

## ***Beyond the Maths : Giving***

Martin Luther says that Christians need three conversions:  
(To convert is to change, or exchange, or turn around)

- 1.The heart
- 2.The mind
- 3.The purse

John Ortberg quotes two behavioural scientists on money:

One says money is a tool – useful, positive  
The other says money is a drug – addictive, harmful

The Bible says that money is either a servant or an idol.  
Hebrews 13.5.

How can money be a servant? Or an idol?

It's not so much the money that is at fault, but the attitude of the one owning or desiring the money. 1 Timothy 6.10

Money can have a positive or negative effect.

What attitude to money gives a positive effect? Luke 12.32-34. A negative effect?

Beyond the maths – Do we have to give a certain percentage of our money and that's all?

How much is our attitude to money affected by our relationship with God?

God loves to give, and to bless. If he gives us much and we won't let it go, what happens? What benefits come from giving to others?

As we give to God, he can bless, if we won't give, his blessings are blocked. True? Or false?

God's laws for giving in Israel :

10% - a tithe to support the Levites as they worked in his temple.

The firstfruits of the crops – to be brought into God's house

Every three years other tithes/commitments to help the poor.

This seems to come to 23% of their income.

Then on top of that there were offerings:

Sabbath offerings

Every seven years, special offerings,

The 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year – more offerings

Malachi 1.6-14 is a message to those who bring offerings that are not acceptable – blind, lame, sick animals, etc.

These givers were despising God in giving what they or their governor would not accept.

We would never despise God, would we? Yet do we ever give God less than he is worthy to receive, or simply neglect to give him the love and obedience that is his due?

We don't live under the laws of 'maths' – give 10% or 20% or .....  
We live under God's grace – his love and favour, giving us what we could never earn or deserve. Ephesians 2.8.

We aren't blessed/saved by what we do, but by God's grace.

Giving honours God. Those who honour God will be honoured by him.

Giving supports the work of God. Giving to those who help the poor and needy is joining in the work that Jesus did. What kinds of things can we give to support others besides money?

Giving recognizes God's ownership. To whom do we belong? Why?

Giving responds to God's generosity. What has God given to us?  
God doesn't just give once and that's it – he keeps on giving. 1 Timothy 6.17-19  
Romans 8.32

Giving exercises the giver's faith. Do we wait to give until we have an excess?  
How can we give in faith? Do you have any examples of times you have given in faith?

Faith is rewarded – and it is necessary for a Christian's growth. Hebrews 11.6.  
What is faith? James 2.14-26 gives examples of the necessity for faith.

Jesus watched the rich put their money into the treasury, Mark 12.41-44. Who gave the most? It isn't the amount that is given, but the attitude of the heart, the love and generosity that is behind the giving.

Philippians 4.19 is a favourite verse, often quoted. But read its context, 4.15-18 show that it was the giving of the Philippians which was the reason that God was able to give them all they needed.

As we give, God is free to give to us – we don't give in order to get something back, but as the Philippians did, we give as an offering, a sacrifice, v.18, and that is pleasing to God.

New Testament giving is:

- 1.Regular and also spontaneous – if it is within your power to bless, then bless
- 2..Part of worship. We give out of willingness, love, devotion
- 3.Sacrificial – 2 Corinthians 8.1-6

4.To care for the poor

5.To support leaders

6.To extend mission – to reach out to the world.

Comment on the above. What do you think are the reasons for our giving?

### **Today's giving – 2014**

In the Old Testament – Obligation – under LAW - Do it or else

In the New Testament – Gratitude – under GRACE – Do it because you love

Malachi 3.10-12 – Under the Old Covenant – much blessing is there to be given

Under the New Covenant – how much more will he bless those who give out of love and thankfulness.

### **Money is a servant**

God gives resources for our needs and to bless others

Giving brings joy, satisfaction and peace

Why do we give? Some reasons:

We give to

- those persecuted for the faith
- the poor
- to spread the gospel
- to usher in God's kingdom
- to be part of something bigger
- because Jesus gave
- to change our world and hearts
- because we were bought with a price
- because God gave and gives and will never stop

John 3.16