

Introduction

At the outset my plan was to prepare a brief remark to the congregation before taking up the offering during worship each Sunday. I know an increasing number of pastors avoid any mention of giving during worship, for fear of offending. I am convinced that is a mistake. Others use foyer kiosks for giving, for fear of offending. I am convinced that is a mistake.

My goal was to show by means of brief, incremental observations before the offering (from Genesis to Revelation) how thoroughly infused into Scripture the notion of God giving and giving to God is without long discourses. The result is a 525-part commentary on Bible verses, with additional material in the Appendices.

They are offered primarily to pastors and missionaries to use as is or modify, for your use as devotional material, for your use as stewardship sermon ideas, for your use as a planned brief remark before the offering, free of charge and with no expectation or need for attribution.

If you would like to add to my collection of thoughts, please write it up and send it to me for consideration to include in this book. Blessings to you.

1. In Genesis 1.1 we read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Thus, God owns everything because He created everything. Surely, then, it is not too much to ask that He be honored by His creatures by giving back to Him a portion of what He has created for our enjoyment. Will you honor God in this way at this time?
2. In Genesis 1.11, we read that “God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind.” In Romans 15.28, the Apostle Paul uses the word fruit to describe the monetary gifts given to him to advance the Gospel ministry. Obviously, God’s plan is for that which possesses life to bear fruit. Will you bear such fruit at this time?
3. As God created plant life on the third day to bear fruit, so He created animal life on the fifth day, according to Genesis 1.22, and “God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful.” Again, we are reminded in God’s Word that living things, both plant life and animal life, bear fruit. Do you suppose spiritual life bears fruit? One kind of fruit that Christians bear is the offering given to advance the Gospel, we learn in Romans 1.13. Will you bear such fruit today?
4. In Genesis 1.26 we read of God’s intention to create man in His image and after His likeness. In Genesis 1.27 we read of God doing precisely that. Then, in Genesis 1.28, “God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful.” Are you fruitful? How are you fruitful? Christians simultaneously bear fruit in three ways; by bringing sinners to Christ, by manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in their personalities, and by giving to support the Gospel ministry.

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5. In Genesis 8.20, we read of Noah disembarking from the Ark and building and offering a sacrifice to God. In light of God giving to Noah his life, his wife, his sons and daughters-in-law, as well as the Ark that delivered them through the great Flood, it seems only reasonable to give back to God a gift as an expression of gratitude. Has God given you life, health, loved ones? Do you express gratitude to God through your giving?
6. We learn from Genesis 9.3 that, after Noah and his family left the Ark, God gave them the animals and the plants for food to sustain their lives. God has given so much to us; our lives, our minds, our health, and our opportunity to worship and serve Him to make life truly meaningful. What a privilege that He has also given to us opportunity to worship Him through our giving.
7. In Genesis 9.11, we are told that God gave to Noah a covenant, promising to never again judge the world for sins by means of a worldwide flood. He also designated the rainbow as a reminder of His promise. Every rainbow is a reminder of what God has given you. Momentarily, you will be given an opportunity to give in return to God.
8. In Genesis 12.1-3 we read,
 - ¹ Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
 - ² And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
 - ³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

This passage contains the provisions of what theologians have labeled the Abrahamic Covenant, the governing decree of God setting forth the guidelines for all predictive prophecy in God's unfolding drama of redemption. Included in the fulfillment of this passage is the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to establish His millennial kingdom on earth. We, too, are a part of the fulfillment of this passage, not only in our congregational Church life but also in our Church's missions outreach and program of giving.

9. In Genesis 12.7 we are told that God appeared to Abram in Sichem and promised to give the Promised Land to his seed (singular, not seeds), which the Apostle Paul declared to be a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, Galatians 3.16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Abram's response? He built an altar on which to give to God an offering. Abraham's pattern was to give to God in response to God's promise to give to bless him. It should be our pattern, as well.
10. In Genesis 12.8, we are informed that Abraham pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai, Bethel meaning the house of God and Hai meaning a heap of ruin. How like your life and mine is it to find yourself between the house of God, Bethel, and a heap of ruin, Hai. When Abraham found himself "there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD." That is precisely what you should do, give and pray, especially when you are between the house of God and the heap of ruin.
11. In Genesis 20.2 Abraham engaged in deception once more, only this time lying to Abimelech. Why is this pertinent to giving? Though he had not yet been born when his father committed those two sins, Isaac demonstrated the identical lack of character defect exhibited by his father as a married man in Genesis 26.7. This is evidence that sons and daughters emulate the conduct and character of

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their parents, even when they do not witness their parent's sins. Thus, children do not need to observe their parent's infidelity with respect to giving to honor the Lord. They will be taught to dishonor the Lord with by withholding their offerings by simply imitating their parent's defective character.

12. In Genesis 13.15, God told Abraham, "all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it." In verse 17, God said, "Arise, walk through the land ... for I will give it unto thee." This is but one illustration showing that the God we worship is a giving and generous God, Who is not stingy and miserly. His children should reflect the character of their heavenly Father, should we not?
13. In Genesis 14.20, shortly after rescuing his nephew Lot, Abraham encountered Melchizedek, the priest-king of the city of Salem. Melchizedek was at least a type of Christ, if not the preincarnate Christ. What did Abraham show us by example to do? "He gave him tithes of all." Interestingly, Abraham did that before God counted his faith for righteousness. Thus, whether someone is a believer or not, he has a holy obligation as one of God's creatures to give tithes of all.
14. Genesis 14.20. After rescuing his nephew, Lot, from kidnapping, Abraham met and worshiped God with Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God. How appropriate it was that as an integral part of his worship of God Abraham gave what Moses says were "tithes of all." Let us recognize that the principle of giving being an integrated part of worship is a principle that holds true to this day. As we prepare to receive the offering remember that God is not worshiped when gifts to Him are withheld.
15. After attacking nephew Lot's captors and rescuing him, Abraham was overcome with fear of retaliation after his offering to Melchizedek. Genesis 15.1 informs us that God gave Abram comfort, telling him, "Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward." Is there a connection between God giving comfort from fear to Abram in Genesis 15.1 and Abram having given to God in Genesis 14.20?
16. In Genesis 15.6, the LORD counted Abram's faith for righteousness, which is to say that He *gave* Abram the standing before Him of a righteous man through his faith. God, therefore, gave to Abram what Abram could never have secured for himself. This is why we give, to advance the Gospel so that others can hear the good news and have the opportunity, through faith in Christ, to receive from God the salvation which they can never secure for themselves.
17. From Genesis 18.7, having received into his home the preincarnate Christ and two angels, the patriarch Abraham fetched a tender calf and gave it to a young man to prepare for the meal. Did Abraham know who his guests were? There is debate on that point. The point that I seek to make is that for the LORD to be properly honored Abraham had to give something to another, who would then use what he gave, to do proper service to the LORD. As you give today, you place an offering into the hands of others, who will then use what you have given to render proper service to the LORD.
18. Genesis 18.1-2 informs us that the LORD once more appeared to Abraham (He had first appeared to him in Ur of the Chaldees). With Him were two angels, the three of them taking on the appearance of men. Sodom and Gomorrah are to be destroyed for their wickedness. Before that takes place, we are given a portion of the LORD's comments to the two holy angels accompanying Him, in Genesis 18.17-18:
 - 17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;
 - 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

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The LORD is about to reveal His plan to judge Sodom and Gomorrah. This revelation, you will note, is predicated on the certainty “that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.” That blessing involves everything related to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who came, Who died, Who rose again, and Who is coming again to fulfill this promise. Our giving to support this ministry is an integral part of this prediction being fulfilled.

19. Having been sent from Abraham’s household by Sarah, Genesis 21.19, the concubine Hagar and her son Ishmael were out in the desert, thinking they would die of thirst. Instead, God comforted Hagar, promised her that He would take care of her and her son, and then opened her eyes. She saw a well, filled her bottle with water from it, and then gave her son drink. As we prepare to give to God, let us remember that everything we have ever given to our children just as surely came from God as did the water Hagar gave to Ishmael. Let us repeatedly remind our children of the same. How grateful we should be in our giving to Him, then, when we realize that even what we give to Him He has first given to us.
20. In Genesis 22.1, we are told that God “tested” Abraham. How did He test His friend Abraham? He directed Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. When he was 100 years old, God gave him his son, Isaac, and now He tells Abraham to give Isaac back to him. Abraham was obedient. Are you obedient when God’s Word directs you to give back to Him a portion of what He has first given to you, be it time or treasure?
21. Told by God to offer up his son, Isaac, in Genesis 22.2, we read in the very next verse that “Abraham rose up early in the morning ... and went unto the place of which God had told him.” That reveals Abraham’s eagerness to obey God’s directive to offer his son. Is eagerness a word that would describe your attitude toward giving to God?
22. In Genesis 22.5, Abraham described his intention to offer up his son to God as worship. I understand worship as the proper response to God at any place and time. Sometime worship is praying. Sometime worship is sitting under preaching. Sometime worship is quietly reading God’s Word. At this time, worship is giving in accordance with God’s revealed will.
23. We know that the angel of the LORD interceded at the last moment to spare Isaac’s life and prevent Abraham’s sacrifice of his son, Genesis 22. Remember, however, what the angel of the LORD said to Abraham: “now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.” Do you fear God? Fear of God is not an emotion. Ecclesiastes 12.13 explains to us how the fear of God is put on display: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.” To give in obedience to God’s command is one aspect of fearing God.
24. In Genesis 22.18 we read the word of the LORD: “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” From our perspective, this side of the cross and the enthronement in heaven of the Lord Jesus Christ, we understand that the way the nations of the earth are blessed is through the Gospel they hear telling of the Savior who bids them come to Him by faith. As Abraham obeyed God’s voice to offer His son, so we are privileged to obey God’s voice to give to make His name known among the nations.
25. In Genesis 23, when Abraham’s beloved wife Sarah died, he sought a place to bury her. Because of his wealth and stature, Ephron offered to give Abraham a burial site. Abraham refused and insisted on paying for the cave of Machpelah. Why so? Abraham knew that everything costs, and that nothing

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is free. Though the Gospel is free to us, it cost God dearly. As well, the cost of spreading the Gospel is enormous. That is why we give. Free to us, it cost God. To make it free to others, it will cost you to send it abroad.

26. In Genesis 24, aged Abraham sent his unnamed servant to find a wife for his son Isaac, a picture of God the Father sending the Holy Spirit into the world to take out a bride for His Son, Jesus Christ. The journey was far and the expenses of the trip were considerable, but the unnamed servant brought Rebekah back with him to Isaac and the father's son was given his bride. In our day, the Spirit of God works in believers (here and abroad) to find sinners to bring to Christ. Yet there are costs. Spreading the Gospel message involves expenses. This is why we give.
27. In Genesis 25.5, we are told that Abraham gave to Isaac all that he had. This reminds me that you cannot out give God. Remember, years earlier Isaac willingly laid down on an altar to be sacrificed by his father. What a great picture of willingness and trust Isaac was. As well, what a great picture is this verse, showing us that, in fact, Isaac never did out give his father. Though willing to give his father everything, what actually happened was that his father gave him so much more than he ever gave to his father. The same is true of us, friends. Though we ought to be willing to give God everything, in fact, we will never give to God so much as He gives us. How this should affect our giving at offering time.
28. When Isaac's twins Jacob and Esau were born God promised that the elder, Esau, would serve the younger, Jacob. After they had reached adulthood we see in Genesis 25.34 that Jacob gave bread and beans to his older brother to purchase his birthright. Usually we shake our heads at Esau for despising his birthright by selling it for one measly meal. However, do not overlook the fact that Jacob gave food to obtain something that God had already promised him. Make sure that when you give to God you are not attempting to get anything from God by your giving, as Jacob did. Your giving is properly an act of worship, a demonstration of obedience, not a silly attempt to get something from God. Remember, God has already given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, Second Peter 1.3. So, give from a full heart. Give from a thankful heart. Give from a worshipful heart. Give from an obedient heart.
29. In Genesis 27.2, Isaac said to his son, Esau, "Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death." Let me ask you a question. Do you know the day of your death? If you knew you would die tomorrow, would you give your tithes and offerings today? Since you do not know the day of your death, you should do today what you would do if you knew you would die tomorrow. Give God His tithes and give beyond that to missions.
30. In Genesis 27.17, we read of Rebekah giving savory meat and bread into the hand of her son, Jacob, a gift that he would use to deceive his father. Such is not our purpose in taking up an offering. When your gifts are taken up and placed into the hands of missionaries, we do not do so that they may deceive the Father, but so that they might more effectively serve the Father. Let us be careful to give gifts that men can use to serve God, our Father.
31. In Genesis chapter 28, we see the thinking of a lost man concerning God's tithe. Jacob was asleep while fleeing from the face of his brother Esau when he dreamed of a ladder with holy angels ascending and descending on it one night during his journey. In the dream, at the top of the ladder, the LORD stood above it and confirmed to Jacob the covenant originally made with his grandfather, Abraham. Jacob's response? He vowed a vow to give God His tithe, *if* God returned him safely to his

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father's house. Jacob seemed oblivious to the reality that the tithe is God's regardless of what He chose to do with Jacob's life. Of course, the same is true in my life and in yours, as well.

