

Holy Habits: Give

Is money essential for life? No matter how you would answer that, we can agree that each one of us occupy a significant part of our life earning it, saving it, investing it, spending it, and even donating it. We spend time figuring out how to manage money so that it does not manage us. Money can bring opportunities and enjoyments but also frustrations and conflict.

Because money is such a part of our lives, Jesus uses money and possessions as illustrations for nearly half of His parables and stories! Money can reveal and reflect our views of God and faith in Him. In one encounter with Jesus, a rich young man asked Jesus how to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him to follow the commandments such as “do not murder, do not commit adultery, honor your father and mother...” The rich young man said excitedly that he had done all those things his whole life. Jesus then told him that he lacked one thing: to sell all his possessions and give to the poor to put treasures in heaven (Mark 10:17-22).

The young man walked away saddened because he had a lot of possessions. He cared more about money than he cared for others. In essence, he worshipped money rather than worshipping *with* money. Money is not bad. Being in love with or trusting in money is the problem. Being consumed by money can cause us to miss what is truly important. Having money or a lack of money can reveal and reflect what we trust.

“For what does it benefit a person to gain the whole world yet lose their life” Mark 8:36

“Don’t store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21

God cares what you and I do with our money because He cares for us. He does not need our money. He already owns everything. Everything we have comes from Him. Money is a tool to live and to love like Jesus. Therefore, we are commanded to be stewards or managers of what He gives us. It does not matter the amount we have; it is what we do with it.

“Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much.” Luke 16:10

“He [Jesus] looked up and saw the rich dropping their offerings into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow dropping in two tiny coins. “I tell you the truth,” He said. “This poor widow has put in more than all of them. For all these people have put in gifts out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.” Luke 21:1-4

Being faithful to God, trusting in God, and worshipping God with our money is not be done out of duty, but with a grateful and happy heart. A cheerful heart is satisfied with what God provides and does not provide. That is called contentment. It is equally important as obedience. Contentment can save us from conflicts and temptations and all sorts of money troubles. Contentment can also keep our faith resilient.

“But godliness with contentment is a great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.” 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Other Principals of Biblical Generosity:

<p>1. It Is a Blessing</p> <p><i>2 Corin 9:6, 8-11 "you will be enriched in every way for all generosity."</i></p>	<p>2. It is an Act of Worship</p> <p><i>2 Corin 9:12 "not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God."</i></p>
<p>3. It should be Proportional</p> <p><i>1 Corin 16:2 "in keeping with how he prospers."</i></p>	<p>4. It should be Sacrificial</p> <p><i>Luke 21:2-4 "this poor widow has put in more than all of them...these out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty."</i></p>
<p>5. It should be Done Cheerfully</p> <p><i>2 Corin 9:7 "God loves a cheerful giver."</i></p>	<p>6. It should be Not Done Foolishly</p> <p><i>2 Corin 8:12-13 "not that there may be relief for others and hardship for you."</i></p>
<p>7. It is Between You and God</p> <p><i>Matthew 6:2-4 "so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."</i></p>	<p>8. It should be Consistent</p> <p><i>1 Corin 16:2 "On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside"</i></p>

Giving Challenge:

We are told *not* to test God (to see if what He says is true)...*except* in this one area of giving.

*"Jesus told him [Satan], "It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God." Matthew 4:7
compare Deut 6:16*

"Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this way," says the LORD of Hosts. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure." Malachi 3:10

If you are not giving at all, start by giving something, no matter how small.

If you are giving something, start giving regularly and consistently.

If you are giving regularly, start giving proportionally towards 10% of your income.

If you are giving 10% regularly, start giving sacrificially.

1) *What level of giving are you currently at?*

2) *In what ways have you seen the faithfulness of God as you've practiced Biblical Generosity?*

3) *Is there anything you are going to do differently now?*