

How to Give

By Edwin Judd

Jesus assumed that His followers would give. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount and teaching on giving, praying, and fasting, He simply said, “*Therefore when thou doest thine alms, . . .*” (Matthew 6:2).

On another occasion, He said, “*Give,*” and went on to say what would happen to the giver. The act of giving is a characteristic of being Christian. Paul calls it a grace. When done appropriately, the Lord takes note of it as though it were done personally to Him and is pleased with the action. How then shall we give?

Dutifully. If we include the returning of the tithe to the Lord as an act of giving, it is fully expected by the Lord and one is held accountable if it is not dutifully done.

Israel of the Old Testament was charged with robbing God for withholding their tithes and offerings from him. (See Malachi 3:8.) It is significant that offerings were included in the charge. If this was God’s expectancy in Old Testament times, how much more is it under the better provisions of the New Testament?

Purposefully. Paul, writing concerning the offering, instructed the Corinthians that one should plan his giving. “*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, . . .*” (2 Corinthians 9:7 NKJV).

Unless one plans for his acts of charity in his budgeting process, performance will never fully satisfy the desire of the heart that truly wants to please the Lord.

Compassionately. God so loved that He gave. If the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, should we not also give as we are moved with compassion?

To do so is being Christlike. To do so elevates one’s motivation from the performance of duty to the fulfillment of desire. One gives because he wants to give.

Consistently. Large acts of Christian charity are wonderful but consistent, scheduled giving is more rewarding and generally adds up to greater generosity and consequently a larger blessing.

This is the principle laid down by Paul when he encouraged the Corinthian church to give on the first day of the week. (See 1 Corinthians 16:2.)

Thankfully. A true Christian should be thankful to be on the giving side of the Gospel. Jesus said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35).

But for the grace of God, we could be among those who have never heard the Gospel or among the destitute who have little or nothing from which to share with others.

Cheerfully. Paul told the Corinthians that God loves a cheerful giver. (See 2 Corinthians 9:7.) One's acts of charity should be out of a willing heart because of the altruistic spirit of the donor rather than from any feeling of necessity or coercion.

This was Paul's desire concerning the Corinthians. He wanted them to do their giving before he arrived so it would be out of a willing heart with cheerfulness rather than of necessity to please him in his presence.

Wisely. In today's society, appeals for donations to this cause or that come from every direction.

Jesus instructed His followers to lay up treasure in heaven. While many earthly causes are good in their own right, the child of God should seek first to further the kingdom of God and its causes. In so doing, one will be assured of investing in eternal values that will bring eternal reward and supporting that which is closest to the heart of God.

Generously. Seed is sown with a view to the harvest. If one sows sparingly, he cannot expect a bountiful crop at harvest time. If one sows generously, he can anticipate a harvest in proportion to the seed that is sown. (See 2 Corinthians 9:6.)

The Lord measures one's giving in relation to the resources from which he gives and what he retains for himself. Jesus considered the widow's two mites more than all of the much larger amounts given out of abundance because she gave her all.

This divine principle gives those with limited resources the same privilege of divine recognition as those that give out of plenty.

Expectantly. While one should not give to get, he has every right to expect the divine law of harvest to increase the seed that is sown.

Jesus promised that the measure used in giving would be returned full and overflowing. (See Luke 6:38.)

In Malachi 3, God challenged Israel to be faithful with their tithes and offerings and see that He would open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing beyond their capacity to contain.

Paul assured the Corinthians that if they would give, God would return the seed that was sown, supply their every need and more so they would be able to give even more to others. (See 2 Corinthians 9:8–10 in The Living Bible.)

Lessons on giving can be learned from the Macedonian churches. (See 2 Corinthians 8:1-5.) They were living in poverty and suffering great persecution. Yet, when they learned that Paul was receiving offerings to help the poor saints in Jerusalem, they did not let these circumstances keep them from giving. They literally begged Paul to receive their offering. They wanted to be included in the giving. And, when they gave, they gave beyond their ability.

The secret was that they had first given themselves to the Lord. When one gives himself unreservedly to the Lord, it is not hard for him to give out of what resources he has.

The church in Philippi was one of these Macedonian churches. The purpose of Paul's epistle to that church was to thank them for the offerings of support they had sent to him while he was imprisoned in Rome.

It is significant that in the context of recognizing what they had done on more than one occasion and thanking them for it, Paul gave them this promise, "*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19).

Do you want to be included in this promise? If so, give!