32. In Genesis 28.14, we read where God restated the covenant He instituted with Abraham and Jacob's father Isaac: "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The question, of course, is how will all the families of the earth be blessed by the fulfillment of this promise in the Gospel? The answer is Gospel preaching and missions, taking the message far and wide. This is why we give.
33. Sometimes our mental image of Bible characters bears little resemblance to reality. Jacob's twin Esau was an accomplished hunter, a hairy man, we are told. Jacob, on the other hand, was smooth-skinned and plain. Nevertheless, in Genesis 29.2 and 10, we are told that he single-handedly moved a great stone over a well, showing that he was an immensely powerful man. So, we have this man named Jacob, a man of brute strength who has acknowledged that the tithe is the LORD's. What is reality with you? You may be a strong guy or a smart person. The question for now is do you acknowledge the tithe to be God's?
34. In Genesis 32, we find Jacob returning to his father after many years with a large family. Learning that his brother he deceived decades earlier is approaching with 400 men, Jacob fearfully cried out to God for deliverance. That night, alone and separated from his loved ones, Jacob met and wrestled with a man at Peniel who left him with a lifelong disability. I think the man Jacob wrestled with was the preincarnate Christ, and the permanently dislocated hip was a reminder to the physically imposing and powerful Jacob that his strength was as nothing to God. I believe Jacob's conversion took place that night. Interesting, is it not, that Jacob's commitment to give God his tithe came years earlier while he was unconverted? Makes you wonder about those who claim to be Christians, but who do not tithe.
35. Returning from exile with his large family and apprehensive at the approach of his twin brother Esau, Jacob sent numerous gifts ahead in the hopes it would temper Esau's years long bitterness toward him. When they finally met, Esau asked "What *meanest* thou by all this drove which I met?" in Genesis 33.8. Jacob answered, "*These are* to find grace in the sight of my lord." Let us learn from this. Many people give tithes and offerings to secure God's favor as Jacob attempted to secure Esau's favor. However, the believer understands that giving to the cause of Christ is properly a response to God's blessings, not at all an effort to secure God's favor by giving money.
36. In Genesis 35.1-4, Jacob returned to the Promised Land with his family, at which time some in his household took strange gods with them, idols. When Jacob was told by God to return to Beth-el and put away the strange gods among them, he made things right with God and his household gave to him what God did not want them to have, properly disposing of the false gods. Think about what an offering to God is. Is it not a time when God wants you to give up that which He no longer wants you to possess? Not that what you have is necessarily an idol ... unless you keep it when God wants you to give it. As we worship God during this time of giving, give what God wants you to give, because what He wants you to give He no longer wants you to have, and will not bless if you keep.
37. Genesis 35.14 records an offering made by Jacob to the LORD, in which he poured out a drink offering and then poured out oil on an altar of sorts that he had made. Why did he do that? He was responding to God confirming His promise to him. Thankfully, when we give in response to God's promises, we are not just pouring our gifts out and allowing them to run to the ground. God allows us

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to give to Him in such a way as to support the ministry and to get the Word of God out. So, when you give, be willing to pour your offering out, but be thankful that once given, your offering will be used to glorify God after it has left your hands. Remember that as you give.

38. When the predicted famine forced Jacob's sons to Egypt to purchase grain, their now exalted brother Joseph arranged for their money to be placed in the bags of grain they returned home with. Fearing that they would be thought thieves, when they returned to purchase more food they tried to explain. However, Joseph (still not recognized to them as their long lost brother) said, in Genesis 43.23, "Peace *be* to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks." He spoke the truth to them and to us, for Jesus said about giving, in 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." Though Joseph gave to his brothers, he recognized God was using him as an instrument to give to them. Do you recognize that what God gives to you He gives by the hands of men, so you will have to give to Him? What you receive from the hands of men has actually come to you from God. That is worth remembering when it is time to worship God through giving.
39. Genesis 45 records the occasion when Joseph, the second most powerful man in Egypt, finally revealed his identity to his brothers who had sold him into slavery, testifying that it was part of God's plan to spare their lives by a great deliverance. Thus, God gave suffering to Joseph as a way of preserving the lives of Joseph's loved ones. God gave Joseph terrible hardship to create the circumstances which lay back of Joseph giving great blessing, and all of it from God. Whatever God allows in your life is for the purpose of instigating giving in you, fruitfulness by you. That is worth remembering when it is time to worship God through giving.
40. Jacob and his family were facing starvation in the Promised Land while his long lost son, Joseph, had ascended by the hand of God to lofty estate in Egypt. Eventually, Jacob and his family were moved to Egypt, where "Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread," Genesis 47.12. However, who actually nourished Jacob and his family? It was God, who had placed Joseph in Egypt, exalted Joseph in Egypt, and then brought Jacob and his family to Egypt. That is worth remembering when it is time to worship God through giving.
41. In Exodus 3.16, standing before the burning bush, Moses was assigned the task of going back to Egypt to deliver his people. When Moses complained to God that he was not eloquent, Exodus 4.10, God reminded him that He had made Moses' mouth. God not only gave Moses his mouth, but also gave him his brother, Aaron, to speak for him. The lesson to learn? God gives you what you need to serve Him. A portion of what He has given to you to serve Him is money that He wants returned to Him. Something to keep in mind as when it is time to worship God through giving.
42. When God called Moses from the backside of the desert to deliver His people from Egyptian slavery, He told Moses in Exodus 3.21-22 that they would not go away from Egypt empty, but would take with them gold and silver and jewels. Why did God plan on giving His people those material blessings? So they could have wealth? No. So they could use wealth in their service to God, specifically, to provide the materials to build the Tabernacle, their future place of worship. In like manner, when God blesses you materially, it is not His desire that you have what you have so that you might have it. His desire is for you to have what He has given to you so that you might use it for Him. Some of it He wants back from you. Some of it He wants you to keep. However, all of it is to be used for Him. Keep that in mind as we prepare to worship God through giving.

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43. In Exodus 5.1-2, Moses relayed to Pharaoh God's directive to let the Jewish people go to worship God in the wilderness. However, Pharaoh opposed this, perhaps because he was used to being worshipped himself and did not want any competition. As we approach our giving time, remember that giving is worship also, and the person who opposes your worship of God has actually aligned himself with the likes of Pharaoh. Do people actually oppose Christians who want to give to God? Oh my, yes. Oftentimes it is because they want that money spent on them and not God. Keep that in mind when it is time to worship God through giving.
44. In Exodus 5.3, Moses and Aaron said to Pharaoh, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." They understood that God would hold them accountable to worship Him in the manner of His choosing even if a third party stood in the way of their worship. Thus, God expects your worship, even if someone else disapproves or stands in the way. This is worth considering when it is time to worship the LORD with your giving.
45. In Exodus chapter 8, we take note that the Egyptians gave God nothing, but that God gave them plagues. The children of Israel gave God worship, and God gave them liberty. You always give to God, even if you give Him nothing. In like manner, God will always give to you. This is worth considering when it is time to worship the LORD with your giving.
46. You recognize that God sent Moses to Pharaoh to demand that he give up to God what was rightly God's, His chosen people, Israel. Pharaoh had grown accustomed to God's property and was reluctant to give them up. In Exodus 11.1, we read these words: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague *more* upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let *you* go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether." Thus, God told Moses that He was certainly capable of making Pharaoh give up to God what God wanted. That is something to keep in mind with reference to God's tithe. Even if He does not make a man give God's tithe to Him, it is not because He cannot. This is worth considering when it is time to worship the LORD with giving.
47. In Exodus chapter 12, we read of the Passover, by which God purposed to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. He smote the first-born of each family, sparing only those whose lives were protected by the shed blood of an innocent lamb. That Passover lamb gave its life so each family who obeyed God by faith could live. As we come to our time of worship through giving, remember that God's plan has always been that one gives so others can live. So it was with the lamb. So it was when the Lord Jesus died. So it is come offering time. Give so that others can live, having heard the message that your offering sends out to the regions beyond.
48. In Exodus 16.29, we are told God gave the Sabbath observance to the Israelites. However, Exodus 31.14 reveals to us that the penalty of death hung over the head of anyone who violated the Sabbath by doing work. What do we take from this? When God gives you something, there will be a responsibility associated with it. Something to consider as we worship the Lord with our giving.
49. After they crossed the Red Sea, the children of Israel complained to Moses when they feared a lack of readily available water to drink. In Exodus 17.2, Moses said to them, "Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?" Interesting to note is that in asking God to give them water, the Apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians, in First Corinthians 10.9, the children of Israel were tempting Christ. Two ingredients comprise that temptation of Christ: *First*, they demanded water rather than humbly asking for water. *Second*, they insisted that God give to them without any

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consideration of their holy obligation to give to God. Some things to remember as we approach this time of worshiping the Lord with our giving.

50. In Exodus 17.6, Moses smote the rock and water came forth for the people to drink. The smiting of the rock was a type of Christ's crucifixion, and the water that came forth was a type of the salvation the Lord Jesus gives to those who trust Him. In the Old and New Testaments we find references to God being likened to a rock. Then, in John 7.37, we read of the Savior clearly alluding to Himself as the rock Moses struck, when we read, "In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." As we come to worship God with our giving, consider what the Savior gave so He might provide the gift of salvation full and free to those who trust Him.

51. In Exodus 19.4-6 we read,

- ⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.
- ⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:
- ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Notice the last phrase of verse 5, "for all the earth *is* mine." God restates that since He created everything He owns everything. If it was important for the Jewish people to understand God's claim on the whole world, it is important for us to understand as well. Something to consider as we approach our time for giving.

56. In Exodus 19, we read of Moses ascending to the top of the mountain to meet with God. When Moses returned to the people he "laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD," Exodus 19.7-8. Of course, sinful people *cannot* do all the LORD has demanded. However, what we can do is faithfully worship the Lord with our tithes and offerings, something to ponder as we come to this time of worshiping God through our giving.

57. Exodus chapter 20 is one place where the Ten Commandments are found. The first commandment God gave His people by the hand of Moses, Exodus 20.1, reads, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Obviously, this refers to having pagan idols as objects of worship and service, rather than God. As we approach the aspect of worship that we refer to as the offering, allow me to make application to today. You surely do not bow down to statues. However, do you have someone or some thing that is more important to you than God? Perhaps it is money. Do not commit that sin anymore. Your tax preparer or the IRS agent who reviews your tax return ought to be able to tell, by your giving records, that God is the most important concern of your life. Remember that as we approach the worship of God through our giving.

58. In Exodus 20.12 we read, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." In Proverbs we are taught to "Honour the Lord with the first-fruits of thy increase." Do not make the mistake of training your children to honor you as they grow up without training them to honor the LORD. I would urge you to train your child to honor God, first, by honoring God yourself, and, second, by instilling in your child the practice of honoring God

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by giving his own money rather than merely giving what you have placed in his hand to drop in the offering. Something to consider as we approach this time of worship through giving.

59. Exodus 22.1 deals with restitution. It reads, “If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.” When I came to Christ, I realized after reading this verse that I had stolen God’s tithe throughout my whole life. Therefore, I determined to give somewhat more than my tithe as a means of making restitution to God for having stolen what was not mine for so many years before my conversion. Does the Bible tell converts to do this after they come to Christ? No, it does not. Restitution was my own choice that no one knew about until this moment. However, it is something to consider as we approach this time of worship through giving.
60. According to Exodus 22.5, it is wrong to allow livestock to feed in a field belonging to someone else. The principle is that your increase should not come at someone else’s expense. This is why Churches ought not seek offerings from members of other Churches, and why members properly funnel their giving primarily through their Church rather than another. It is also why Bible believers endorse capitalism, the free and voluntary exchange of goods and services, and oppose socialism, the seizing of one’s bounty by the government to give to someone who has not earned it. Things to consider as we approach this time of worship through giving.
61. Proverbs 3.9 reads, “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.” This is the tithe. However, Exodus 22.9 begins, “Thou shalt not delay *to offer* the first of thy ripe fruits.” Thus, God does not want His people to borrow what is His for other purposes before giving it to Him. Something to consider as we approach this time of worship through giving.
62. In Exodus 23.19, the children of Israel were directed to bring their first fruits to the house of the LORD their God. Can we do less than they were directed to do? Make sure that your giving to the LORD comes first. Do not pay every bill you owe and then see whatever is left for God. Pay your bills. Do not misunderstand what I say. Just put God at the front of the line, not the back. At our house the check cut for the LORD’s work always gets written first, before any check for anything else is written. Something to consider as we approach this time of worship through giving.
63. In Exodus 25.1-9, we read God’s instructions to Moses to teach the Israelites how to give the materials with which to build the Tabernacle, their portable place of worship. Three things to note in verse 2: *First*, “every man” was to give. *Second*, he was to give “willingly.” *Third*, he was to give “with his heart.” How is it one is told to give willingly? People willing to do right need to be instructed to do right. In like manner, God wants us to give. Every Christian should want to give. Every Christian should give willingly. And every Christian should give with his heart. Something to remember as we approach this time of worship through giving.
64. Exodus 25.20 through Exodus 27.21, the better part of three chapters, are spent instructing the children of Israel just how the offering collected for the building of the Tabernacle was to be used. We, too, are instructed by God how to use the offerings collected from God’s people. Not to build a building, but to finance the spread of the Gospel to a lost and dying world. Something to remember as we approach this time of worship through giving.
65. In Exodus 29.15-18, we read that Aaron and his sons were consecrated to be the priests of Israel, whereupon they offered up to God a sin offering, to atone for their sins and to give them standing before God. The second thing they did, by way of consecration, was to offer up a burnt offering, in

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which the entire animal sacrificed was consumed by fire. This sacrifice is described by Moses as a sweet savor to the Lord. Two things to note as we prepare to give: *First*, your offering, too, is a sweet savor that is pleasing to God. *Second*, our offerings, of course, are not consumed. Rather, they are used in God's work to finance the ministry that He has called into being to glorify His Son through the preaching of the Gospel, that message of Christ's saving death, burial, and resurrection from the dead on the third day. That is a message worth giving good money to get out. Do you not agree?

