

## The Ten Basic Steps: Step #8: The Christian and Giving

### Lesson 6-Stewardship of our Possessions

**Objective: To surrender all our of materials wealth to God, and to give with joy and gratitude.**

Read: II Corinthians 9, Matthew 6:19-34, 25:14-30, Luke 12:15-21

Memorize: Luke 16:13

1. Money -- The Old Testament Standard
2. Money -- The New Testament Standard
3. God's Priority for Missions
4. Life Application

One afternoon, Grandpa Clark strode into his house, pockets bulging with treats for his grandchildren. As he settled into his creaking rocker, the children clamored around him with expectant faces, each pushing and shoving to be the first to see what Grandpa had brought them.

The gray-haired man dug deep into his pockets and pulled out a fistful of candy, handing each child a favorite treat. When he finished, he leaned back in his rocker with a smile of contentment to watch them tear at the wrappings.

On his left, two jealous brothers argued over whose flavor of Lifesavers tasted better. Another child sat at his feet munching a candy bar. Suddenly, a tiny red-haired sweetheart patted her grandpa on the arm. Concern furrowed her brow.

"Would you like some of my M&Ms, Grandpa?" she asked with sad, shy eyes. "You don't have anything."

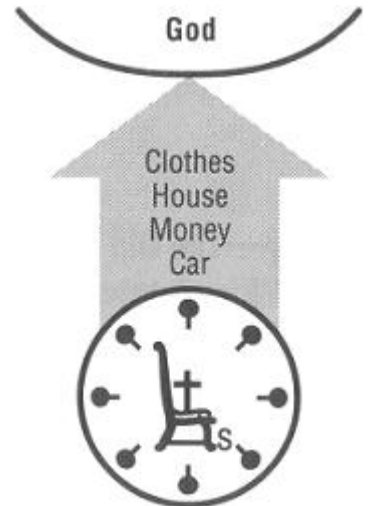
Grandpa Clark peered down at his only granddaughter and grinned. Gently, he gathered her dainty form into his lap. "Why, you haven't even opened your candy," he observed.

She stared into his eyes with a frank expression. "Cause I want you to have the first one."

"Why, thank you, I think I will," he smiled, carefully opening her little package. With relish, he removed a couple of colored candies and popped them into his mouth. Then he wrapped his arms tightly around her, engulfing her happy face.

This story clearly illustrates tithing - giving back to God the first part of what He has given us.

As you recall, the word tithing comes from a Greek term simply meaning the tenth. Godly principles underlay this practice. Tithing accomplishes the following:



- Acknowledges God as the source and owner of all that we possess
- Is a voluntary act of worship
- Teaches us to put God first
- Is a practical guideline for systematic giving
- Provides spiritual release and blessing

Tithing performs a role entirely different from that of mere giving, which suggests that we own all that we possess. Through tithing we acknowledge that God created our increase. As stewards of what God entrusted to us, we set aside a proportion to use for the cause of Christ. We never consider any part of our possessions to be our exclusive property but prayerfully tithe on the entire amount.

"The purpose of tithing," we have learned, "is to teach you always to put God first in your lives" (Deuteronomy 14:23, TLB). God does not honor a gift that comes from leftovers. He requires the first and the best of our increase (Exodus 22:29,30; Proverbs 3:9,10). Tithing ensures this.

Ten percent, an Old Testament measure for giving, is a good beginning point for a faithful and dedicated steward. And though we are not under the Law but under grace, as Dr. J. B. Gabrell declared, "It is unthinkable from the standpoint of the cross that anyone would give less under grace than the Jews gave under law."

Measuring their giving by the grace of the cross and not by the legalism of the Law, the early Christians did not limit themselves to the tithe. They gave much more. And they gave in the Spirit of Christ, as a demonstration of His pre-eminence in their lives, to help fulfill the Great Commission.

## **Money -- The Old Testament Standard**

What did God command those under the Law of Moses to do? (Leviticus 27:30, Malachi 3:8-10)

What would you say the "storehouse" is? (Deuteronomy 12:5,6,11)

How much is a tithe? (Genesis 14:20, Hebrews 7:2)

## **Money -- The New Testament Standard**

As believers in Christ, we are under grace rather than under the Old Testament Law. Whereas the Law in itself did not provide eternal life for those who attempted to keep it (Galatians 2:16), we have received life by the favor of God though we do not deserve it and could not possibly earn it. Therefore, do we have a higher or lower motivation and standard for stewardship of our possessions than those under Law?

How did Jesus regard a person's responsibility in that area? (Matthew 23:23)

Read II Corinthians 8-9. In this passage, Paul attempts to encourage the Corinthian church to give financially to help needy Christians. He first points them to the example of the Macedonian church. What was the attitude of the Macedonians in giving their money to God?

In light of this, what do you think God is interested in? Why is giving money an important part of our Christian life? (II Corinthians 8:7, 9:12-13)

In what sense does the one who sows sparingly reap sparingly? (II Corinthians 9:6) What kind of attitude does God want you to have in giving? (II Corinthians 9:7) When is it hard for you to give that way?

## **God's Priority for Missions**

Who is the great example of giving? (II Corinthians 8:9)

In your own words, describe the last command Jesus gave to His disciples. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Read John 14:21-24 . Describe how this relates to fulfilling the Great Commission.

Oswald Smith said, "If you see ten men carrying a heavy log, nine of them on one end and one man struggling to carry the other, which end would most need help? The end with only one man. This illustrates how inequitably the evangelized nations have been using their resources to help fulfill the Great Commission. What percentage of your giving is going to overseas missions and home missions?

Prayerfully consider what kind of adjustments you feel the Lord is leading you to make in your missions giving. Record it here.

To whom do you and your possessions belong? (Psalm 50:12, I Corinthians 6:19-20)

What should be your motive in the use of whatever you possess? (I Corinthians 10:31)

## **Life Application**

What is your understanding about tithing? Describe your view in a short paragraph.

What is the difference between giving and tithing? Which one describes your practice, and why?

Ask yourself, "Is my heart attitude one of joy and gratitude as I give?" How do you express your attitude?

List some Christian groups or churches that are working to fulfill the Great Commission (like Campus Crusade for Christ) in which you would like to invest financially.

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