How to Give to God

**** How should you <u>GIVE</u> to the work of the Lord?***

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1. **Give <u>UNSELFISHLY</u>**
   ("the collection for the saints" - v.1)

2. **Give <u>REGULARLY</u>**
   ("upon the first day of the week" - v.2a)

3. **Give <u>PERSONALLY</u> (Individually)**
   ("let every one of you..." - v.2b)

4. **Give <u>DECISIVELY</u>**
   ("lay by him in store" - v.2c)

5. **Give <u>PROPORTIONATELY</u>**
   ("As God hath prospered him" - v.2d)

6. **Give <u>ANONYMOUSLY</u>**
   ("that there be no gatherings when I come" - v.2c)

7. **Give <u>RESPONSIBLY</u>**
   ("whomsoever ye shall approve...them will I send" - v.3-4)

2 Corinthians 8

8. **Give <u>SACRIFICIALLY</u>**
   ("in a great trial of affliction…and their deep poverty" – 2 Cor. 8:1-4)

9. **Give <u>WILLINGLY</u>**
   ("if there be first a willing mind" – 8:11-12)

2 Corinthians 9

10. **Give <u>BOUNTIFULLY</u>**
    ("soweth bountifully" – 9:6)

11. **Give <u>RESOLUTELY</u>**
    ("according as he purposeth in his heart" – 9:7a)

12. **Give <u>CHEERFULLY</u>**
    ("God loveth a cheerful giver" – 9:7b)

13. **Give <u>EXPECTANTLY</u>**
    ("God is able to make all grace abound toward you" – 9:8-12)

How to Give to God

(1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9)

Introduction: The Bible has much to say about money:

It teaches us to earn it honestly
Proverbs 10:2
Ill-gotten gains do not profit

To invest it wisely
Mt. 6:20 "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

To pay our debts promptly (Prov. 3:27-28, 22:7)
Proverbs 3:27-28
Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it.
Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.

To view it soberly (Prov. 8:10-12, 16:16)
Proverbs 8:10-12
"Take my instruction and not silver, And knowledge rather than choicest gold.
"For wisdom is better than jewels; And all desirable things cannot compare with her.
"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge and discretion.

Money will Buy:
A bed but not sleep.
A steak but not an appetite.
Books but not wisdom.
A house but not a home.
Medicine but not health.
Luxuries but not peace.
Amusement but not joy.
A crucifix but not Salvation.
A church pew but not heaven.

Proverbs 10:22
It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich, And He adds no sorrow to it.

Wisdom regarding money:

1. The Principle of <u>Ownership</u>
   You and your possessions are God's.
   Psalm 24:1
   The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.
   Psalm 50:12
   "If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains.

2. The Principle of <u>Dependency</u>
   Your power to derive wealth comes from God.
   Deut. 8:18
   "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

3. The Principle of <u>Stewardship</u>
   You are God's manager/steward.
   (Lk. 16:1-13)
   1 Cor. 4:2
   moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

All of us likes to receive gifts, presents, help, etc.
Receiving is a blessing!

Many times we have stingy hearts

However, Jesus said that the giver is more blessed than the receiver.

Ill. The dead sea (takes, takes & takes but never gives) it receives water from the Jordan river and other sources but because of its depth nothing flows out. Therefore, nothing can live in the dead sea.

When you give, you are <u>acting like God</u>, who gives & gives
James 1:17 - Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

God created the earth to give: The Sun gives of it's energy; Flowers give nectar to bees; the Clouds give rain; the trees give off oxygen; the ground produces crops etc.

We as Christians ought to be givers!

Nothing God expects of us is without instruction. God gives us a spiritual plan for how we ought to give.

"A story is told about a man who, after twenty years of marriage, decided to divorce his wife. In preparing for the financial settlement, he began to rummage through his old checks.

"One canceled check after another stirred up memories of a long-forgotten past: the check to the hotel where he and his wife had spent their honeymoon, the check for their first car, the check for the hospital bill for their daughter's birth, the check for the $2,000 down payment on their first home.

"Finally, he could stand it no longer. He pushed the checks aside, reached for the telephone, and called his wife. Telling her they had invested too much in each other to throw it all away, he asked her to start over with him in a fresh beginning.

"Our own checkbook also tells the story of our life—our values and our lifestyle. And more than almost anything else, that checkbook reveals our true walk with God. Because our checkbook announces what our treasures are."