66. In Exodus 29.22-25, we read that one of the steps in the consecration of Israel's priests involved the wave offering. The exact significance of the wave offering is not fully understood, but one thing is clear. The offering was put into the hands of the priest, who then waved it in some fashion before the LORD, and then gave it to the LORD. What has God put into your hands? Take everything you have been given, wave it back and forth before the LORD so He can get a really good look at it, and then give it to Him as an offering. Understand that a great deal of what you give to Him He will want you to keep and use, while some of it He will choose to receive and use elsewhere. However, *everything* that has been placed into your hands needs to be offered. Something to consider as we worship God through our giving.
67. According to Exodus 32.1-6, while Moses was on Mount Sinai where God gave him the Ten Commandments, the children of Israel grew bored with the waiting and sacrificially gave, it appears, by giving to Aaron all their jewelry. From that jewelry Aaron fashioned a golden calf. Then they scheduled a feast to the LORD. Is it not amazing that even God's people will sacrificially give for the wrong reasons? As we approach this offering time, make sure that you are giving to the LORD, not to construct some golden calf, whether it be a Church building, or a personal endeavor. Make sure your gifts are to the LORD.
68. To craft the Tabernacle, the furniture, and the ornaments used in the worship of God after leaving Egypt, the children of Israel gave of what they had. In Exodus 36.6-7, they were told to stop giving because they had enough material. In fact, they had too much. Christian giving is for a different purpose. Our giving is not to supply for the fabrication of a place for us to worship since we already have facilities, but to supply a lost and dying world the Gospel, to proclaim to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. There will someday be a time to stop giving, but that time has not yet arrived.
69. In Leviticus 1.1-2, the LORD called unto Moses, and directed him to tell the children of Israel, "If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD," before proceeding with precise instructions. The passage does not tell the people to give, but how to give, since it was understood that God's people give to God. The question for us today is, "Is it understood that God's people are to give to God?"
70. Leviticus 1.2-9 contains instructions for giving to God. Some of the phrases sprinkled throughout the passage are, "Ye shall bring your offering," "Let him offer," "He shall put his hand upon," "And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall," "And he shall," and finally, "And the sons of Aaron the priest shall." God wants what He wants done to be done His way. Do you know what to give? Do you know how to give? Remember, the God Who wanted things done just so in Moses' day is the same God we serve. Those who give to God need to have an idea what they are doing.
71. God's plan for His Jewish people's giving to Him as an act of worship is quite interesting. In Leviticus 1.3 is found the phrase "he shall offer it of his own voluntary will." Thus, the LORD directs Moses to tell the people that although God wants His people to give to Him, He wants them to give to Him voluntarily.

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72. In Leviticus chapter 1, two different sizes of animals are offered to God as burnt offerings. The offering could be a bullock, a sheep, a goat (a relatively large animal), or a pigeon (a small animal). Why the large animals versus the small pigeon? A person was to give what he could afford to give. If someone was very poor, he would not have a bullock to offer to God, but the poor could afford a pigeon. Paul summed up the principle in Second Corinthians with these words, “According as a man hath.” What God wants are not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice.
73. In Leviticus 3.1, we are told that the offering made was to be an animal “without blemish before the LORD.” It is very uncommon to find an animal of the herd or flock without a blemish. If you wanted to make sure that you had such an animal you would have to take special precautions. The point being made is that what you give to God is supposed to be the very best you have. I know of missionaries being given used tea bags, and sport coats with cigarette burns in them. The gifts were to God, for use by God’s men. That being the case, they should have been the very best, not the worst, or even average. Your gifts to God are to be the best you have, and not anything less than your best.
74. In Leviticus 4.2, we find the words, “If a soul shall sin through ignorance,” and then instructions were given for the sin offering to atone for sins. Two things to take note of as we prepare to worship the Lord through our giving: *First*, take note of the fact that the sinner is shown to be responsible even for sins that he or she ignorantly committed, sins one did not know were wrong, or perhaps even were not aware that he or she had committed. *Second*, take note that offerings we give are not sin offerings. Jesus Christ was and is our once and for all time sin offering, cleansing us even from those sins we did not know we committed. Our giving does not atone for sins, but is given in response to the forgiveness of sins we have in Christ.
75. In Leviticus 6.2, we find the words, “If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD,” and then instructions are given for the trespass offering to atone for sins. Two things to take note of as we prepare to worship the LORD through our giving: *First*, note that the sinner is shown to be responsible for sins that he or she knowingly committed, sins you know are wrong and are aware that you have committed. *Second*, note that this offering we are about to collect is not a trespass offering. Jesus Christ was and is our once and for all time trespass offering, cleansing us from those sins we knowingly committed. Our giving does not atone for sins, but is given in response to the forgiveness of sins we have in Christ.
76. Leviticus 6.20 begins, “This *is* the offering of Aaron and of his sons, which they shall offer unto the LORD in the day when he is anointed.” In days gone by only those holding the anointed office of priest could offer to God certain kinds of offerings. Thankfully, such is not the case today. Christians are priests, and since we have an anointing from God, there is no kind of offering acceptable to God that we cannot give. So, give as a priest. Give as one anointed of God.
77. In Leviticus 10.1-2, we read of a most astonishing and enlightening event. God killed two sons of the newly anointed high priest Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, for attempting to give an offering to Him in an inappropriate and presumptuous manner, termed “strange fire.” Do we conclude from this passage that God will kill anyone who offers to Him a gift in an inappropriate manner? Not at all. This event was repeated only one time in history, when Ananias and Sapphira lied about their gift in Acts 5. We do conclude, however, that even when lives are spared God is not always pleased with our gifts, particularly when they are not given to Him in a satisfactory manner, or when they are not given at

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all. Be careful to give to Him in a satisfactory manner; what He wants, when He wants it, and with a right heart attitude.

78. I bet you never thought an offering could clear up a major source of heresy. However, in Leviticus chapter 12, which describes the offering to be made by a woman following the delivery of her child, we have such an offering. The offering given by the mother was to atone for her sin. How does this clear up a heresy? Simple. Roman Catholic dogma maintains that Mary was immaculately conceived and lived a sinless life. However, according to Luke 2.24, the Virgin Mary offered the sacrifice called for in this chapter. What does that prove? It proves that she considered herself a sinner and atoned for her sin in the prescribed manner. Whatever else the Virgin Mary knew, she knew she was a sinner.
79. In Leviticus 13 and 14 we find the Law of the Leper. A leper was considered ceremonially unclean under Mosaic Law, and was not allowed to participate in any part of ceremonial worship. Lepers were not even allowed to give freewill offerings to God. Leprosy was a type of sin in the Bible, and what lepers suffered physically, and their physical contamination, paralleled the spiritual uncleanness of the sinner's sin. Before the Christian's sins were washed clean in the blood of Christ, your spiritual defilement was such that no freewill offering from you was considered acceptable to God, though the tithe is always God's and is not a freewill offering. However, it is different now for the believer. God now delights in your freewill offerings.
80. According to Leviticus 15, everything a leper touched was defiled, unclean, and could not be touched by anyone without taking special steps to cleanse themselves afterwards. Leprosy, of course, is shown in the Bible to be a type of sin. Therefore, the Christian can thank God he has been cleansed from all sin, First John 1.7. Thus, not only are we clean, but what we give to God is now clean, as well. Your gifts to God, Christian, are not the stench they were before you trusted Christ. They are now a sweet smelling savor to Him.
81. In Leviticus 17.1-9, the Israelites in the wilderness were directed to offer before the LORD every animal that was killed for food. Not that the animal was to be given, but that a portion of every animal was to be given, as an acknowledgment of God's place in their lives. This was so the Israelites would worship the LORD, as well as no longer offering sacrifices to devils. God's position was that folks are going to worship someone, either the true God or a false god. If you do not acknowledge God through your giving, you are worshiping someone or some thing other than God. That false god may even be you. Worship God through your giving.
82. Right after forbidding the making of molten idols, God spoke these words to Moses in Leviticus 19.5: "And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, ye shall offer it at your own will." Why would someone want to offer up a peace offering to God? Leviticus 7.15 informs us that peace offerings are to be given to God as an expression of thanksgiving. I wonder how many Christians express their gratitude to God for His abundant goodness by giving to Him an offering?
83. Leviticus 19.9-10 forbids gleaning wheat and barley from the fields when harvesting, and the gleaning of grapes from the vines. Gleaning is when you pick up what you have dropped to the ground during harvest, or when you look for grapes left on the vine after the harvest. Why did God forbid gleaning? So food would be left for the poor to come along later to retrieve. God wants His people to be generous, to be giving to the less fortunate, without depriving the poor of the responsibility of working for what they get. Therefore, give to God first, but do not give to God only.

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84. Leviticus 19.11 reads, “Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.” Why is it wrong to steal, to deal falsely, and to lie? For two reasons: *First*, because God said it is wrong, which is reason enough. *As well*, stealing is the opposite of giving, dealing falsely is the opposite of integrity, and lying is the opposite of telling the truth. Thus, we see that a life of life is an integrated whole, with giving being as much a part as are integrity and speaking the truth. Something to remember when it comes time to give to the cause of Christ.
85. In Leviticus 21.21 we read, “No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offering the offerings of the Lord made by fire.” Perfection is required by God from those who would approach Him, from those who would worship Him, from those who would give to Him. Thankfully, the Christian, being in Christ, does have the standing of one perfect in the sight of God. So, you may give to God, Christian.
86. In Leviticus 22.20, we read, “But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you.” Most animals have blemishes of some kind. In Old Testament times only the very best animals, specially cared for and fed, would be free of blemishes. God wanted only those very best used as sacrifices. Why? Because He is God. Nothing less than the best is suitable for Him. When you give to God, give the fruit of your best labors, your best thinking, and your best effort.
87. In Leviticus 22.21, we read, “And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish *his* vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.” When you give to God, you are to give your very best. Nothing second-rate for God. Only the best will do. If you give money as an offering to the LORD, make sure the money was earned by your best effort. Remember, nothing less than the best is good enough for our God.
88. In Leviticus 22.29 we read, “And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer it at your own will.” You ought to give to God because you want to, and you ought to want to. When you do not want to, you ought to fix your want to. Something to keep in mind as we worship the Lord with our giving.
89. In Numbers 3.4, Moses reminds his readers that “Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD.” Why did that happen? What they offered to the LORD was an express violation of His directive concerning the source of the fire they offered. A reminder when we give an offering that God wants His will done His way.
90. I read Numbers 4.46-47: “All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers, From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation.” Only those Levites who were between the age of 30 and 50 were permitted to take an Israelite’s offering and give it to the LORD. Thus, only men, and only certain men, and only certain men of a certain age, were permitted to present offerings to God on behalf of others during Old Testament times. Thankfully, because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are permitted to give to God acceptable sacrifices no matter who we are. What a privilege.
91. Numbers chapter 7 records in minute detail the offerings given by each of the twelve tribes after the completion of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Though each tribe’s offering was exactly the same as

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the other tribes, the listing of the offerings, all twelve of them, are recorded in minute detail. The lesson to remember? God keeps track of what we give to Him.

92. In Numbers 8.5-18, God directed Moses to separate the tribe of Levi from the rest of the tribes, and to offer a sacrifice on their behalf, to do other things, so that they might serve the LORD wholly. Two observations: You need no one to offer a sacrifice on your behalf beside the one made for you by the Lord Jesus Christ. As well, we do not have a two-tiered population as the Israelites did, those who were priests and those who were secular, since all Christians are priests, capable of and expected to give things which are acceptable to God.
93. Numbers 8.19 reads, “And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel...” Read on and you discover that God provided the tribe of Levi to serve the Aaronic priesthood, to help them conduct their service to God. Without the Levites’ help the sons of Aaron could not have fulfilled their duties before God in offering sacrifices. The lesson? God gives you what you need to give to Him what He wants from you. Does God want you to give to the cause of Christ? Yes. Therefore, He provides a way to obey. Does God want you to serve. Yes. Therefore, He provides a way to obey. God *always* provides a way to obey. The lack, then, the shortfall, is not with God. It is with you and me. That is something each of us needs to remember when we prepare to give, as we give, and when we serve.
94. In Numbers 8.19, we read that God gave the tribe of Levi to Aaron and the other priests to help them perform their service to God. In Numbers 8.21, we see what Aaron’s response to God’s gracious help was: “And Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD.” Amazing. God gave to Aaron what Aaron needed to properly serve God. However, Aaron gave what God gave to him right back to God. That is genuine spirituality. When God gives you what He wants you to use to serve Him, what you should then do is offer it right back to Him, to then use as He wants you to use it.
95. We see in Numbers 8.25 that upon reaching the age of 50, Levites were no longer allowed to render service unto God by helping the priests of Aaron’s family offer their appointed sacrifices. Some Christians also have this mindset, thinking that when you reach a certain age you should no longer give to the LORD or serve Him. That was under the Law of Moses, and it was because their service was physically very demanding, requiring heavy lifting. Our service to God is not so much physical as spiritual. Therefore, you can continue to give to the cause of Christ and serve in Church ministries as long as you are able. I well remember Mrs. Johnnie Brown, past 90 years of age and with one leg amputated, was incorporated into the nursery ministry and served as part of our Church outreach. You can give time, talent, and treasure to the LORD if you want to.
96. Numbers 15.1-13 is an interesting passage of Scripture, in that two things were told to the nation of Israel. *First*, God told them that He was going to give them the Promised Land. *Then*, He told them that He wanted them to give Him an offering in return for the land they received. Think for a moment. God has given to His people a great salvation. That being so, is it so great a thing God directs of us to give to the cause of Christ in return? Christian giving is only asking too much of those who have not received the great salvation so full and free that comes when Jesus Christ is acknowledged as Lord and Savior.
97. In Numbers 18.1-6, the LORD told His high priest Aaron that He had given to him the tribe of Levi to help him perform his duties. God has done the same for you, whereby the Lord Jesus Christ is said in Ephesians 4.8-12 to have given gifts, men, to equip Church members to perform our duties as

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servants of God. As we worship God in our giving, and as you give to Him of your substance, remember that He has given to you gifted men to equip you for the work of the ministry.

