

Generous Living (Part 3)

Review of Part 1

- **Problem of competing treasures (Matt 6:19-24)**
 - Serving two masters: God & Money; loving one and hating the other
 - Loving the one that has captured our heart; hating the other
- **Being stuck and sorrowful; unable to give up possessions. (Mark 10:17-22)**
 - Losing our life to find it (Matt 10:39)
- **Stockpiling abundance vs releasing it; hoping abundance makes a life. (Luke 12:13-21)**

Principle:

When faced with competing priorities, we'll follow our heart in the long run.
Where is my heart set right now?

Review of Part 2

Luke 12:22-34

Jesus explains why we should not worry about our provisions:

Truths about God:

- God thinks I'm valuable (v24, 28)
- God knows what I need (v30)
- God gave me the Kingdom—with no regrets (v32)

Truths about Myself:

- I cannot provide for myself, even in little ways (v26)
- I'm rich; been given the Kingdom (permanent riches v32)
- Pagans worry, I don't have to (v30)

Truths about the World:

- Sets its heart on abundance (v22-23, 29-30)
- World's riches are temporary (v28, 33)

Principle:

Anxiety comes from trying to provide for ourselves--forgetting the truth about God's sovereignty & love for us.

FIRST-FRUITS GIVING

Done at harvest time, giving & returning to the Lord

- ✓ The **first** and the **best** - set apart; HOLY to the Lord
- ✓ Reminded people of God's **Ownership** and **Faithfulness** to us

Conducted as a worship service, reminding the people that:

1. God is the Provider
2. Just as God provided the first portion, I trust Him to provide the rest

Principle:

Giving back to God will always be difficult unless I'm convinced it came from His hand first.
He is the provider and owner.

Malachi 3: 6-10:

- Spiritual malaise & distance from God is often tied to sin patterns
- In Israel 400 BC, the sin was "robbing God"; keeping tithes & offerings
 - God wants changed hearts and a relationship with us

Principle:

Giving sacrificially and regularly is a key to intimacy with the Lord. Withholding it is an obstacle to relating & depending on Him.

The Cheerful Giver (2 Corinthians 9: 6-15)

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written,

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;

his righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

What does Scripture Teach About:

Amount?

Our Motives?

Giving Style?

God's Response?

Encouragement to Give Generously (2 Corinthians 8:1-12)

⁸ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ⁶ Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷ But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you— see that you excel in this act of grace also.

⁸ I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. ¹⁰ And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹ So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹² For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

The Widow's Offering (Luke 21:1-4)

²¹ Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, ² and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. ³ And he said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. ⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

GIVING AMOUNT GUIDELINES FROM THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
<p>Amount:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% (King's share) • Abram to Melchizedek (Gen 14:17-20) • 10% Jacob (Gen 28:22) • 10% of fields/flocks (Lev 27:30,32) • 10% festival tithes (Deut 14) • 10% every 3rd year (Deut 14) 	<p>Amount:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything (Widow; Luke 21:1-4) • Rich generosity (2 Cor 8:2) • Out of severe trial (2 Cor 8:2) • As much as able (2 Cor 8:3) • Beyond ability (2 Cor 8:3) • What he has decided in heart (2 Cor 9)
<p>Motive for Giving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude for provision • Trust for continued provision 	<p>Motive for Giving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust (Luke 21:1-4) • Assumed; alongside justice, mercy, faithfulness (Matt 23:23) • To please God, not men (Matt 6:1-4) • Viewed as privilege (2Cor 8:4) • Sincerity of love (2 Cor 8:8) • Willingness (2 Cor 8:12) • Not reluctantly (2 Cor 9:7) • Not under compulsion (2 Cor 9:7) • Cheerfully (2 Cor 9:7)
<p>God's Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will return to you; will help you (Mal 3:7) • Will throw open flood gates of heaven and pour out blessings (Mal 3:10) • All nations will call you blessed (Mal 3:12) 	<p>God's Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewards generous sowers (2 Cor 9:6) • Loves cheerful givers (2 Cor 9:7) • Makes grace abound (all things, all times, all needs (2 Cor 9:8) • Enlarges my righteousness (2 Cor 9:10) • Makes me rich & generous again (2 Cor 9:11) • Supplies needs/more thanks to God (2 Cor 9:12-13)
<p>Giving Style:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obedience to a command • Generously; often 	<p>Giving Style:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated on own (2 Cor 8:3-4) • Gave to Lord first, then men (2 Cor 8:5) • Excel in grace of giving (2 Cor 8:7) • No command to give (2 Cor 8:8) • Earnestness (2 Cor 8:8) • Like Jesus becoming poor (2 Cor 8:9)