(Chuck Swindoll, "A Minister Everyone Would Respect," Bible Study Guide of 2 Cor. 8-13, Insight for Living)

**** How should you <u>GIVE</u> to the work of the Lord?***

Give God <u>YOURSELF</u>, before you give Him your money
Paul gave this testimony of the churches of Macedonia:
And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. (2 Cor.8:5)

See: 1 Corinthians 16:1-4:

1. Give <u>UNSELFISHLY</u>
("the collection for the saints" - v.1)

"Saints" - Holy ones; people set apart by the grace of God. Set apart from sin and its consequences and set apart unto God.
These saints were believers who lived in ***"Jerusalem"*** (v. 3). Because of <u>persecution</u> (Acts 8:1-3; I Thes. 2:14) and because of a <u>famine</u> that affected Palestine (Acts 11:27-30), many of God's people had great needs. These needs were met by themselves sharing any abundance some of them had (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37), and also by the gifts that came their way from others believers in Asia Minor, etc.

While we should *"do good unto all men,"* we are exhorted especially to do good *"unto them who are of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10). After all, we are family in the Lord, members one of another, joint-heirs with Christ.

For the Corinthians to give to the saints at Jerusalem would indeed be an act of love and unselfishness. Why? They would perhaps be giving to people whom they never met before and people who could never repay them. Of course, God in Heaven would repay (Mark 9:41 - *"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.)* SEE: Matthew 25:34-40

One reason God gives us money is to help others in need.

> Prov. 19:17 - *"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."*
>
> Prov. 21:13 - *"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."*
>
> Prov. 22:9 - *"He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor."*
>
> Prov. 28:27 - *"He that given unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth is eyes shall have many a curse."*

The Athenian statesman Aristides wrote the following of Christians living in the second century: "They walk in humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them and they love one another. They despise not the widow and they grieve not the orphan. He that hath, distributeth liberally to him that hath not. If they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof and they rejoice over him as if he were their brother. For they call themselves brethren, not after the flesh but after the Spirit and in God. But when one of their poor passes away from the world and any of them see him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability. And if they hear that any of their number is in prison or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs. And if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy and they have not an abundance of necessity, they will fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with his necessary food." (MacArthur, p. 456-7)

Any giving which comes into a local church should by one way or another be funneled to reaching <u>people</u> with God's Gospel.

If "things" are bought with the church income, these things must in some way help us minister to the needs of people.

(One look at a church's annual report will reveal if God's money is being invested in people or not.)

2. Give <u>REGULARLY</u>
("upon the first day of the week" - v.2a)

The ***"first day of the week"*** = Sunday, also called *"the Lord's day"* (cp. Rev. 1:10), in commemoration of Christ's resurrection triumph over death (Lk. 24:1ff) and the Holy Spirit's descent to begin the church on Pentecost (Acts 2).

Sunday became a regular day of worship as evident by Acts 20:7, which states: "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."*

Paul's charge is that the Corinthians form a consistent practice of dedicating a portion of their income to the Lord each and every week.

"Giving should not be spasmodic, done only when we feel generous or "as the Spirit leads..." Our giving should not be based on periodic emotional appeals or feelings, or on bonus income, but on regular, willing, and grateful commitment of our possessions to the Lord, to His people, and to His work." (MacArthur, p. 451-52).

3. **Give <u>PERSONALLY</u>** (Individually)
("let every one of you..." - v.2b)

"Every one" - Giving to God is <u>not</u> merely for <u>some</u> of God's people, but for <u>all</u>.

From the youngest to the oldest, male and female, saved Jew and Gentile, black or white, upper class or lower class, rich and poor. Every blood-bought child of God should desire to give to the God who gave you eternal life.

Parents should teach their children at a very early age about the importance of giving to God's work.

4. **Give <u>DECISIVELY</u>**
("lay by him in store" - v.2c)

Unless you determine what you will give and set it apart as "*holy unto the Lord,*" you will not give much, nor will you give consistently.

"Lay by him in store" - to put aside and save. This statement conveys the idea of a deliberate decision to save a portion of one's income so as to not spend it, but to give it to God.

5. **Give <u>PROPORTIONATELY</u>**
("As God hath prospered him" - v.2d)

"As God hath prospered him" - Our giving should be proportionate to our income. The more God blesses us with, the more we should bless others with.

6. **Give <u>ANONYMOUSLY</u>**
("that there be no gatherings when I come" - v.2c)

Paul did not want collections to be made in his presence, lest people give to impress him. He wanted their giving to be noticed only by God (SEE: Matt. 6:1-4).
NOTE: To give in an offering envelop for tax write-off purposes does not violate this principle.

7. Give <u>RESPONSIBLY</u>

("whomsoever ye shall approve...them will I send" - v.3-4)

"Whomsoever ye shall approve" - Not just anyone can be trusted with a church's finances.

Only faithful men can act as treasurers or deacons. Men whose life and character has been tested and proven to be gold (Note: the deacons chosen in Acts 6).