98. In Numbers 18.7, the LORD said to Aaron, “I have given your priest’s office *unto you* as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.” How very particular God is that He would allow no one to approach Him to give offerings to Him who He had not chosen. How strange it is, then, that those who have been chosen to approach Him and give to Him sometimes do not either approach Him or give to Him.
99. In Numbers 18.8, the LORD told Aaron, “I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing....” The priests were responsible for the heave offerings. That is, they were accountable to God to make sure the offerings were properly prepared and offered. You and I are anointed, Christian. That means you and I are also priests. Could it be that you and I are responsible to God for the offerings? I think you would agree that the answer to that question is most definitely “Yes.”
100. I read the words of the LORD to Moses, in Numbers 20.25-26:
- ²⁵ Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor:
²⁶ And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered *unto his people*, and shall die there.
- God took back from Aaron what He had given to him to enable Aaron to serve Him. Remember, everything you have has been given to you by God for you to use to serve Him. Whether it be your weekly giving or what you are left with at the end of your life, God wants it back in some way and at some point. It is to either go into the offering plate or to that person, that child, that grandchild, or perhaps that ministry, that will best use it to God’s glory.
101. In Numbers 23.2, we read of two men, Balak and Balaam, making sacrifices; giving offerings, if you will. A good thing, you might think. However, you would be mistaken. An example of two men giving to the LORD in order to get their way, rather than seeing God get His way. They were evil men, committing terrible sins, as is always the case when men seek their own wills rather than seeking God’s will for their lives. Our giving should be to advance God’s will, not our own.
102. Notice something about the offering the LORD directed to be given to Him in Numbers 28.1-2 in due season. Under the Law of Moses, God specifically declared when each and every “due season” was, at which time He was to be honored by an offering. Are things really that different these days, in one respect? Does not God still want to be honored by His people in “due season”? Is it not “due season,” on the first day of the week, to honor the LORD with the first fruits of our increase?
103. Have you ever thought about the frequency of Israel’s offerings to the Lord God? In Numbers 28.3-4, we are reminded that twice each day the nation, corporately, gave an offering to God. I wonder how often we consider the spiritual benefits of giving to God? What unseen and unrealized blessings and benefits to our spiritual growth and maturity come when God’s people give something to Him each and every day? Is it good to give to God? God thought so much of giving to Him that He directed Israel to give something to Him every twelve hours. Is it so much, then, that we give to Him once a week?
104. Numbers 28.9 indicates that on Israel’s Sabbath the morning and evening offerings were to be double what was called for every other day. I am not one for re-instituting the Sabbath, and I certainly would not seek to impose a law on anyone to rule their giving. However, is it not interesting that God called

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for twice the normal offering on days of special religious significance, while those days upcoming of special religious or spiritual significance to us, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, are days when many Christians, even those who regularly give to the cause of Christ, are so distracted that they give nothing to God whatsoever? Give to God today. Make sure you give to God on Easter, on Thanksgiving weekend, and on Christmas weekend. We should surely be able to do as well as did the Israelites who had not the indwelling Spirit of God.

105. It is so important for all of God's children to participate in the giving of tithes and offerings to the Lord. I know that every Christian ought to give without regard to what others are doing, and a number of those faithful givers in our Church do just that. However, what you do has a great impact on what others do. Take, for example, the case of the children of Israel as they were about to enter the Promised Land after so many years in the wilderness. The tribes of Gad and Reuben decided, after all those years, that they did not want to cross the Jordan River. They wanted to stay on the East side of Jordan and tend to their cattle on the well-watered plains of Jordan. Notice what Moses said in Numbers 32.7: "And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?" In other words, why are you behaving in such a way that others are discouraged from doing what God wants them to do? Let us each do what God wants us to do, thereby encouraging one another and making the load easier for each of us to pull.
106. This morning we come to the collection of God's tithes and offerings, a time when you can either give to Him in a deeply spiritual act of worship, or He can collect it. In either case, God gets His Own. A pastor was asked, "How many church members do you have?" He answered, "One hundred fifty." The pastor was further asked, "How many of them are tithers?" The pastor replied, "One hundred fifty." In astonishment the inquirer exclaimed, "What? All one hundred fifty, the entire church, are tithers?" "Yes, indeed," said the pastor. "About fifty of them bring the tithe to the storehouse, and God collects it from the rest." We do not cheat God.
107. When God gits His
 And I gits mine
Then everything
 Will be just fine.
But if I gits mine
 And keeps God's, too,
What do you reckon God will do?
 I believe he will collect,
 Don't you?
- The unlettered hillbilly who said those words was speaking God's truth.
108. In Numbers 35.2, we read of the children of Israel preparing for their entrance into the Promised Land, with the LORD directing Moses to command the people to give cities for the Levites to dwell in. To some this does not seem fair, until you consider two things: *First*, God gave the children of Israel the Promised Land, and He wanted only a portion set aside for the priestly tribe. *Second*, when the priestly tribe was provided for they could more easily tend to matters related to the people's worship. Thus, though God commanded the people to give, it was in their own interests to comply with God's wishes, something to remember when we worship the LORD with our tithes and offerings.

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109. In Deuteronomy, Moses recounts what God had done to bring the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and to the brink of entering the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy 4.22, he said, “But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.” In verse 23, he warned them to take heed unto themselves. Then, in verse 24, he declared, “For the LORD thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God.” Finally, in verse 31, Moses stated, “For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God.” It is always good to be mindful of God’s attributes when worshipping Him with your tithes and offerings.
110. In Deuteronomy 4.35, Moses reminded his people “that the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him.” Something to keep in mind as we worship the LORD with our giving.
111. In Deuteronomy 4.39, still recounting God’s great deeds on behalf of the people, Moses said, “Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none else.” Something to keep in mind as we worship God by giving.
112. In Deuteronomy 7.21, Moses comforted the children of Israel as they reflected on their Egyptian bondage, their forty years of wilderness wanderings, and were fearful of the future that awaited them as they anticipated entering the Promised Land. Perhaps you, too, have fears concerning the future. Be comforted regarding your future obstacles and concerns by the words Moses spoke to the children of Israel: “Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible.” Something to remember as we worship the LORD with our giving.
113. I remind you of the words of Moses to the children of Israel at the conclusion of their forty years of wilderness wanderings and in anticipation of their success in the Promised Land. Deuteronomy 8.14: “Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee ... Who fed thee ... And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth,” verse 17. Then we come to verse 18: “But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth....” Something for each of us to remember as we worship the LORD with our giving.
114. In Deuteronomy 8.19-20, Moses warned the Israelites, saying,
- 19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.
- 20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.
- The lesson, of course, is that no one who disobeys God is immune from consequences. Something we want to be true who worship the LORD with our giving.
115. When rehearsing God’s blessings of the children of Israel, Moses reminded them, “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *is* the LORD’s thy God, the earth *also*, with all that therein is,” Deuteronomy 10.14. A good thing to remember when we worship the LORD with our giving.
116. When we give God His tithes and our offerings, keep in mind that we do not by our giving seek to bribe Him. Deuteronomy 10.17: “For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.” His tithes returned to Him and our offerings given to Him are a means of honoring and worshipping Him, not a way of getting Him to do things for us.

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117. When Moses reminded the people what they should and should not do, what they should and should not eat, he also reminded them to tithe, in Deuteronomy 14.22: “Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.”
118. In Deuteronomy 15.6, Moses said, “For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow.” Not only because the borrower is servant to the lender, and they had only recently been slaves and God did not want them in servitude again, but also so that every seventh year they would be in a position to give what had been borrowed from them by their own people. That God wants His people to be givers is something to remember next time you consider asking to borrow money from someone, as well as when you worship the LORD with your giving.
119. While it is inappropriate for someone to borrow, it is very appropriate for someone to lend to the poor, according to Deuteronomy 15.7-8, anticipating that you will forgive the loan in the seventh year if he has been unable to pay you back. God’s approach to helping the poor is constructive, and builds character in the form of a loan instead of an outright gift. Then, if he cannot pay you back, release him from the obligation. Again, God wants His people to be givers at heart. Remember that as you worship the LORD with your giving.
120. In Deuteronomy 16.16 we read, “Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty.” Here Moses reminds the people that they are not to appear before the LORD to worship without bringing with them an offering. Something to remember in our day as a principle, knowing that you cannot worship Him who you will not honor.
121. Deuteronomy 16.16, “Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty.” Moses reminded the people they were not to appear before the LORD to worship without bringing an offering. What do you imagine would have happened if someone did not appear with an offering? I ask because others would certainly have known. With offerings of wheat, barley, animals, or precious metals, it was impossible to conceal from others that you brought nothing to give. How would others have reacted? Would they have been angry? Sad? Would they have felt betrayed? And what do you imagine God’s response would have been?
122. In Deuteronomy 16.17 we read, “Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.” This same principle of giving according to your ability, proportional giving, is the governing principle for a Christian’s giving in the New Testament. In Second Corinthians 8.12 the apostle writes about giving: “For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.”
123. Deuteronomy 17.1 reads, “Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God *any* bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, *or* any evilfavouredness: for that *is* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.” While this prohibition by Moses did not require the children of Israel to give everything in their possession to the LORD, it did prohibit giving damaged goods to Him. Not much of an issue in our day, except to remind us that God deserves the best from us when we give to Him in worship.

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124. In Deuteronomy 17.19, Moses gave instructions for the future when Israel would have her own king. The king was to read the Word of God “all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them.” Thus, reading God’s Word daily is central to fearing and obeying God, something to remember as we worship the LORD with our tithes and offerings.
125. Deuteronomy chapter 19 is devoted to setting aside six cities of refuge, to which a person could flee who caused someone’s accidental death, thereby escaping anyone who would seek revenge. Thus, cities of refuge are a picture of one aspect of Christ’s salvation from sins, delivering sinners from God’s vengeance. In like manner, the worshiper sets aside his tithes and offerings so sinners might hear the message of the safe refuge from sin’s punishment that is found only through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
126. In Deuteronomy 28.10, we read a wonderful prediction: “And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.” Of course, the question that naturally arises is how will people know that God is called by the name of the LORD? Though this likely has its ultimate fulfillment in the millennial reign of Christ, was it not part of Israel’s charter and our own Great Commission in this Christian era to make the LORD’s name known among the heathen? How, pray tell, is this to be done but by giving to missions and sending missionaries?
127. In Deuteronomy 28.12, Moses gave the children of Israel final instructions before entering the Promised Land, revealing to them the principles by which God wanted them to handle their material resources. He said, “The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.” Our nation, and we as individuals, need to live our lives by this principle, rather than being the largest borrowers in human history. Something to consider as we worship the LORD with our giving.
128. Continuing in his discourse to the children of Israel, Moses added direction from God regarding the handling of money, along with a warning, in Deuteronomy 28.43-44:
- ⁴³ The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.
- ⁴⁴ He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.
- No wonder Proverbs 22.7 warns “the borrower is servant to the lender.” Something to consider as we worship the LORD with our giving.
129. For forty years resident idolaters anticipated the arrival of the children of Israel to possess the land promised to Abraham more than four centuries earlier, but they refused to abandon the region. Therefore, God used the Israelites to fight for the land, promising them that they could have the fruits of their victories *after* the firstfruits were given to God. They took Jericho in battle, but then lost 36 men in battle to the much smaller city of Ai. The reason? Sin. Achan took a portion of the wealth of Jericho and kept it. God was so displeased that He did not protect the Israelites against Ai. Then, when Achan’s sin was discovered, Achan and his wife and children lost their lives as punishment for the theft and cover-up. In summary, God placed Jericho’s wealth in their hands but did not want them to keep it, with innocent lives tragically affected by one man’s greed. In what subtle ways are one’s

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loved ones and other innocents affected by one individual's stubborn insistence on taking God's tithe? Something to consider as we worship the LORD with our giving.

