

The Gesture To GIVE

Introduction. Last Tuesday (12/1/20) was “GivingTuesday,” an annual event created in 2012, which takes place on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving Day in the United States. If you’re unfamiliar with GivingTuesday, it’s an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is simply “to build a more just and generous world.”

“There are two ways in which a Christian may view his money,” suggested Bible expositor and author W. Graham Scroggie. “How much of my money shall I use for God?” or “How much of God’s money shall I use for myself?”

Scroggie’s observation reminds us of God’s statement through the prophet Haggai, “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine” (2:8). Indeed, as the psalmist penned, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (24:1).

Preachers are usually very hesitant to preach on the topic of giving. Some will accuse the preacher of hinting for a raise. Others will charge the church leaders of being more concerned about the members’ money than their welfare. Some will say, “Every time I come to church all they talk about is money.”

The reality is that money is necessary for the work of the church to continue. We all know that it takes money to live, to raise a family, to buy a car, to get groceries, to purchase a home, to receive medical treatment, and to send children to college.

The church is no different. Whether the church owns its own meeting house or rents a facility, there is a cost. Teaching materials are not free. Local preachers must be supported with a wage. Preachers in other countries need our financial assistance. Benevolent needs arise due to natural disasters, economic downturns, or individual financial problems due to loss of a job, sickness, or death within a family. The church has a responsibility to provide for needy saints.

Furthermore, the Lord’s church doesn’t acquire money through business endeavors, raffles, or secular fundraisers. The only scriptural means of the church obtaining money is through the giving of its members.

Therefore, the proper use of money becomes an important theme in the New Testament and assumes an important place in the Christian’s life. When God gave us His plan for the church, it included a commandment to give. Giving is an act of worship, and worship is not about what God can do for me, but it’s about what I give to Him. If we are going to worship God, we have to worship Him in an authorized way (John 4:23-24). The guide to give as an act of worship is displayed in our lesson with the acronym GIVE.

I. G-odly

- A. Giving is an authorized gesture (1 Corinthians 16:1-4).
 1. Giving is not an opinion of man; it is an order of God.
 2. False teachers try to show that church treasuries are unscriptural.
 - a) Jesus and His disciples had a treasury.
 - (1) Judas was the treasurer (John 12:6).
 - (2) Women contributed to the support of Jesus and the apostles (Luke 8:1-3).

- (3) The funds sometimes were insufficient to take care of situations (John 6:5-7).
- b) The saints at Jerusalem had a treasury.
 - (1) Funds were laid at the apostle's feet (Acts 4:34-35).
 - (2) Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira demonstrate that this was true (Acts 4:36-37; 5:2).
 - (3) There is a distinction between church funds and individual funds (Acts 5:4; 1 Timothy 5:16).
- B. Giving is an applicable gesture — the churches in Galatia and Corinth were ordered to give.
 - 1. The collection was to be made on the day when the church assembled. Why would this have been required if it were to be done at home?
 - 2. The church at Philippi had a treasury (Philippians 4:15-17). Paul could not take their gift if they did not have it from a collection on Sunday.
- C. All giving and good done by Christians should be to God's glory, not our personal aggrandizement (1 Corinthians 10:31).

II. Individual

- A. Giving is an individual gesture that is required for all.
 - 1. Individual enterprise makes giving possible (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13).
 - 2. Money should never be a reason why anyone in a church shows partiality (James 2:1-4).
- B. Giving is an individual gesture that is regulated for all.
 - 1. We are to give as we purpose (decide) in our hearts (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
 - 2. One version says, "In keeping with his income."
 - a) Not everyone can give the same amount. Income and ability vary from person to person.
 - b) In fact, personal prosperity changes in one's lifetime, and may even vary year to year or month to month.
- C. The church's work is financed by our giving, but is that the only reason to give? Is there a deeper meaning to our giving? In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul addressed the deeper significance of giving.
 - 1. Giving demonstrated their graciousness (2 Corinthians 8:7).
 - 2. Giving demonstrated their love (2 Corinthians 8:8).
 - 3. Giving demonstrated Christ's graciousness (2 Corinthians 8:9).
 - 4. Giving allowed the brethren to have equality (2 Corinthians 8:13-15).

III. Volitional

- A. God is pleased when a Christian gives with a proper motivation (2 Corinthians 8:5; 9:6-7). One version says, "God loves people who love to give."
- B. How much should I give?
 - 1. The first example of giving is between Abram and Melchizedek. When Abram met Melchizedek on the way back from his victory, he gave Melchizedek a tenth of his spoils (Genesis 14:17-20). Melchizedek blessed Abram and then went on his way.

2. God commanded the children of Israel to give a tenth of their produce.
 - a) God wanted a tenth given to the Levites because they had no possession (Leviticus 27:30-32; Numbers 18:24-28; Deuteronomy 14:22-29).
 - b) The tithe was still respected and used in Jesus' time (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12).
 - c) The children of Israel had no choice about their giving. No emphasis was put on the attitude of heart.
 3. With the New Testament, these principles changed:
 - a) Giving is measured by ability (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:12). No one is expected to give what they don't have.
 - b) Our offering should be given in a bountiful or generous manner (2 Corinthians 9:6; cp. Proverbs 11:24-25; 22:9). It shouldn't grieve you or cause you regret when you give.
 - c) There is grace in liberality (2 Corinthians 8:2, 6-7). It is not how little but how much we can give and how great is the need (Acts 2:45; 4:35).
- C. Paul commended the Macedonians as he observed their principles of giving.
1. They gave liberally (2 Corinthians 8:3). They did not withhold their contribution from a good cause. The saints in Judea needed to be cared for, and the Macedonians were willing to give what they could not spare. Is this not what the widow did (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4)?
 2. They did not have to ask or be asked (2 Corinthians 8:3). No one should give under "compulsion;" they shouldn't be forced, pressured, or coerced to give.
 3. They gave themselves first (2 Corinthians 8:5). If you are not willing to give yourself to the Lord, you will not find any joy in giving to the church, helping your brethren, or helping your neighbor.

IV. E-xact

- A. Giving is an exact gesture with an exact period.
 1. Giving is authorized on the first day of the week (cp. Acts 20:7).
 2. Giving is unauthorized on other days of the week (cp. Hebrews 7:14).
- B. Giving is an act of worship with an exact procedure.
 1. The procedure is gathering as one has been prospered.
 - a) Paul does not specify a definite amount or definite proportion of one's income; he leaves it to the conscience of each.
 - b) He makes the measure of God's blessing to us the measure of our return to Him.
 2. The procedure is gathering to help those in need (Acts 11:27-30; Titus 3:14).
 - a) Someone might legitimately ask if we can spend the Lord's money on edification and evangelism if the only pattern in the New Testament shows they contributed for benevolence.
 - b) Divine wisdom led Paul to give this plan to Corinth for raising money and good reasoning will lead to the conclusion that if it will work in raising money for one righteous cause, it will work for all righteous causes.

Conclusion. God wants His children to be cheerful givers in giving back to Him for His cause. Fulfill the biblical exhortation to "be rich in good works, ready to give,

willing to share” (1 Timothy 6:18). God gave tremendously to us (1 Chronicles 29:14, 16; James 1:17), including the greatest gift through His Son’s sacrifice at Calvary’s cross (John 3:16).

Anne Frank said, “No one has ever become poor by giving.” Dr. Ben Carson added, “Happiness doesn’t result from what we get, but from what we give.” Finally, to paraphrase John D. Rockefeller, “Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege.”