Commonly-Asked Questions

1. Amount (Gross or Net)?

The amount should be proportionate to our income. The Old Testament model of tithing comes from the literal translation of “tenths and heave offerings” which refers to portions lifted off the top of a pile of harvest (provision)—whatever the total—large or small. Taking that first portion was the “first-fruits” concept of giving God the first and best of what is reaped. The New Testament does not command following the Old Testament tithe system. It prescribes no percentage. It certainly never defines a baseline in the context of government tax withholding and giving a percentage from gross or net income. We may ask ourselves this question: “Am I asking about gross or net because I want to give more?”

Some Christians consider the Old Testament tithe a “recommended minimum” for their giving. Although it might be reasonable for some, it is not prescriptive to all believers. We are free to determine the starting point of our income and to give the Lord as we are able: generously, sacrificially, without compulsion—and as the Spirit leads us.

2. From what income sources?

Since all income comes from God’s hand, giving should be based on all sources of income (ie: base wages & salaries, tips, bonuses, commissions, interest & dividends, capital gains). Did this particular income come from my hand or God’s hand? If I believe it came from my hand alone, I should keep it. However, if I believe it came from God’s hand, why would I want to keep it all?

2. When?

Generally, Christians should give to the Kingdom whenever they receive income. Drawing from two scriptural principles (“first-fruits” and giving as a part of worship), ideally, Christians should give a portion of what they receive at the soonest Sunday worship service. However, advances in technology allowing for web-based gifts or auto drafting are alternatives.

3. Mandatory or Optional?

Scripture instructs Christians to provide a portion of their income to the Lord. Not doing so is evidence of a lack of faith and actually “robs” God of His own resources. God intended this “giving back” to be a joy and a blessing to us. Even in cases of very low income or financial peril, returning the Lord some measure of income is important. The Lord’s praise for the poor widow in Luke 21 illuminates His heart for those struggling financially—but are willing to trust in God’s provision.

4. Local Church or Parachurch?

The Christian is free to give a portion of his/her giving to Kingdom work and ministries outside the church. However, the church is God’s primary instrument for gathering and perfecting the saints. Therefore, it may be reasonable to limit outside gifts to an amount secondary to that of the local church. Every member is called to support his/her church financially; we cannot neglect this.

5. What giving is NOT:

- Paying off God to gain favor or stay "safe"
- A holy hedge against future financial ruin
- A way to become righteous or "saved"
- An investment to guarantee future wealth



Generosity

STEWARDS OF GRACE

PCPC Principles of Stewardship

As stewards who are to be held accountable, we must prayerfully seek to exercise our stewardship in a manner that is consistent with and obedient to God's Word.

1. God is sovereign and we recognize Him as exercising divine ownership over all things. We are only stewards, entrusted by God. Our fiduciary responsibility is to Him alone. The fruits of good stewardship are for God's pleasure and not for our selfish purpose.

Matthew 25:14-30
Genesis 1:28-30
Deuteronomy 10:14
1 Chronicles 29:11-14
Daniel 4:34-35

Isaiah 45:6-7
Romans 8:28
Leviticus 27:30
Job 41:11
Psalms 24:1-2

1 Timothy 6:17
Exodus 19:5
Psalms 50:10-11
1 Samuel 2:7

2. By His indwelling Spirit, Christ enables us to follow Him in being a servant to all. As servants, we are charged to be faithful in handling all the money entrusted to us, not just ten percent. When we acknowledge God's ownership, every financial decision becomes a spiritual decision.