130. In Judges chapter six, we are told that Midianite occupiers oppressed the children of Israel, prompting them to cry out to God. The angel of the LORD then appeared to a fearful man named Gideon who was hiding from the Midianites. What did Gideon do in response to the angel of the LORD appearing to him and speaking to him of future deliverance? He prepared and presented an offering, Judges 6.19-20. Are you anticipating a future deliverance? Christians certainly are anticipating a future deliverance from the presence of sin, even as our lives are to be a celebration of past deliverance from the penalty of sins and a present deliverance from the power of sins. Something to consider as we worship the LORD with our giving.
131. When preparing Gideon and his men for the battle against the Midianites, in Judges chapter 7, God greatly *reduced* the manpower available to Gideon to fight the battle ahead. That is, God *reduced* the available resources so that victory would be accounted to God and God alone. Are your resources limited? Are your numbers small? Perhaps a reduction in numbers and material resources is not always such a bad thing as a good thing, so God will be glorified by our service to Him during a time of scarcity.
132. In Judges 8.1-3, we read that though the men of Ephraim sacrificed nothing to achieve victory against the Midianites, they were offended when the victory was won without their participation. So it is with some who attend Church, are blessed by attending, are thrilled to enjoy the benefits of attending, yet give nothing and do nothing to work for the victories. Be careful, for such will react with wounded pride like the Ephraimites if they cannot rejoice as if the victory is theirs. What to do when this happens? Do what Gideon did. Give a soft answer. It is better to prepare for battle, to pray for the battle ahead, and to sacrifice to make victory possible by God's grace, so you will not be tempted to react like an Ephraimite when God gives the victory without your participation. Something to remember as we worship the Lord with our giving.
133. As Gideon and his band of men chased the Midianites, he asked for food for his men to sustain them as the drawn-out conflict proceeded. You would expect his countrymen to help him with their gifts, but they did not because the victory was not yet secured. In Judges 8.4-17, we read that Gideon warned them that he would exact revenge on them after his victory, and sure enough, he did exactly that. In our day, people will frequently withhold their gifts until they are assured of victory because they do not want to give to a lost cause. Two things: *First*, no Bible-sanctioned enterprise that seeks the salvation of the lost is ever a lost cause because Christ has already given us victory. *Second*, we never seek revenge on those who cripple our ministry by their stinginess because "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord." Something to remember as we worship the Lord with our giving.
134. Should you care to read about God's plan for giving to the poor under the Law of Moses, Ruth 2.2, reads, "Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn." This was a poor woman planning to go to a farmer's field to pick from the ground that portion of the harvest that had fallen and was left as a gift for the poor. Though given by those with greater wealth, it had to be worked for to be received by the poor. It is an example of God providing for poor people through the abundance of others. Thus, we give to God first, but we do not give to God only.
135. Reflect on gleaning, whereby the poor in Israel could follow the harvesters in a field and pick up what they had left behind. In Ruth 2.16, Boaz instructed his young field workers to "let fall also *some* of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean *them*, and rebuke her not." In

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other words, he permitted his young men to intentionally drop a portion of what they had gathered so Ruth could come along behind them to gather. He was giving to her without her realizing that he was giving to her. Christians, too, should give to the poor with discretion and subtlety.

136. In Ruth 2.17, we read of Ruth's gleanings in the field of Boaz: "So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley." Does this not sound like 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." Ruth was then receiving. However, where had she given? She gave when she stayed with her mother-in-law instead of abandoning her, when she sacrificed to obtain food for Naomi instead of fending only for herself. God is always involved in some way in this kind of giving.
137. In First Samuel chapter one, we are introduced to a Jewish woman named Hannah, who was childless, but pleaded with God for a baby. When God answered her prayer, she gave her son up for service to God and His high priest at the Tabernacle at Shiloh. In First Samuel 2.21, we read that "the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters." Can you out-give God? If one could ask Hannah, what would she have said?
138. In First Samuel 2.28, God questioned the high priest, Eli, by asking him if God had not greatly blessed him by choosing him to be the high priest and to perform the related duties of that office? Then, in the next verse, He challenged Eli, "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me...?" Imagine someone blessed of God who then dishonors God by his giving (or lack thereof) and by paying greater attention his children than to God? God does not give children to inhibit giving and worship, but to enhance giving and worship.
139. Because the high priest Eli dishonored God in giving sacrifices and by honoring his sons more than he honored God, "the LORD God of Israel" said in First Samuel 2.30, "... them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Something every mom and dad should remember in their priorities of parenting and in this matter of giving.
140. When the prophet Samuel was a child the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines and held for seven months. During that time God afflicted the Philistines with emerods, known to us as hemorrhoids. To put their troubles behind them, the Philistines put the Ark on a cart drawn by two milk cows, along with a trespass offering consisting of a golden mouse and a golden hemorrhoid representing each of the five Philistine cities, First Samuel 6. Imagine such a thing. Are you as glad as I am that God wants no trespass offering from us, but that the precious blood of Jesus Christ is our trespass offering? Thus, we do not give offerings to appease God or to atone for our sins, but to worship God in Spirit and in truth.
141. In First Samuel 13.9, we read that King Saul, waiting seven days for the prophet/priest Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice for him, grew impatient and offered a sacrifice himself. For that presumptuous sin, Samuel informed King Saul that his kingdom would not continue, which is to say his heir would not succeed him as king, verses 13-14. Thank God we are priests of God as believers in Jesus Christ, and we can give our gifts to God without the requirement of waiting for any priest to engage in this aspect of our worship.

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142. King Saul presumptuously offered a sacrifice, usurping the office of the priesthood, for which sin God would not permit his heirs to succeed him as king. In First Samuel 15.18, God sent King Saul and his soldiers “on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.” However, Saul spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, as well as the best of the flocks and herds, supposedly to later offer to God as sacrifices. In response to King Saul’s attempt to explain his disobedience to God’s command, Samuel uttered a timeless principle, in First Samuel 15.22: “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as *great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.” Not that anyone should obey instead of giving offerings, but that the overarching principle in all our worship, even in our giving, is obedience. “For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.”
143. When the prophet Samuel anointed David to succeed King Saul in response to Saul’s disobedience regarding the Amalekites, David became a fugitive no doubt known to all in the land for his defeat of Goliath, for his prowess as a warrior against the Philistines, and for being anointed as Saul’s successor. Therefore, when David’s men suggested that Nabal give them food for safeguarding his flocks, you can imagine the outrage when Nabal answered, “Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* unto men, whom I know not whence they *be*?” First Samuel 25.10-11. Nabal’s response is an example of refusing to give honor to whom honor was due. First Timothy chapter five teaches that honor is shown in the form of material gifts. Here we see Nabal refusing to honor David with material gifts. Those who give material gifts to God are honoring Him.
144. Nabal was a shepherd whose flocks were protected by David’s men; even while David was a fugitive from King Saul, yet Nabal refused to honor David for protecting his flocks. In First Samuel 25.17, one of Nabal’s servants described him as “a son of Belial” for endangering them all by dishonoring David and provoking his wrath. Those who refuse to honor God never consider the opinions of them held by God-fearing people. Nabal’s man thought him a fool for refusing to give to David. How greater is a fool who refuses to give to God?
145. In First Samuel 25, we read of David’s fury toward a foolish man named Nabal for refusing to honor him with an appropriate gift for protecting his flocks from pilferage. An enraged David was determined to avenge the insult until Nabal’s wife, Abigail, approached David and pleaded on behalf of her husband. I wonder how many godly women plead to God on behalf of their foolish husbands’ insults toward God by refusing to give Him what is due Him in tithes and offerings?
146. We know God anointed Saul to be Israel’s first king, and that King Saul abused his position by usurping the priesthood and offering a sacrifice himself, and also disobeyed with the matter of the Amalekites. Those two misuses of office disqualified Saul from reigning as king, and resulted in the loss of his kingdom and the loss of his heir succeeding him. What Saul also forfeited because of his repeated disobedience was a loss of communion with God, so much so that when he sought God’s guidance there was no response, First Samuel 28.6: “... when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” First Corinthians 9.27 reveals that Paul avoided by all means such a thing happening to him, where he wrote, “But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself

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should be a castaway.” What God gives to you He wants used to give back to Him, by means of worship, by means of service, by means of sacrifice, and by means of material possessions.

147. In the days before David became king over Israel, the Philistines attacked the city of Ziklag and took hostage the families of David and his men. So angry were David’s men that they spoke of stoning him for not making sure their families were not better protected, “but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God,” First Samuel 30.6. Of the 600 men with David, 200 were so faint from prolonged fighting that they could not accompany him in the rescue of their loved ones, so they stayed behind. When the rescue was completed and spoils were taken from the enemy, some of David’s 400 men who fought did not want to share what they had taken from the enemy with the 200 who had stayed behind. However, David ruled, “as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was *so* from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day,” First Samuel 30.24-25. This principle, that those who tarry by the stuff have equal share in the bounty with those who take part in the actual battle has been understood by missionaries to apply to those of you in Churches who give financially to support missionaries serving on foreign fields. Thus, you who give to missions may play a different role than missionaries, but both you and the missionaries are a part of the same team effort to reach the lost for Christ.
148. Most people are familiar with the tragedy of David’s adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah to cover up his adultery because of her pregnancy. Please consider the occasion when the prophet Nathan confronted David about the sins he had covered up. He told a story about a wealthy man with many flocks and herds taking a single ewe from a poor man to feed one of his guests, Second Samuel 12.4. The story infuriated David’s sense of justice, having grown up in poverty. This left him open to Nathan’s charge, “Thou *art* the man,” verse 7. Because of the drama of the confrontation, most people overlook the underlying injustice that Nathan rested his story on to expose David’s sin. It was the inherent injustice of giving someone what is not yours by first taking it from someone else. This not only angered David but was the underlying basis for his great sins, taking another man’s wife and then another man’s life to further his own ends. When you give to God, or when you give to someone else, what you give should first be yours and not another’s, a principle of justice that seems lost to many in our day.
149. Sometimes it takes courage and manliness to be a faithful giver. Just after he reminded the Corinthians about the offering to be taken up on the first day of the week, in First Corinthians 16.2, in verse 13 the Apostle Paul urged his readers to “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Let me now read to you an account of the kind of man Paul may have had on his mind when he wrote those words, from an account of one of David’s mighty men: “The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time,” Second Samuel 23.8. Yes, sometimes it takes real courage to do right.
150. Sometimes it takes courage and manliness to be a faithful giver. Just after he reminded the Corinthians about the offering to be taken up on the first day of the week, in First Corinthians 16.2, in verse 13 the Apostle Paul urged his readers to “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Let me read to you an account of the kind of man Paul may have had on his mind when he wrote those words, from an account of one of David’s mighty men: “And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the

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Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil,” Second Samuel 23.9-10. Our Church has members with courage and manliness to do right.

151. Sometimes it takes courage and manliness to be a faithful giver. Just after he reminded the Corinthians about the offering to be taken up on the first day of the week, in First Corinthians 16.2, in verse 13 the Apostle Paul urged his readers to “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Let me read to you an account of the kind of man Paul may have had on his mind when he wrote those words, from an account of one of David’s mighty men: “And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory,” Second Samuel 23.11-12.
152. Sometimes it takes courage and manliness to be a faithful giver. Just after he reminded the Corinthians about the offering to be taken up on the first day of the week, in First Corinthians 16.2, in verse 13 the Apostle Paul urged his readers to “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Let me read to you an account of the kind of man Paul may have had on his mind when he wrote those words, from an account of one of David’s mighty men: “And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, *and slew them*,” Second Samuel 23.18.
153. Sometimes it takes courage and manliness to be a faithful giver. Just after he reminded the Corinthians about the offering to be taken up on the first day of the week, in First Corinthians 16.2, in verse 13 the Apostle Paul urged his readers to “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Let me read to you an account of the kind of man Paul may have had on his mind when he wrote those words, from an account of one of David’s mighty men: “And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow: And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, and slew him with his own spear. These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men,” Second Samuel 23.20-22.
154. Consider what King David said to Araunah when the Jebusite offered to give him the threshing floor he wanted to purchase as the site on which the Temple would later be built, Second Samuel 24.24: “And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.” Fifty shekels of silver was a great deal of money. Yet David had rather pay a great deal of money than to obtain the threshing floor as a gift. He knew that any gift given to the LORD was meaningful only if it cost you.
155. When it came time to build the Temple in Jerusalem, we see in First Kings 5 that Solomon’s desire to give such a thing to the LORD was met by Hiram the king of Tyre’s desire to give to Solomon the materials and skilled craftsmen needed to accomplish the task, because of the love he had for Solomon’s father, David. The principle illustrated, of course, is found in Luke 6.38, where the Lord Jesus said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together,

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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.” Something to remember as we worship the Lord with our giving.

156. Ever wonder why the Queen of Sheba, when she heard of King Solomon’s fame, “gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon,” First Kings 10.10? Because the lesser always gives to the greater. Something to remember when we worship the LORD with our tithes and offerings.

157. First Kings 10.24-25 records how King Solomon was honored:

²⁴ And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

²⁵ And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

Dare we honor God less than men respectfully honored King Solomon? Something to remember as we worship the LORD with our tithes and offerings.

158. In First Kings chapter 17, we read of Elijah’s prediction of drought in Israel and of his approach to a widow in Zarephath, asking her for water and a morsel of bread. She responded by informing the man of God that she had planned for her and her son to eat the last of their food before they starved. Elijah told her to go ahead and do what she had planned, after preparing food for him to eat. He then spoke these words, in First Kings 17.14: “For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.” The lesson here is not to feed the prophet first and then feed yourself. The lesson is that God is a God of miracles, and He can provide for you even during times of great scarcity, as He provided for that widow and her son. Have no fear of obeying God.

