week is Sunday, and *kata* is distributive so that we may translate: 'Sunday by Sunday let each of you . . .'"<sup>12</sup>

The freedom which is granted to the Christian in giving is not to be confused with a spasmodic, "whenever-I-feel-like-it" attitude. The Christian is to be regular and systematic in his monetary stewardship. "It is a fair inference that Sunday was the day which was set aside for the public worship of the Corinthian congregation, and that this custom was also followed in Galatia and in the other churches that had been founded by Paul."<sup>13</sup> When the gifts of the individual Christians were gathered for total accumulation, it is reasonable to assume that this also took place on the first day of the week.

### The Principle of Priority Distribution

This last principle of New Testament giving is found in Galatians 6. It is the answer to a question that is asked by a great many Christians. "How do I know what to do with the money that belongs to the Lord?" If we are personally re-

sponsible for the distribution of the Lord's money there certainly must be some way of knowing to whom it should be given.

Galatians 6:6-10 deals with several aspects of Christian giving. It presents the responsibility of the student in the Word of God to communicate or "contribute" to the one who is teaching him. It again applies the sowing-reaping law to New Testament giving. (This is also in the 2 Corinthians 9 passage.) Finally, verses 9 and 10 give some new encouragement and instruction to the grace-giver: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

The comments of Donald Grey Barnhouse on these two verses are helpful:

A believer is not to sigh and moan when a cause is presented or another offering requested. We are not to be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. The principles set down here may require self-sacrifice but they lead to complete satisfaction.

The last verse in the paragraph about giving has to do with priorities. There are a thousand good causes asking for every dollar that we can afford to give. How shall we decide between so many things? Church, missions, radio broadcasts, Bible societies, Red Cross, Community Chest, cancer fund, other medical drives, other charitable causes. God tells us that we need not be perplexed if we follow Him closely. We love all the human race and are to be as open-handed for famine relief in India as for the local hospital. We are to give as readily for the relief of orphans in

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## DOCTRINE OF GIVING

(from page 10)

Korea as for the support of an orphan down the street. There is to be one standard of choice and it is set forth here in the Bible. "As we have opportunity."

This means that if you have a million dollars, you may give to a wide range of activities. But it also means that if you do not have a million dollars, you are to confine your giving to the needs of those who are of the household of faith.

If I have a dollar and many hands are stretching towards me, I think along these lines. Suppose Cause A has a serious deficit. Can its officers appeal to Jew and Gentile, Christian and non-Christian? If so, then I do not give to that cause. But if Cause B is so Christian in its outreach and impact that no unsaved man would be interested in it, to that cause I give my dollar. Only the very wealthy are to support causes that do not minister in the name and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. And even they are to give priority to Christian causes.<sup>14</sup>

The emphasis of the New Testament is upon the ministry of the local New Testament church. If we follow the principle of priority one more step, we reason that our money should be directed toward the organization God has promised to bless. "As we have opportunity" we will want to give to other Christian causes. It should be remembered by each church member that the local church has no other constituency but its own people. Extra-church organizations have a wide base of appeal. In other words, if the members of the local church do not support its ministry, the church has no other source. This is not true with most other Christian organizations. This principle of priority is not the final answer in every situation, but it will be very helpful if applied correctly. □

<sup>10</sup>Charles Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 85.

<sup>11</sup>John F. Walvoord, "Outline of Christology" (notes from theology course at Dallas Theological Seminary).

<sup>12</sup>Ryrie, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup>Ray Stedman, "Giving Under Grace," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 107, pp. 469-70.

<sup>14</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg) p. 1130.

<sup>15</sup>Lenski, p. 1172.

<sup>16</sup>Stedman quoting Barnhouse, Vol. 107, p. 477.

<sup>17</sup>K. O. White, ed., *Messages on Stewardship*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963), p. 130.

<sup>18</sup>Ryrie, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup>White, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup>Ryrie, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup>William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), p. 362.

<sup>22</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. IV (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), p. 200.

<sup>23</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Lectures on Galatians" (transcribed from the Audio Bible Study Series).