

Why We Give – Managing what God has given you

“If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving- large or small- it will be used to measure what is given back to you” Luke 6:38

Looking at the Issue of money

Jesus talked about the issues of money and material possessions frequently. And while some passages on money management may be open to interpretation, we believe the Bible clearly teaches these 6 things.

1. Everything I have has been entrusted to me by God.

We are not owners; we are stewards (managers) of the resources God gives us. This includes our money. With this in mind, we should manage all of our money carefully (not just the money we give away) because we are managers of Gods’ money, and someday will give an account. (Luke 12:41 – 48, Psalm 24:1, 1 Corinthians 4:7)

2. Giving to God is an expression of my love and gratitude.

We give in response to our relationship with and our worship of God and His love for us. Generosity and gratefulness, not guilt and obligation, move us to give. We give “not grudgingly or out of obligation, for God loves a cheerful giver”. (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

3. I’m to give to God first and then live off the rest.

Often we spend what we earn on our needs and desires and if there’s anything left over, give something to God. But the Bible teaches it’s supposed to be the other way around. “Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of all your income, and He will fill your barns with wheat and barley and overflow your wine vats with the finest wines, “ Proverbs 3:9-10)

4. My Giving is to be sacrificial

Sacrificial giving is voluntarily doing without so that another can benefit. We aspire towards sacrificial giving because it imitates Jesus who “though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor” (2 Corinthians 8:9-13, Luke 21:1-4)

5. I’m to give in proportion to how god has blessed me financially

God does not expect everyone to give equal amounts. Those who are materially wealthy are exhorted towards greater giving, but all give according to the income and resources entrusted to them by God (2 Corinthians 8-9). This is what is called proportionate giving, a principle referred to in Acts 4:32-34, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

6. God promises to bless me as I give generously back to Him

The Bible is clear about the principle of reaping and sowing. God urges us to sow, that is to give generously to His work and the needs of others, and in return He promises to bless us beyond what we would expect. Luke 19:11-27, Malachi 3:10-12

Where do I start?

Bring all that I have to God

Invite Him to guide you as you wrestle with issues of lifestyle, expenditures, and generosity.

Work at getting out of debt

This both honors God and frees you to be more generous. Seek out financial counseling. Crown Financial Ministries (crown.org) offers information on budgeting and getting out of debt.

Start with a base line goal

The Biblical concept of a tithe (10% of what we earn) is a starting point for most. For some, this may be too overwhelming, and you need to set a goal that will build your sense of faith and stewardship. For others, a tithe might be too easy, and you need to set more aggressive generosity goals. For most however, a base-line of 10% is a God honoring starting point towards generous, sacrificial giving.

Give to whatever church I call home

There are many potential avenues for charitable giving, but the starting point should be the ministry you call your local church family. If you would like more information about Calvary Chapel's finances, please speak with Rob Groz, our church treasurer.

Are you Growing in your Financial Stewardship?

5 Stages of Giving

The Needy Stage: This is a person who is in need. We as a church are called and privileged to care for such a person (1 Timothy 5:3, Proverbs 14:21). At least temporarily, there is little or no ability for this person to give financially in support of the church.

The Introductory Stage: This is a state in which one's giving is often impulsive. The long-term ministry of the church cannot survive on this type of inconsistent giving.

The Growth Stage: As growth in understanding of stewardship increases, a follower of Jesus becomes more consistent in giving, often moving toward a pattern of proportional giving. But "how much is enough"? The growth stage giver understands that the Biblical commands in the Old Testament involve "tithes" (one tenth of one's produce, capital, etc.) and has 10% as a base line minimum goal. But this person also is realizing that they should not be preoccupied with exactness but rather the overall spirit of a generous lifestyle.

The Generous Stage: People in this stage understand that everything comes from God. They differ from those in the Growth stage because their question is more "How can I revise my lifestyle to be more generous?" rather than "Have I given enough?"

The Sacrificial Stage: The sacrificial giver (Luke 2:1-4) understands the spirit of Christ's generosity for us: He gave at expense to himself, laying down his life that we might benefit. The sacrificial giver voluntarily and joyfully goes without so that another person or ministry might benefit.

We believe that all we have and are and possess is a stewardship given to us by God. "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). This total dependency on God – our relationship to Him – drives our desire to be generous.

Our time, our gifts, our abilities, and our resources compose an overall "trust" that God has given to us to manage. As followers of Jesus, we desire to be faithful to that trust. This means that we seek to develop a "whole life stewardship." God cares about our overall management of our trust, not just the monetary issue.

The Bible also teaches that "the generous person will experience the riches of God's blessing" (Psalm 112:5, Luke 6:38). Put simply, as we give of ourselves through our service and our resources, God rewards us with fulfillment, joy, righteousness and at times, even the outpouring of material blessings.