159. In First Chronicles chapter 13, we read of an incident that troubles many who read of it. King David consulted with the military leaders who had fought with him about returning the Ark of the Covenant from where it had been since it was returned by the Philistines after they captured it. It was moved using an ox cart, and when the oxen stumbled a man named Uzza put forth his hand and touched the Ark that he might steady it. God was displeased, First Chronicles 13.10, and He smote Uzza dead. Three things strike me about this entire episode: *First*, the impression is given that David consulted with military leaders when thinking of moving the Ark, but did not seek the counsel of the priests. *Second*, the Ark was carried on a cart, when God had decreed it was to be born on men’s shoulders by means of long poles. *Third*, Uzza touched the Ark when God had forbidden anyone to touch it, and it cost him his life. What connection does this have to do with worshiping God through giving? It shows us that God not only wants what He wants done, but He also wants what He wants done His way. Something worth remembering as we worship the LORD with our giving.

160. Remember the death of Uzza for touching the Ark of the Covenant to steady it as it was being carried on a cart when the oxen stumbled. Of course, the Ark was always to be born on the shoulders of Levites. That was in First Chronicles 13. In First Chronicles 15.2, King David said, “None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God.” David did learn to do God’s will God’s way. Sad, though, that someone else had to die for David to learn. Let us remember when we worship the LORD with our giving that sometimes others will pay a price for you learning to do God’s will God’s way. Something to remember as we worship the LORD with our giving.

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161. One can worship God in a variety of ways. In a Church service, we seek to worship the LORD through prayer, singing, giving, and Bible preaching. You can also worship God elsewhere, with your family and as an individual. But not everyone will support your worship of God, with some actively opposing your worship. First Chronicles 15.29 records David worshiping God by publicly rejoicing, as well as his wife's opinion in front of others about her husband's worship of God: "And it came to pass, *as* the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart." She did that in front of witnesses. You must consider that your worship of God will sometimes be opposed, even by family members. Recognize it for what it is, deal with it, and worship God anyway. Allow no one to stop you from worshiping God.
162. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant a cart was used and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered up to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.8: "Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people." You help to make known His deeds among the people when you give to the cause of Christ and thereby finance the spreading of the Gospel message.
163. The first time King David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered up to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.12: "Remember the marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth." When you give you enable those sent forth by your gifts to remember God's marvellous works, which is to say that His marvellous works are recounted and rehearsed to others.
164. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse from the psalm of thanks David offered the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.23: "Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation." To be sure, showing forth His salvation daily includes openly living the Christian life in front of others. However, it also includes financing the spread of the Gospel message by proclamation of the truth to those who have never heard.
165. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered up to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.24: "Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvelous works among all nations." How are you to do this in places you cannot go but by sending missionaries and supporting the advance of the Gospel ministry elsewhere by your giving?

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166. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.28: "Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength." Let us not be dishonest with this verse. The word "give" found twice in this verse does not refer to giving money or sacrifices, but to ascribing glory and strength to the LORD. This occurs when the glorious Gospel of God's grace is preached to the multitudes. However, that occurs only when you give so Gospel proclaimers, such as missionaries, can be sent.
167. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered up to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.29: "Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." Notice how this verse brings together ascribing to God the glory to His name that is His due with bringing to Him an offering when you come before Him and worship Him in the beauty of His holiness. I submit to you that supposedly ascribing to God the glory due His name and supposedly worshiping Him in the beauty of His holiness is little more than pretense so long as one consciously withholds an offering when he pretends to come before Him.
168. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered up to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.31: "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let *men* say among the nations, The LORD reigneth." How will the nations know to say "The LORD reigneth" unless each of us gives to send missionaries to tell them?
169. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered up to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.34: "O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever." Do you believe such an expression of thanks to the LORD consists only of words, even words uttered in prayer? I am persuaded God's Word does not support such a cheap concept of expressing thanks. Remember, these words were written by the same David who indicated that he would never give to God that which cost him nothing. I believe that real expressions of thanks to God are so only when gifts accompany them.
170. The first time David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant, a cart was used, and a priest named Uzzah was struck dead by God for touching the Ark to keep it from falling off the cart when the oxen pulling it stumbled. At the expense of a man's life, David learned to do it the way God commanded, and the Ark was finally and successfully moved. Following is a verse taken from the psalm of thanks David offered up to the LORD when that was done, First Chronicles 16.35: "And say ye, Save us, O

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God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, *and* glory in thy praise.” How will people know to say these words and to glory in God’s praise unless we send with our giving missionaries to tell them?

171. After David’s rule over Israel was established, his heart desired to construct a permanent place of worship to replace the Tabernacle crafted centuries before when the Israelites were at the foot of Mount Sinai. However, God told David through the prophet Nathan, “Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in,” First Chronicles 17.4. Therefore, it is established in God’s Word that there are times when one’s desire to worship God by giving something to Him from one’s heart cannot be fulfilled. Thankfully, God takes a desire of the heart to do as if the deed had been done. Something to remember as we worship the LORD with our giving.
172. Sometimes, people will question your motivation for giving. To be sure, giving should never be demonstrative to attract attention. However, sometimes others will observe and question your motives, as we find in First Chronicles 19 when David attempted to honor a young king following his father’s death. The young king’s advisors completely misread David’s intentions, and a war ensued. However, the point I seek to make is that there are occasions when your gift, even your gift to the LORD, may be misread by others. Not to worry. Keep your focus on the Lord, and do not overly concern yourself with those who try to judge other people’s motives.
173. First Chronicles 21.1 informs us that Satan provoked David to number the men of Israel. The rightness or wrongness of that aside for now, consider the fact that Satan can provoke a man known for his spirituality to do something God does not want him to do. Now, apply what we have learned to worship God through giving. We know God wants His creatures to worship Him through giving. This truth is found all through the Bible. God wants you to, but Satan does not want you to. Something to consider as we worship the LORD through our giving.
174. Satan provoked David to number Israel. God sent a plague for that sin. One thing led to another, and David purchased Ornan’s threshing floor on Mount Moriah to be the future site of the Temple. However, when he sought to buy it, Ornan, fearing the mighty warrior David, offered to give him the site. Listen to David’s response in First Chronicles 21.24: “I will not take *that* which *is* thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.” What did David mean? Two things: *First*, you give to God only what is yours. *Then*, you do not give to God what costs you nothing. For it to be worship, it has to cost you.
175. Most people who are familiar with King Solomon know that shortly after his father, King David, died and he became the king, God asked him what he wanted. In response to his request, God gave him both wisdom and wealth, Second Chronicles 1.7. However, attention should be paid to the preceding verse: “And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it.” That means God asked Solomon what he wanted *while* he was worshiping God by giving to God. If God knows you will glorify Him with something, He will give you that something. We must remember that principle when we worship the LORD with our giving.
176. In Second Chronicles 6.33, we have a portion of Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the Temple he built after his father died, including the phrase “that all people of the earth may know thy name.” Solomon’s desire reflected God’s desire, which is still His desire and is a key reason why we give to the cause of Christ. We seek to make Christ’s name known among the nations.

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177. When Solomon became the king of Israel, God gave him matchless wisdom and wealth. When the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, she visited him and gave the richest man in the world an abundance of gold and precious stones, Second Chronicles 9.9. Why did the Queen of Sheba give so much to the man who passed all the kings of the earth in riches, Second Chronicles 9.22? She gave to Solomon because the lesser honors the greater by giving him gifts, which principle is true with God. We honor Him as greater by giving Him gifts.
178. In Second Chronicles 16.9, we read, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him." Is it not a great encouragement to do right to know that the LORD knows because He sees your obedience in this matter of giving and that He will show Himself strong on your behalf?
179. Judah's King Uzziah began to reign when he was sixteen years old, and he did that which was right in the sight of God... until he transgressed by offering incense on the altar of incense in the Temple of the LORD, Second Chronicles 26.16. Only priests were permitted to worship the LORD in this way. Even as the priests were restraining Uzziah from usurping their office in this way, the leprosy that God smote him with began to cover his body. Uzziah's leprosy required his isolation until the day of his death. God does not take kindly to anyone worshiping him according to their desires. Worship of God is *for* God and must be given *to* God in the manner He prescribes.
180. King Uzziah was stricken with leprosy for daring to worship God in a manner forbidden to all but priests, and was quarantined from others for the rest of his life. In Second Chronicles 27.2, we read of his successor, his son King Jotham, who "did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD." His father worshiped improperly, and God dealt with him about it, yet the son focused on God's response and not his father's sin that prompted God's response. This shows the danger to your children when you do not worship God properly. Children typically side with their parents (who are sometimes wrong) against God (who is always right). Do you want that? Something to consider as you worship the LORD with your giving.
181. Uzziah was a godly king who stopped worshiping God when he greatly sinned. His son Jotham was a good and moral king, yet he never worshiped God in the Temple. His son, Ahaz, worshiped idols and burnt his children in the fire, Second Chronicles 28.3. Notice the generational decline. A father might think that how he worships God with his giving is an isolated practice that does not affect others. I submit that it has a lasting impact on your children and grandchildren. Something to consider as you worship the LORD with your giving.
182. In Second Chronicles 29, Hezekiah became king and restored the worship of God. At his direction, the people entered the house of God once more, bowed their heads again, sang praises with gladness, and brought in offerings. People were supposed to have been doing those things for a long time, but they began doing those things at that time. Perhaps today is such a day of beginning to worship God rightly again. Something to remember as we worship the LORD with our giving.
183. Second Chronicles 30 records the people worshiping God in a manner not prescribed by the Law of Moses. However, the reason was that they had not worshiped for so long that they staggered somewhat in their compliance. However, King Hezekiah recognized that God accepted their intent as good as the act, and spoke comfortably to those who would teach the people how to obey God. The lesson to learn? If your heart is inclined to worship God, worship God as best you can and improve your worship in the future.

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184. Giving is one aspect of worshiping God. However, the motives for worshiping God by giving will vary. Sometimes, the motive is gratitude, such as when the people brought many gifts to the LORD following His defeat of the Assyrians surrounding Jerusalem in Second Chronicles 29.23. Think about God's intervention. One hundred eighty-five thousand enemy soldiers were slain in the night to spare the holy city. Perhaps God has delivered you in some way. Would not a gift to honor Him as an act of gratitude be appropriate? Something to consider as we worship the LORD with our giving.
185. You may remember evil King Manasseh, who succeeded his father, Hezekiah, at the age of 12 and then grew up to be Judah's most wicked king, sacrificing his children to false gods. God was merciful to that wicked man and brought him to repentance, at which time Manasseh gave offerings to the LORD, Second Chronicles 33.16. If a most wicked man like that can end up worshiping the LORD with gifts, what is to be said of those who continue to withhold their worship of God by giving? Something to be mindful of as we worship the LORD with our giving.
186. King Manasseh was very wicked for many years before humbling himself, worshiping the LORD, and giving to Him. Tragically, his son Amon's formative years were during his father's wicked years. By the time Manasseh repented of his sins and began worshiping God Amon had reached adulthood. When his father died and he became the king, his wickedness was such that his servants conspired against him and assassinated him, Second Chronicles 33.24. The principle? What your children learn from you when they are young, they may never outgrow or overcome, even if you repent of your sins. Therefore, worship God now, while your children are young, including worship God with your giving.
187. In Second Chronicles 36.9, we are told that "Jehoiachin *was* eight years old when he began to reign" as king over Judah. We are told in the same verse that "he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD." As we approach the worship of God by means of our giving, observe that God takes note of the sins of even those who are only eight years old. Something to remember as you train your children to worship God employing praise and prayer, and through preaching and giving."
188. In fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy, the Jewish people had been in captivity for seventy years when "the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia," Ezra 1.1. Cyrus' proclamation stated two things: *First*, Jewish people were permitted to return from captivity to rebuild the Temple. *Second*, those who remained were directed to give offerings, Ezra 1.4. Imagine that. A Gentile king directing God's people to give to advance His cause. Something to remember as we worship through our giving.
189. Ezra chapter 3 chronicles the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem from seventy years of captivity. Verses 2-5 record the construction of an altar, the offering of sacrifices, and the keeping of the feast of tabernacles, made possible by "every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD." It is worshiping God by means of giving that the worship of God by other means is made possible.
190. Though freewill offerings enabled worship for the people who returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity by other means possible, they still had no Temple. Ezra 3.7 informs us that they also gave money to rebuild the Temple. Their gifts having been given, and their labor having been fruitful, "all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid," Ezra 3.11. Sometimes more is needed than the amount required to maintain worship.