Mark 10:35-45
Philippians 2:4-11
Luke 16:1-13

1 Chronicles 29:16
John 12:24-26

Romans 12:1
1 Timothy 6:6-10

3. God is concerned with the heart of the giver as opposed to the amount of the gift. God does not need our money, nor are God's ultimate purposes contingent upon our gifts. Generous giving is a grace given by God which He provides us the opportunity to participate in His work. As we give sacrificially, we grow in our sanctification.

Matthew 6:1-4
Matthew 6:19-21
1 Corinthians 13:3

Matthew 23:23-26
2 Corinthians 9:7
Luke 19:1-9

2 Corinthians 8:1-7
Mark 12:41-44

4. Gifts are given to the Lord Himself even though they are for the benefit of other people.

Numbers 18:24

Matthew 25:35-40

5. God richly provides us with everything to enjoy. We are to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up heavenly treasure beyond our comprehension as a good foundation for the future so that we may take hold of that which is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19
2 Corinthians 8:9

Matthew 6:19-21
Luke 12:32-34

2 Corinthians 9:6
Matthew 6:24

6. We are called to give regularly from our first fruits as this discipline gives us an opportunity to be consistently drawn to Christ.

Proverbs 3:9
1 Corinthians 16:2

Nehemiah 10:37
Psalms 96:8

7. Giving should be done prayerfully. It should be motivated by God's abundant love for us and the amazing grace He has bestowed to us rather than a desire to impress people.

Matthew 6:1-4

1 Thessalonians 2:4

2 Corinthians 9:7

8. Tithing has been a great blessing to many Christians. In both the Old and New Testaments, giving according to one's prosperity is in view when considering stewardship. Giving is not limited to the tithe but is defined by grace and a response to the love of Christ. Stewardship recognizes not only a tenth; instead, everything belongs to God. Man merely acts as a trustee of God's resources. Man should not seek to serve both God and money.

Leviticus 27:30
Matthew 6:24

Matthew 23:23
Malachi 3:8-10

9. Scripture supports giving in three areas: to the local Church, to the poor, and to extending the kingdom of God in the Church and the world. All three are important but giving to the local Church should have equal or greater importance than giving to the poor and to extending the Kingdom of God in the church and the world, so long as the local church participates in the other two. Our giving, to and through the Church, is a tangible expression of our commitment to PCPC and our support of the equipping of the Saints and the protecting of our souls. As members of PCPC, we take a vow upon membership "to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of [our] ability."

Numbers 18:21

Acts 4:32-37

1 Timothy 6:17-18

10. When we share with the poor, we are sharing with Jesus Himself.

Matthew 25:34-45

Deuteronomy 26:12-15

11. We are responsible to use our gifts and abilities to Extend the Kingdom.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

1 Timothy 6:17-18

Matthew 28:19-20

Supporting Documents:

- Scripture
- PCA Study Committee Report (1981)

PCA Directory for Worship, Chapter 54

54-1 The Holy Scriptures teach that God is the owner of all persons and all things and that we are but stewards of both life and possessions; that God's ownership and our stewardship should be acknowledged; that this acknowledgement should take the form, in part, of giving at least a tithe of our income and other offerings to the work of the Lord through the Church of Jesus Christ, thus worshipping the Lord with our possessions; and that the remainder should be used as becomes Christians.

54-2 It is both a privilege and a duty, plainly enjoined in the Bible, to make regular, weekly, systematic and proportionate offerings for the support of religion and for the propagation of the Gospel in our own and foreign lands, and for the relief of the poor. This should be done as an exercise of grace and an act of worship, and at such time during the service as may be deemed expedient by the Session.

54-3 It is appropriate that the offerings be dedicated by prayer.

PARK CITIES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PCPC Principles of Stewardship as adopted by the Session

Other Sources:

The Treasure Principle

Randy Alcorn

Money, Possessions & Eternity

Randy Alcorn