

Are You Giving in the Light of Eternity?

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2 Corinthians 9:6–15 (NKJV) “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. ⁹ As it is written: ‘He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.’ ¹⁰ Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, ¹¹ while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. ¹² For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, ¹³ while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, ¹⁴ and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

The early church was a giving church. They regarded themselves as stewards of God and were eager to meet legitimate needs. Acts 4:33 says, “And great grace was upon them all.” The early church was a grace-filled church.

Christians are generally more blessed of God today than those in the early church. Sadly, the abuse of God’s blessing has been the means for our nation’s great spiritual decline. This is not new. In the light of both the blessings and corroding effects of prosperity on the continuation of revival, John Wesley said: “Is there no way to prevent this? this continual declension of pure religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal: We must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich! What way, then, (I ask again,) can we take, that our money may not (send) us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who “gain all they can,” and “save all they can,” will likewise “give all they can;” then, the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.” In summary, prosperity can be a means to empower revival if the corroding effects are overcome with an ongoing spirit of generosity.

Our National Motto reads: “In God We Trust”. Unfortunately, we have not modeled what our motto declares. Jesus made it clear that we cannot serve two masters: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”¹

We will either serve God or material things. We will either live with our eyes on eternity or on this temporal life. Since life is short and we can’t take earthly treasures with us, how should we handle God’s blessing of prosperity? Jesus gives us the answer: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves

¹ Matthew 6:24 (NKJV)

do not break in and steal. ²¹ *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* ²² We must learn to invest what we cannot keep in things that we cannot lose.

If we are to overcome the corrosive effects of prosperity, we must learn to cultivate a generous attitude. How do we cultivate a generous attitude? First, we must remember that God owns everything; we own nothing.³ Everything that we claim as our own belongs to Him. Second, we must remember that, regardless of our supply, God is our Source and Jesus Christ is the Means by whom He will supply our needs.⁴ Third, we must remember that obedience to God's Word, rather than the pursuit of material things, is our life.⁵ We are not to live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Fourth, God wills that we prosper in all things.⁶ God's qualifying factor is that we will prosper *as our soul prospers*. Fifth, we must remember that God commands us neither to forget Him during times of prosperity nor His purpose for wealth lest it bring a curse upon us instead.⁷ God's purpose for prosperity is so that He might establish His covenant through sharing the gospel and making disciples.

Sixth, we must make God's kingdom, rather than meeting our own needs, our priority. As we do, God has promised to meet our needs. Jesus said, *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"* ³² *For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.* ³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* ³⁴ *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.* ³⁸

As we look at our text, we see that every believer is called into the ministry of giving. As stewards rather than owners, God has entrusted to us money and possessions that help supply a need. As every member contributes their part, the needs will be met.⁹

Jesus outlines our role as stewards in The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). We are stewards of God's gifts of time, talents, and treasure. Our time on earth is limited, our talents are unique, and our treasure is limited by God's provision. Each of us is to consider our stewardship in each of these areas. One day we will each give account to God for what we have done with what God has given to us.

Selfishness is natural. Giving is a sign of God's great. Generosity is a sign of great grace. The grace of giving is imparted by God in the lives of His people to supply the needs of His work and to bless His people in return. God uses freewill offerings to accomplish His work.¹⁰

We must learn to cooperate with the God's grace of giving. We must not allow the spirit of fear or of stinginess to quench it. God wants us to give from a willing heart rather than from a begrudging obligation. He wants us to be generous. Generosity is giving more than the need requires. Generosity is giving with a liberal attitude rather than a stingy attitude. Generous people feel good. Stingy people rarely feel good.

² Matthew 6:19–21 (NKJV)

³ Psalm 24:1

⁴ Philippians 4:19

⁵ Deuteronomy 8:2-3

⁶ 3 John 2

⁷ Deuteronomy 8:11-18

⁸ Matthew 6:31–34 (NKJV)

⁹⁹ Ephesians 4:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Exodus 25:2

As stewards, we must be purposed in our giving. We must give as if we are investing God's resources for maximum kingdom benefit. It is like sowing seed for a bountiful harvest. Purposed giving is prepared giving; it is giving according to what we have purposed in our heart. Purposed giving is intentional. It enables us to give readily and with joy.

As stewards, we must give in obedience. Obedient giving is giving according to what God has asked and what we have already promised. All giving is to be done as unto the Lord.

Generous giving is not losing in God's kingdom. God's blessing rests upon us if we are actively involved in grace giving. He has promised to make all grace to abound toward us so that we might be sufficiently supplied and have an abundance to sow into every good work. It is like sowing for a harvest. Those who sow much will harvest much and those who sow less will harvest less.

We can be confident that our giving will supply legitimate needs, will cause others to give thanks to God, will bring glory to Him, will testify to the reality of our faith, and open hardened hearts to the love and message of Christ.

Now is an important time to ask ourselves, not only if we are not only living in the light of eternity but also, are we giving in the light of eternity? May the LORD build His church with those who give of their time, talents, and treasures. May the LORD send revival that is sustained by the grace of giving!