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191. In Ezra chapter 7, we read that the Persian king, Artaxerxes, granted permission to the exiled Jews to return with gold and silver to Jerusalem to worship God. He also authorized up to “an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt” be provided for the reconstruction of the Temple, Ezra 7.22. His reasoning is found in verse 23: “for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?” Is it not amazing that a pagan ruler would be more concerned about the wrath of God for failing to worship Him than some who claim to be His people?
192. Concerning the matter of the separation of church and state, notice what Artaxerxes decreed in Ezra 7.24: “we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.” Thus, the Persian ruler prohibited any interference by Persians in the worship of God. What a blessing that would be in our day.
193. After the Jewish people were taken into captivity for seventy years, a wave of immigration returned from Babylon back to the Promised Land during Nehemiah’s time, when Jerusalem lay in ruins and neglect. Nehemiah 11.2 reads, “And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.” Recognize that a significant aspect of worship involves living where God wants you to live to bear witness to Him to the surrounding people.
194. In Nehemiah 13.11, Nehemiah asked, “Why is the house of God forsaken?” As we prepare to worship the LORD with our giving, let each of us do our part, as if Nehemiah would have directed his question to us, and how we would have answered him.
195. Though we recognize the principle of honoring the LORD with the firstfruits of our increase as the guideline for our giving, we sometimes falter in executing our heartfelt beliefs. Just how far should one go in this matter of faith? Job reminds us in Job 13.15: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Is there a part of the Christian’s life where that principle does not apply?
196. When the patriarch Job was afflicted with boils and greatly suffered, his friend Bildad wrongly accused him of secret sins. Among Job’s responses to Bildad, we find this statement in Job 9.4: “who hath hardened *himself* against him [God], and hath prospered?” This question is fair to consider as we give our tithes and offerings.
197. Job’s inspired response to the erroneous accusations of his friend, Bildad, includes this comment in Job 9.32-33:
- ³² For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.
³³ Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.
- We give our tithes and offerings because what Job truthfully said thousands of years ago is no longer valid. We now have a daysman who stands between us and God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our charter is to make His name known worldwide so sinners can be reconciled to God by this same Jesus.
198. Responding to a false accusation made by his friend Zophar the Naamathite, the suffering patriarch Job defended himself in Job 13.16 when he said concerning God, “He also *shall be* my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.” Since hypocrisy is in part pretending to give to God when you do not, or to pretend there is no duty to honor Him with the first fruits of your increase when there is, this comment is among those everyone should be mindful of when comes the time for giving tithes and offerings to God.

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199. When the patriarch Job was afflicted with boils and suffered so greatly, his friends mistook the cause of his suffering to be a personal sin rather than testing from God because he was so godly. However, Job's friends were not mistaken about everything. In Job 22.26-27, Eliphaz described what happens should Job repent: "For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows." Though Eliphaz was mistaken about the condition of Job's relationship with God, he was right about what happens when repentance occurs. You do delight in the Almighty. You do lift your face unto God. You do make your prayer unto Him. He does hear you. And you will pay your vows, meaning you will resume giving offerings to Him. All these things accompany repentance.
200. Though written as Hebrew poetry, with no attempt to portray the truth in a technical or scientific way, notice how Job clearly acknowledges the existence of interstellar space and our world's place in it more than 3,000 years ago, in Job 26.7: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, *and* hangeth the earth upon nothing." However, not only does Job declare God's omnipotence and creation of the immense, but also the small ("his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo, these *are* parts of his ways," verses 13-14). He is the God of the infinite and as well as the infinitesimal. Thus, the great cause of Christ is affected and influenced by the giving of a solitary Christian, by your giving.
201. In Job 33.4, the suffering patriarch Job declared, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." True not only of him, but of each of us. Is it not, therefore, reasonable for we His creatures to honor the Almighty with the first fruits of our increase?
202. Though Job's friends were convinced his terrible suffering resulted from some secret sin, Job protested in Job 33.9 when he said, "I *am* clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither *is there* iniquity in me." Was he claiming sinlessness? Certainly not. However, he insisted that his suffering was not chastisement for secret sins he was committing, and we know he was faithful in giving his offerings. However, the suffering saint who withholds his giving does not know that his suffering is not because he is not giving. Sometimes suffering is corrective, though in Job's case, that was not the reason for his affliction.
203. In Psalm 5.2, we read the pleading of David: "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray." After reading that, can you imagine David praying to God and expecting Him to hearken unto the voice of his cry after he had refused to honor God with his tithes and offerings? No? Neither can I. God does not reward disobedience. Something for you to consider as we prepare to collect God's tithes and our offerings.
204. As we prepare to give our tithes and offerings to the Lord, keep something in mind. It is clearly wrong not to give God the first fruits of your increase and offerings. That understood, listen to Psalm 5.4: "For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee." A serious matter to consider as we worship God with our giving.
205. Psalm 5.5 reads, "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity." The Hebrew word for iniquity strictly means nothingness, and by extension wickedness since doing wrongly is really doing nothing of benefit. Thus, someone who does nothing of benefit rather than give to God His tithe and offerings besides is a worker of iniquity. David wrote by inspiration of the Spirit that God hates all workers of iniquity. Something to keep in mind as we give tithes and offerings to the LORD.

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206. Let me clear up two misconceptions before we collect God's tithes and our offerings to Him. First, everyone knows that God loves everyone. Does He? Second, everyone knows that it does not really matter if you tithe and give offerings or not. It doesn't? Psalm 5.5 reads, "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity." Unless the inspired prophet David was wrong, God does not love everyone. It also matters if you tithe and give offerings to God.
207. One of the reasons our Church is so strongly committed to evangelism is our concern for God and also for the wicked. In Psalm 7.11, David wrote, "God is angry *with the wicked* every day." Numbered among the wicked would certainly be those who refuse God the honor that is due Him in giving Him His tithes and our offerings. As we honor the LORD, let us prayerfully remember the judgment that awaits those who do not so honor Him.
208. In Psalm 8.1, David writes, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens." It is our privilege at this time to honor Him with the first fruits of our increase, Who is so deserving of our respect and worship.
209. Psalm 8.3-5:
- ³ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
 - ⁴ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
 - ⁵ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

One reason we take time to give God our tithes and offerings is gratitude for the place He has given to us in His creation.

210. From a psalm of David, Psalm 9.17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God." Mr. Spurgeon said about this verse, "The justice which has punished the wicked, and preserved the righteous, remains the same, and therefore in days to come, retribution will surely be meted out. How solemn is Ps 9:17, especially in its warning to forgetters of God. The moral who are not devout, the honest who are not prayerful, the benevolent who are not believing, the amiable who are not converted, these must all have their own portion with the openly wicked in the hell which is prepared for the devil and his angels. There are whole nations of such; the forgetters of God are far more numerous than the profane or profligate, and according to the very forceful expression of the Hebrew, the nethermost hell will be the place into which all of them shall be hurled headlong. Forgetfulness seems a small sin, but it brings eternal wrath upon the man who lives and dies in it."
211. There are many reasons why someone withholds God's tithes and refuses to give an offering. Listen, as I read Psalm 10.3: "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth." If greed, which is one aspect of covetousness, is the reason someone refuses to tithe, know that the LORD abhors him. Abhor, here, meaning to despise.
212. Have you ever wondered what kind of person never seems to give thought to giving God his tithe? Psalm 10.4 may shed some light: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after* God: God *is* not in all his thoughts." That would be someone described in God's Word as both wicked and proud.
213. Psalm 10.11 gives us a glimpse into the heart of those who are wicked, who will not honor God with the first fruits of their increase: "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*." Such a person thinks God forgets his sins, does not pay attention to his sins, or is

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unaware of his sins. Of course, such a person is tragically and grievously mistaken. God remembers all, attends to all, and sees all.

214. Psalm 10.13 provides another glimpse into the heart of the wicked man who dishonors the LORD by withholding the first fruits of his increase: “Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.” The word condemn means to provoke. The wicked person provokes God by saying in his heart, and thereby convincing himself, that God does not require what God most certainly does require, which is to be honored.
215. As we prepare to take up tithes and offerings, listen to the words of David in Psalm 11.5: “The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked... his soul hateth.” Will God put you in a place where giving the tithe and offerings is difficult to do? Yes. That is when the LORD is trying you, to put on display your faith and your love for Him. However, those who are wicked, His soul hateth. What a contrast between those who give and those who hold on to what He has placed into their hands.
216. Psalm 25.12 reads, “What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.” The man that fears the LORD is taught in the way that God chooses. That makes sense, does it not? The God-fearing man is teachable. Do you suppose the God-fearing man will be taught by God to honor Him with the first fruits of his income? Do you suppose a God-fearing man will be one who tithes and gives offerings? A topic worthy of discussion with your friends.
217. When he was a fugitive, slandered by his enemies, isolated from his parents, and unable to worship at the tabernacle, young David anticipated his deliverance and the opportunity to, according to Psalm 27.6, “offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy” and “sing praises unto the LORD.” Perhaps affliction is brought upon a child of God for him to gauge his spirituality. When you are troubled by your enemies, cut off from your family, and unable to gather for worship with the brethren, to what does your mind turn? Does it turn to a time when you anticipate giving an offering? Does it turn to a time when you anticipate singing praises unto the LORD? It would be a good thing, would it not, if that is where your mind and heart fled for comfort during times of affliction?
218. Psalm 37.16 shows the relationship of the righteous to material possessions and the relationship of the unrighteous to material possessions: “A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.” Something to reflect on as you return to God His tithe and as you give to God your offerings.
219. In Psalm 37.21, David pointed out the difference between the unrighteous taker and the righteous giver: “The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.” Something to think about as we prepare to take up our offering.
220. In Psalm 42.2, the inspired psalmist asked, “when shall I come and appear before God?” You realize that you will someday appear before God, do you not? It may be at the judgment of the Great Day. On that day the books wherein are recorded your thoughts and deeds will be opened and you will be judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to your works. It is a sobering fact, is it not? Something to think about as we prepare for collecting God’s tithe and your offerings.
221. People sometimes think Christians, by our giving, believe we can buy our way into God’s good graces. Psalm 49.6-9 should disabuse anyone of that wrong notion:
- 6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
7 None of *them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:
8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

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⁹ That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

To redeem is to deliver someone by paying something on their behalf. God's Word teaches that giving money to God *does not* redeem anyone. Thus, we do not give tithes and offerings to bribe God's favor toward us. There is another principle at work when a Christian gives.

222. Psalm 49.6-9 is very clear in showing that wealth and riches are of no use in providing redemption for someone. However, do not wrongly conclude that redemption is not possible. Psalm 49.15 does declare, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah." Redemption is possible. However, it is not for sale to a rich man for the price of an offering.
223. Psalm 50.14 begins with the words, "Offer unto God thanksgiving." This suggests that offerings are as much demonstrations of gratitude to God as they are acts of worship. And do we who worship God with our giving not have much to be thankful for? Thus, there are layered reasons for giving to the cause of Christ. On one level, there is the motive of glorifying God. On another layer, there is the motive of worshiping God. On this layer, there is the motive of expressing gratitude to God. And there is always the motive of giving to advance the Gospel of God.
224. Psalm 54 tells of David as a fugitive from King Saul, on the run from the man determined to take his life. Though he experienced terror and great difficulty, notice his words in verse six: "I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for *it is* good." Notice that, despite his situation, David was resolutely determined to both give and worship, "I will freely sacrifice unto thee," and "I will praise thy name." David is an example to us all during our seasons of great distress.
225. In Psalm 66, the psalmist opened with joyful singing, voicing God's terrible (meaning awe-inspiring) works, and the prediction that someday all the earth will worship Him. He then called upon his readers to bless our God, to make the voice of His praise to be heard, and announced, "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay my vows," verse 13. "I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams: I will offer bullocks with goats," verse 15. The psalm closes, "Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me." Do you see how praising God, worshiping God, giving offerings to God, and prayers offered to God and answered by God, all fit together? God's people do not live our lives on a buffet line, picking and choosing what and what not. It all fits together in the lives of God's children. Something to consider as we give our tithes and offerings.
226. In Psalm 67.1-2 we read these words:
- ¹ God be merciful unto us, and bless us; *and* cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.
² That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

What is not found in this passage is what is declared so often in other places in God's Word, how God's way comes to be known upon earth and His saving health reaches the nations; the gifts offered by God's people to get the Gospel message out.

227. Psalm 78 speaks of the forty years of wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel, before they entered the Promised Land. We know they tempted God again and again during that time. I read verse 19: "Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Does that sound to you much like the person who justifies withholding his offerings with the claim he does not have enough money to give? Something to consider concerning this important issue in the lives of God's people.

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228. In Psalm 78.20, the psalmist reminds the reader that God can provide for His people: “Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?” Despite God’s miracles of provision, the people still questioned God’s ability to provide for them. When times are lean, God has been known to test His children to show them their level of trust, the strength of their faith to give.

229. In their wilderness wanderings after the Exodus, the children of Israel doubted God’s provision for them. Therefore, He provided abundantly. I read Psalm 78.22-32:

- 22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:
- 23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,
- 24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.
- 25 Man did eat angels’ food: he sent them meat to the full.
- 26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.
- 27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:
- 28 And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.
- 29 So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;
- 30 They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,
- 31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.
- 32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.

We previously saw that God tested His people to see if they trusted Him with little. Here we see that because they did not trust Him when they had little He gave them abundance, but the abundance He gave to them was a curse to them and not a blessing.

230. I call the prayer of Moses in Psalm 90.10-12 to your attention. He wrote,

- 10 The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
- 11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so *is* thy wrath.
- 12 So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.

Do you think a person whose days are numbered, who wants to be taught to number his days so that he may apply his heart to wisdom, will reflect on giving to God His tithe and offerings besides? If wisdom reflects good decisions based upon available information, I would answer in the affirmative.

231. As we prepare for the offering, have you ever wondered why we have time set aside in worship to give offerings? Allow me to answer in part with a wonderful verse that reveals only one of the reasons why we give. It is because we can think of no better way of seeing come to pass what we think all of God’s creatures should do. In Psalm 96.1, we find these glorious words:

“O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.”