In Paul's day, money could not be "wired" via Western Union. A certified check could not be sent overnight via Fed-Ex or Express mail. The heavy coins had to be hand-delivered by faithful people.

Paul here is not talking about how the money would leave Corinth, but how it would be transported safely and efficiently to Jerusalem.

How would the money be brought to Jerusalem and would all of it (right down to the last shekel) arrive?

II Cor. 8:16-24 gives more information on the "finance committee" which assisted Paul. The offering did eventually make it (Acts 24:17).

The New Testament teaches ecclesiastical giving. As a matter of fact, all giving in the NT was giving though the Local Church (Acts 6:1-6; Acts 11:27-30; I Cor.9:4-14; 16:1-4; II Cor. 8-9; Gal. 6:6; Phil.4:10-19; I Tim.5:17,18). The Corinthians' giving was through the <u>local church</u> (when they assembled on the first day of the week) and was via <u>officially designated</u> church representatives (money handlers had to have spiritual credentials).

See: 2 Corinthians 8:1-f

8. Give <u>SACRIFICIALLY</u>
("in a great trial of affliction…and their deep poverty" – 2 Cor. 8:1-4)

8:2
The Christians of Macedonia did not have big, fat bank accounts from which to give. As a matter of fact, they were severely strapped with tight financial pressure ("affliction" – *thipsis*) themselves. Yet they had a deep well of joy, and they scraped deeply from the "bottom of the barrel" and accumulated a tremendous offering.

9. Give <u>WILLINGLY</u>
("if there be first a willing mind" – 8:11-12)

8:12
It's not ability that God is looking for, but <u>availability</u>!

God accepts and uses even what we do not have. He can do a great work through you (though you may think you have little or nothing to offer Him). What you must have, however, is a "willing mind" – a desire to be used!

> Exodus 25:1-2
> And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.
>
> Exodus 35:5
> Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass,
>
> Exodus 35:21
> And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.
>
> The best investment is the investment in best thing! (What is better than the Lord's work in reaching souls with he Gospel?)

See: 2 Corinthians 9

10. Give <u>BOUNTIFULLY</u>
("soweth bountifully" – 9:6)

Sowing little = reaping little.
Example:

Haggai 1:6
Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.

Haggai 1:9
Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

God's law of the harvest:
If you plant little, you harvest little; if you plant much, you harvest much.

"Sparingly" = in a miserly manner

"Bountifully" = generously; lit. to give with showers of <u>blessing</u>, to freely and profusely pour out blessing.

Galatians 6:7
Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Everybody, sooner or later, sits down at the "banquet Hall" of consequences.

If it was not for this law, the whole principle of "cause and effect" would fail. (chaos would result) for example: the farmer who sows wheat, expects wheat.

This verse shows that:

Your activities do not escape God's notice

Mock = an intention to outwit, and thereby make God out to look ridiculous. Some sneer at God thinking "He is dead"

You can't do good and not be rewarded for it.

- Man's reaping <u>equals</u> his sowing (in kind and degree). (“reap also”)
- Man's reaping is <u>in a different season</u> that his sowing. (“shall” = future tense)
- The reaped consequences are <u>just</u> and <u>certain</u> (unavoidable)

God holds the scales with an even balance.

Proverbs 22:9
He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

11. Give <u>RESOLUTELY</u>
(“according as he purposeth in his heart” – 9:7a)

“According as he purposeth in his heart” –

“Purposeth” – to determine beforehand; to deliberately choose or decide what you will give.

Our giving should not be haphazard, spur of the moment, or without any planning. God expects us to give in a deliberate, planned manner.

What proportion of our income should we give to God? I believe this is a matter of Christian liberty. However, God gives some principles to help us to determine what percentage of our income should be voluntarily given.

1. The Principle of the <u>Tithe</u> (10%) and <u>Offering</u>

   Gen. 14:18-20 - *"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes of all."*

Lev. 27:30 - *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD."*

Mal. 3:8-10 - *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be root enough to receive it."*

Matt. 23:23 - *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone."*

2. The Principle of the <u>First Fruits</u>

Prov. 3:9-10 - *"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."*

The Old Testament Israelite gave 10% proportionate to his income for the support of the Temple and Levites.

We ought to give *"better"* than the Old Testament saints. A key word in Hebrews is "better." God's expectations of us are higher than the Old Testament. God does not say, "Get out a calculator and limit yourself right down to the penny!" What if God gave to you the same way you give to Him?! Does He get out a calculator and say, "I need to stop pouring out blessings because this one has received over 10%?" NO

Becoming rich should <u>never</u> be the goal of a believer (SEE: I Tim. 6:6-10, 17-18).

