

What Does God Say About Our Giving?

Scripture gives us great directions regarding financial stewardship. This is an important part of the Christian life, and God wants each of us to have financial stewardship as a point of growth in our relationship with Jesus. Of the many suggestions God offers regarding giving, here are five of the most important.

Give First

“When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you...you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground...and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name.”

—Deuteronomy 26:1-2

Giving first means that each time you receive income, however you receive income, first you make your gift to your congregation. Giving first means giving to God first and living on the rest, rather than living first and giving the leftovers to God. In a world that exerts countless pressures on our spending, giving to God first is critically important.

Give Intentionally

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly nor under compulsion.”

—II Corinthians 9:7

We make up our mind about our giving with we develop a plan for giving. Important questions to ask in formulating this plan are, “How has God blessed me recently?” “How do I feel God is calling me to respond to these blessings?” Many people develop a plan for giving each year, and then follow that plan closely. What is your plan for giving?

Give Proportionately

“For as I can testify, they gave voluntarily according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry of the saints.”

—II Corinthians 8:3-4

Proportional giving lies at the heart of the Biblical message about stewardship. Those who have many financial blessings are called to

give generously from their abundance. Those who have fewer financial blessings are called to give in proportion to their assets. Proportional giving is not about equal gifts, but rather about equal sacrifice. Those who have received much are expected to give much. Sometimes the smallest gift is the largest gift.

Give Generously

“We want you to know...about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.”

—II Corinthians 8:1-2

Generous giving may be the most basic stewardship value. It is difficult to imagine anyone who is serious about discipleship giving stingily. It is difficult to imagine a tither who isn't serious about his or her relationship with Jesus. In Luke 12:34, Jesus says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Isn't He saying that generous giving to Jesus has the ability to lead one's heart to Jesus? A congregation full of generous givers would make an incredible witness to our Lord.

Give Cheerfully

“The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

—I Corinthians 9:7

In the verses around this call to cheerful giving, Paul talks about generous giving and intentional giving. The key to being a cheerful giver is to have your giving aligned with the other words listed here. If your giving is in line with God's instructions regarding giving, you will be a cheerful giver. If your giving is out of step with God's instructions, you won't be a cheerful giver. It is that simple.

Give *first, intentionally, proportionately and generously*. Then you will give *cheerfully*.