

Giving Series, 1.28.07

Principles to Give By

Intro.

1. Becoming a Christ centered person – icon of money, watch & gift. One element of proper time management is honoring God on the Sabbath...Sabbath team will begin their research. Use of sg in church...use of wealth.
2. Take a break from the book of Romans for several weeks
3. Share your testimony via email

Principles to Give By

1. It isn't yours. It all belongs to God – "Ps.24.1"
 - a. Scripture: Deut.8.18; Matt.25.14-30; 1 Cor.6.19f; Hag.2.8
 - b. This must be established in your thinking...what is "it"?
Everything
 - c. Illustr. – Take out wallet & pull out check book or debit; point to your brain & say, "This mind is your mind"...this body is your body...this money is your money.
 - d. Abraham Kuyper said, "There is no one square inch of this universe about which Jesus Christ does not say, 'Mine, mine, mine.'"
 - e. We are mangers not owners. When we came to Christ we bowed down and acknowledged it all belongs to him. It already belonged to him. We are saying that we agree when we surrender. It's not like we're giving it to him; we're just acknowledging it's already his.
 - f. You will have stunted spiritual growth when you think you have to hold onto possessions, people, abilities, money, etc. You need to repent...change your way of thinking. When I come to understand that it all belongs to God it frees me from materialism. I can travel light, b/c I'm not having to constantly worry about this or than.

- g. Basic law of physics is the larger the mass, the greater the hold that mass exerts. The more things we own the greater the grip they have on us. They set us in orbit around them.
- h. If you make \$1000 this week, How much belongs to God? All of it. Someone said, "The question isn't how much of my money do I give God, but rather how much of God's money do I keep for myself?"

2. Giving is an act of worship – "Phil.4.18"

- a. Worship is giving God our best in everything. W/in worship is the idea, God is the greatest and he deserves my best. We gather weekly to acknowledge God's worth over all creation & our lives.
- b. Worship isn't about singing. Worship is about acknowledging God for who he is and committing ourselves to serve him with all we have.
- c. OT sacrificial system: They were to bring their best to the Lord (crops & animals). Don't you think they had to struggle with that? They see the potential of a particular animal or need food b/c of a harsh winter that dwindled their supplies. Yet, they still gave God the best believing that he would make up the difference. By giving God their best, they were trusting him for the rest.
- d. By giving our tithes, we are worshipping the Lord. It's more than an act of obedience; it's an act of worship. "Lord you deserve my best...you've required of me the tithe & I give it to you willingly & gratefully.
- e. When we pass the offering plate, it's not to take up a collection to pay the bills. Rather, it's an opportunity to give God our best with the wealth that he has provided.
- f. You may think, "Yeah but I really need that 10% to..." God knows that and when he sees you tithe he obligates himself to not only make up the difference, but to both bless you & keep the devil far from you.
 - i. Illust – considering how much we've given over this past year

- ii. You can either keep the money and try to make ends meet or give God the money and let him make ends meet.
- 3. This life is Act 1 in a three act play (Mike Woodruff) – “Luke 12.33”
 - a. Act 1 – your life on earth; Act 2 – judgment before God; Act 3 – living with the rewards or punishments of the judgment of God.
 - b. The author of the play feels no obligation to work everything out in Act 1. Everything will work out...all the promises will be fulfilled...but it may not be until Act 3.
 - c. If you are focused either primarily or exclusively on this life, then the Bible will confuse you, and its view of money will make no sense. But, if you look at everything, especially the stewardship of wealth in the light of eternity, it all makes sense.
 - d. Luke 19.11–27 – You see the three acts here. He gives each wealth; he holds them accountable; he gives them their reward. What I get in the next life is determined how I manage the things I have in this life. In both Luke 19 & Matt.25, it was about managing money that was given to me.
 - e. We must live in the light of eternity...it’s all headed for the judgment seat...if you’ve not been the best at honoring God with your wealth, seek his forgiveness, repent and punch delete and start new...start today. We are still in Act 1 and there’s a lot of time for some new developments...there are great rewards for those of you who have honored God with your wealth...you won’t see all the rewards in this life...you’ve got presents wrapped up in heaven with your name written on them...you’ll unwrap them and won’t believe what’s inside.
- 4. Tithing is the starting point for giving – Mal.3.6–12
 - a. Basic question: Does being under grace mean that we stop doing all that was done under the Law? Some principles were practiced before the Law, such as keeping the Sabbath (Gen.2.2–3) & tithing.

- b. Christ fulfilled the entire OT, but he didn't render it irrelevant. The OT demonstrated how to love my neighbor with specific regulations that don't all apply today, but I'm still to love my neighbor. You don't throw out the principle with all the regulations.
- c. But the NT speaks of voluntary offerings, some may say. Yes, and so does the OT - Lev.22; Num.15; Deut.12. Having a minimal standard of giving has never been incompatible with giving above and beyond that standard.
- d. Which is the higher standard?
 - OT: Do not Kill
 - Do not commit adultery
 - Do not swear by name falsely
 - The tenth is set a part to the Lord - Give as you are prospered
 - NT: Whoever hates his brother is a murderer
 - if you lust you commit adultery
 - Don't swear at all

By no stretch of the imagination can any think that Christ has lowered the standard of giving, while raising everything else.

e. The average per capita giving of church members today is 2.5% of their income. What does this reveal? When it comes to giving, the Law is 4 times more effective than grace! To put it another way, people are 4 times more responsive to the Law of Moses than they are to the grace of Jesus. Is something wrong with this picture?

f. To some the term "grace giving" is synonymous with "give what you feel like." The problem is that most Christians just don't feel like giving. As the Law is the tutor that leads us to Christ, so tithing is the tutor that leads us to grace giving.

It is time to reexamine our faith when living under grace means that our giving is smaller than under the OT Law. The person who gives less than a tithe is effectively saying God has lowered the standards and that NT grace means reduced commitment.

The Benefits of Tithing:

1. It is a consistent reminder that everything I have belongs to God.
2. It's an opportunity to test God's promise to provide (Mal.3.8-12). You're placing yourself in a position to be blessed. I believe God will make things last longer, money go further, health be healthier when I'm tithing. He opens doors of opportunity and closes doors of trials. Hag.1.5-11 - God's people were in a place of want b/c they had been giving to themselves and not to him. God had minimized and dissipated their profits, so they do not come out ahead. By your obedience, you're keeping yourself in a place where God can both bless with provision and protection.
3. It is a significant factor in your spiritual growth. If we want to grow in our relationship with the Lord, we must be putting this principle into practice. You are hindering your spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of this body if you aren't living out this principle. Any area of disobedience in our lives acts like a wall/dam that resists the activity of God's Spirit flowing in & through me. When we submit ourselves to His will then the Spirit can flow me freely and powerfully through me.
4. The work of the kingdom of God would increase exponentially.
5. It's more blessed to give than receive - "Acts 20.35"
 - a. Followers of Christ know this to be the case...it's
 - b. Illust - early in marriage, pastoring first church, making \$250 a week, & dad insisted on giving me some money...I declined...he grew frustrated and said, "Son you are not allowing me the blessing of giving...if you put that way I'll gladly receive.
 - c. One of the reasons to get out of debt is so that you can freely & easily give.
 - d.