12. Give <u>CHEERFULLY</u>
("God loveth a cheerful giver" – 9:7b)

"Not grudgingly" – not with grief or reluctance; not with an "I'll do it, but I don't want to" attitude.

Is it a pain to give? Do you cringe as you write the offering check?

"If you find yourself giving with a tight fist, the problem is probably deeper than your wallet." (Swindoll, p. 4).

"Nor of necessity" – not of a feeling of compulsion, not pressured into giving. God does not want our giving to be a mere "duty", but a joy. Not an "I have to," but an "I want to." Not a legalistic "I must give," but a loving "I am glad to give."

"Giving, like the rest of the Christian life, is not to be done out of rote obedience to law or out of pressure from others. It is a matter of the heart." (Swindoll, p. 3).

Do you view giving as a mere regimented obligation or a joyful privilege?

"A cheerful giver" –

"Cheerful" = *hilaros* – from which we derive our English word "hilarious."

God appreciates our giving with a smile, joyful sacrifice, not a cringing giving.

2 Chron. 24:10
And all the princes and all the people <u>rejoiced</u>, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.

13. Give <u>EXPECTANTLY</u>

("God is able to make all grace abound toward you" – 9:8-12)

9:8

God does <u>not</u> merely give to us, so that we might supply our needs and pay our bills.

The ultimate reason God gives to us is so that we would give to others. God (through various means) gets His resources to us so that we in turn might share of that resource with others in need.

9:10

"Multiply your seed sown" – God does not use the math of addition to repay the giver. He uses multiplication!

He does not parcel back to us the exact number of seeds we planted, but He multiplies the number of seeds by whatever generous number He chooses and repays with abundance. He does "exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think."

Receiving from God should not be the reason we give, but it will be the result.

A. Expect God to <u>give back</u> to you (v.8-10)

God pays us back on <u>EARTH</u>:

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again

Ex. The widow of Zarephath: I Kings 17:7-f

God pays us back in <u>HEAVEN</u>:

Matthew 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Matthew 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

You reap for what you sowed:

Galatians 6:7 - Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
2Corinthians 9:6 - But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
Proverbs 11:24-25 - There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.
Proverbs 28:27- He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 - Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Many fear that if they give, they will lack the needed money to pay their bills.
If you have a big bill with Con-Edison and say: "I can't give to God!" Remember this: Con-Edison will not help you pay God! But God will help you pay Con-Edison! (Put God first!) It's a matter of perspective.

One reason why many struggle to "make ends meet" may be because they are not faithful stewards with what God gave them. He gives you little because you cannot be trusted with much" (Luke 16:10-11 - *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. [11] If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*

Ex. J.C. Penney

ILLUS: I know a couple who bought a new home and found that it was difficult to make all their bills each month. It seemed that every month, they would have to take from their savings account to pay all the bills. So, the man sat down with his wife and said, 'As you know, we don't have enough money coming in to meet all our bills each month, so the answer is, we're going to start giving more to God.' 'What!' she exclaimed, 'How will that help?' But that is what they did, and within a few months, she had received a promotion and pay increase and he had been given a huge raise. Now they can easily pay their bills, and have even more money to give to God!

B. Expect God to be <u>glorified</u> (v.11-13)

"being enriched in every thing" – God richly meets our needs and gives us extra so that with the extra, we might be generous toward others.

It is important to remember that it is <u>God</u> who supplies the believer's needs, but He works through human instruments.

Oftentimes, when our necessities are not provided, it is because someone has <u>failed to respond</u> to the leading of the Lord.

God never intends for any ministry to be hindered because of a lack of funds. Disobedient Christians are to be blamed.

When we are generous, not only are the needs of God's people met, but the result is God being thanked, praised, and glorified.

2 Corinthians 9:12-13
For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by <u>many thanksgivings</u> unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration (the ministry of this service) they <u>glorify</u> God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;

C. Expect God's people to <u>pray</u> for you and <u>appreciate</u> your ministry (v.14)

2 Corinthians 9:14
And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

When people see God's grace flowing out of our lives they will both pray for

us and desire to be with us.

CONCLUSION:

9:15 – The ultimate gift, the most sacrificial gift, the most costly gift was that of God giving His Son, so that we might have the gift of eternal life!
"Unspeakable" – Indescribable;

God owns it all (Ps. 24:1; Job 41:11)

If I really believe that God owns everything . . .

1) When I lose a possession, I realize that He has <u>the right to take it</u> anytime He wants.

2) I own nothing, but am a <u>temporary manager</u> (steward) of all that God has entrusted to my care.

3) Then I must conclude that my giving is a <u>spiritual</u> matter.

4) I can rest assured that God has the resources and power to supply my every need.