232. As we prepare for the offering, have you ever wondered why we set aside time in worship to collect offerings? Allow me to answer in part with a wonderful verse that reveals in part why we give. It is because we can think of no better way of seeing come to pass what we think all of God’s creatures should do. In Psalm 96.2, we find these glorious words:

“Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.”

233. As we prepare for the offering, have you ever wondered why we set aside time in worship to collect offerings? Allow me to answer in part with a wonderful verse that reveals in part why we give. It is

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because the Gospel ministry is best advanced abroad by the giving of God's people. In Psalm 96.3 we find what is done by those our gifts send to the far reaches of the world:

"Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."

234. Psalm 96.4 reads: "For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised: he *is* to be feared above all gods." The question, of course, is how are spiritually darkened pagans to know that the LORD is great, or that He is to be greatly praised and feared above all gods (who, after all, are false gods at best)? Servants of God are to be sent to tell them, to declare the good news that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. That is the Great Commission and that is why we give... so others may live.
235. In Psalm 96.6, we read these words: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker." While sinners can only come to Christ with empty hands for salvation, saints must be careful not to always come before the LORD with hands empty of offerings to give Him.
236. In Psalm 96.7, we read these words: "Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength." That is, ascribe to Him glory and strength. Let me urge you to ascribe to the LORD glory and strength as we give.
237. In Psalm 96.8, we read, "Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto* his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts." That should be the pattern of our worship, to give God the glory due His name, to bring an offering, and to come into His courts.
238. Psalm 96.9 reads, "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." Key to a right understanding of this verse are the words holiness and fear. Understand that God is holy and He demands both holy conduct and an attitude of reverent fear from His creatures. We give offerings and reach out to those around us with the Gospel message. While this world descends into a spiritual pit of denying that evil is evil, we pray and give and go to lovingly woo the lost to Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
239. In Psalm 96.13, we are told, "Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." Should we warn our neighbors that God is coming to judge the world with righteousness? We ought to. Others before us gave so that we might be warned. That is one reason we give to the cause of Christ.
240. Psalm 105.1 reads, "O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people." That is one reason why we give our tithes and offerings on Sunday, to make known God's deeds among the people. What better use of money is there than making known God's deeds among the people?
241. Psalm 105.2 reads, "Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works." The question, of course, is who we talk to of all God's wondrous works. Just ourselves, or others as well? One reason we give to the cause of Christ is to finance our worldwide effort to talk of all God's wondrous works in the hearing of those who have never before heard of Him.
242. Psalm 105.3: "Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD." Some have recognized in nature the existence of a Creator and began in their own feeble way to seek Him. Rather than waiting for them to come to us, we give to reach out with the Gospel to meet them as they are coming to us who seek the LORD.
243. The 119th Psalm has for its subject the Word of God, identified by a variety of terms, such as statutes, precepts, testimonies, law, commandments, and so forth. In Psalm 119.72, we find this statement:

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“The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.” How is this verse to be understood? Sometimes individuals find themselves at a place of decision, whether to give in obedience to God’s Word, here identified as “the law of thy mouth,” or to disobey God by clinging to the money in your possession, concluding that your gold and silver is better than is obeying God. The psalmist declared that such is not the case. Obedience to God’s Word is a better thing than gold and silver in your possession that God would have you give to advance His cause.

244. In Psalm 119.108, we read, “Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.” I suppose some accept that God would be pleased with a worshiper saying nice words about Him without any corresponding gift of material value. However, I am reminded of Second Samuel 24.24, where David, searching for a site upon which the Temple would eventually be built, said to the property-owner Araunah in response to his offer of the land as a gift, “Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So, David bought the threshingfloor.” Freewill offerings of my mouth, by my way of understanding, should always be accompanied by corresponding gifts of material value.
245. Some people think they are too small and insignificant to be concerned about faithful giving. They imagine that they are too poor. However, who is not small and insignificant in comparison to our great God Almighty? Listen to Psalm 119.141: “*I am* small and despised: *yet* do not I forget thy precepts.” Thus, we see that being small and despised should not be a consideration when it comes to obedience and faithfulness.
246. The instruction of King Solomon’s son begins in Proverbs 3.1 with the words, “My son, forget not my law.” Then, in verse 9, he wrote, “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.” Thus, the young man who finds favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man, who trusts in the LORD, who acknowledges God in all his ways, who is not wise in his own eyes, who fears the LORD, and who departs from evil, honors God with a portion of the firstfruits that comes to him given back to God in offerings.
247. I read Proverbs 5.21, which says, “For the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.” What a wonderful encouragement it is to the obedient and worshipful giver of tithes and offerings to know that the LORD knows the ways of every man, and that He ponders every aspect of our lives. Thus, when you give to the cause of Christ (or if you do not), be sure that God knows and God ponders all your goings.
248. Proverbs 11.4 reads, “Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.” From this verse, we can surmise that all the money in the world a greedy and selfish man clings to will be of no use to him in the day of wrath, so why hoard, why cling to it, why not make righteous use of what you have before the day of wrath?
249. Proverbs 11.24 declares, “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and *there is* that withholdeth more than is meet, but *it tendeth* to poverty.” It is one of many verses in God’s Word suggesting the nature of generosity, with the characteristic of being surprisingly counter-intuitive. Increase from scattering? Withholding tending to poverty? But, of course, every farmer knows this to be true.
250. Proverbs 11.25 informs us that “The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.” Understand that this refers not to political inclinations, but to a spirit of generosity and giving. Something to be mindful of as we approach the offering time.

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251. Proverbs 15.3 reads, “The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” Because God is a spirit He does not have physical eyes that gather and focus light on optic nerves. This is a poetic way, what is sometimes called an anthropomorphism, of God describing Himself so as to communicate to us that He is omniscient, that He knows all and that He observes everything. Understand that God knows when you withhold and when you give, because He knows everything.
252. I read from Proverbs 15.8 and then pose a question: “The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.” Hebrew poetry, such as we have here, frequently exhibits a parallelism in which two things are either compared or contrasted, with implications left to be drawn by the reader. If the wicked person sacrifices but his offering is an abomination, is it even possible that the upright whose prayer is His delight does not give a sacrifice?
253. Proverbs 15.16: “Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.” Hang onto everything so that you have great treasure without fearing God and you will also have a certain kind of trouble, but the person who fears God and gives so that he has less is actually better off.
254. Proverbs 16.3: “Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.” The way to make sure you want to do the right thing is to actually do the right thing, and then your thoughts will be brought around. God blesses a person who does right because it is right, after which He enables your thoughts and feelings about what you are doing to then agree with your actions. Thus, the cheerful giver is not someone who waited until he felt cheerful before he began to give, but one who was first obedient and who then became cheerful about what he was already doing in obedience to God.
255. Proverbs 16.8: “Better *is* a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.” It is better to have less while doing right than to have more when not doing right. That reality is appreciated by those who are faithful to support the work of the Gospel ministry.
256. As we prepare for the offering, let me surprise you with Proverbs 21.27: “The sacrifice of the wicked *is* abomination: how much more, *when* he bringeth it with a wicked mind?” We know there are those who are convinced Churches and pastors are only interested in persuading people to give money. Sadly, that is too often the case these days, with many ministries overreacting to that widespread perception by not taking up offerings at all, but having places in the foyer for offerings to be given, or arranging for all giving to be online. Just understand that a Scriptural ministry reflects God’s opposition to *anyone* attempting to give to Him for the wrong reason, or based upon pretense or showing off. It really is an abomination for the wicked to offer a sacrifice.
257. As we prepare for the offering, I read Ecclesiastes 5.4: “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.” It is not good to promise to the Lord you will do something and not do it.
258. As we prepare for the offering, I read Ecclesiastes 5.5: “Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.” As with the verse previous to this one, it is not good to promise the Lord and not fulfill your promise.
259. As we prepare for the offering, I read Ecclesiastes 5.10: “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity.”

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260. As we prepare for the offering, I read Ecclesiastes 5.13: “There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.” Hanging on to that which is yours is said by Solomon to harm some people.
261. In Ecclesiastes 10.14 we read, “a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him.” Will you ever attend another church’s service? Will you ever in this lifetime be given an opportunity to give to the cause of Christ? Will you ever have opportunity to worship again? I do not know and neither do you, therefore you should do what you can when you can as the last opportunity you may ever have, because “a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him.”
262. Isaiah 5.11-12:
- ¹¹ Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine inflame them!
- ¹² And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.
- May I summarize? In this passage the God of Israel criticized those who were committed to a self-indulgent lifestyle characterized by intoxication, music, and partying, while having no regard to the work of the LORD. Something to keep in mind as we approach this time in our service when we give to the work of the Lord.
263. In Isaiah 5.20, we read of God’s rebuke of the kingdom of Judah: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” This might be said of those who think it evil to give to the cause of Christ but good to withhold tithes and offerings. Something to consider during our offering.
264. In Isaiah 5.21, we read of God’s rebuke of the kingdom of Judah: “Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” How clever some people think they are to withhold from God His tithes and offerings, believing it to be smarter and more clever to keep their money than to give it to the cause of Christ. On such thinking, God pronounces a woe.
265. In Isaiah 55.1, we read, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” C. H. Spurgeon agreed with most other conservative commentators when he wrote about this verse, “With matchless condescension the Lord invites us to come to himself. He presses upon us the calls of his mercy. The gospel provides for all our spiritual needs in the amplest manner, and it gives us everything for nothing. We have but to receive freely what God gives gratis.” If that be true, if the Gospel is free to all for the taking, why do Christians give? We give because our heavenly Father gives. We give because our Savior gave. We give because it is now in our nature to give. And we give because it costs to get the free Gospel to those who need it.
266. In Isaiah 55.9 we read, “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Man’s thoughts tend toward accumulation, toward withholding, toward grasping and greed, but God’s superior ways and thoughts are ever and always directed toward giving and generosity. Something to consider as we approach our time of giving.
267. Jeremiah 2.19 reads, “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that *it is* an evil *thing* and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear *is* not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.” Those who forsake the LORD thy

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God, who do not fear Him, are those who do not worship Him, who do not serve Him, and who do not honor Him with the first fruits of their increase.

268. As we prepare for our offering to the LORD, consider Jeremiah 9.23-24:

²³ Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches:

²⁴ But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

269. Hear the words of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 12.1: “Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? *wherefore* are all they happy that deal very treacherously?” Do you think as you give that God does not hear, that He does not care, that He does not understand your confusion and concerns regarding the prosperity of the wicked and the happiness of they that deal treacherously? Think again. He knows. He understands. He deals with it. Leave it to God to take care of His business while you concern yourself with obeying Him.

270. In Jeremiah 22.29 we find these words: “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.” This is one reason why we give. Whether by word of mouth, by print media, or via other means, there are expenses associated with the advance of the Gospel. So in Paul’s day, so in our day. For the earth to hear the word of the LORD, we give. Please get on board and commit yourself to the Church’s ministry.

271. During his conversion testimony, Dr. Francis Collins, the scientist who headed up the human genome project, recounted his spiritual journey from atheism to faith in Jesus Christ. Then, there is Jeremiah 23.23-24:

²³ *Am* I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

²⁴ Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

A coincidence? Or a providential confirmation? God is real. He is everywhere present, filling both heaven and earth. That means He is never far away. That also means no one can hide himself from God, Who always sees him wherever he happens to be, whatever he happens to do... or not do.

272. Notice what the LORD said to His prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 33.3: “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Surely, this wonderful promise has application to us as well as Jeremiah, especially to those who are committed to making His name known throughout the world.

273. Jeremiah 33.8 reads, “And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.” We know that cleansing and pardon comes to those who respond to the Gospel message, which is advanced at home and abroad by the giving of God’s people.

274. Some people are complete pragmatists, siding only with those they see as eventual winners. To such people I want to reveal what God says about defeating Him. Yes, God provides for us all the keys to defeating Him, in Jeremiah 33.19-21:

¹⁹ And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying,

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- ²⁰ Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;
- ²¹ *Then* may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

What do these words mean? These words mean that if you can stop the sun from rising in the morning or setting in the evening, then and only then will you be able to keep God from fulfilling His covenant promise to place an heir of David on the throne of David to fulfill prophecy. Does that help you decide whose side to be on and whose cause to support with your giving?

275. We are a missionary Baptist church. By that I mean planting Churches and supporting missionaries is crucial for us. It is our spiritual DNA because it is a reflection of the Savior's Great Commission. Throughout the Bible, God is revealed to be a sending God. He sent Abraham to the land of Canaan; He sent Joseph to Egypt; He sent Moses to rescue His people; He sent prophet after prophet to the Jews with both warnings and promises; He sent Jonah to Nineveh. He even sent an Englishman named Patrick to Ireland. He sent John to announce the coming of the Messiah. And then He sent His Son. So, what about us? Does He send us too? The answer is "Yes." This is why we go ourselves and this is why we give so that others may go.

276. The Old Testament book of Daniel is familiar to most of you as one of the richest of the prophetic books. To that end, let me read what Daniel wrote about Judgment Day and the resurrection, in Daniel 12.1-3:

- ¹ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.
- ² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.
- ³ And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

It is in verse 3 that Daniel identified as wise those who turn many to righteousness, and who will shine as the stars for ever and ever. Who would these people be? Those engaged in reaching the lost with the Gospel, by means of personal witness and cooperative outreach with our church, as well as those who give to missionary endeavors through our Church.

277. In Hosea 4.6 we read a phrase familiar to most who have attended Church for any length of time: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." What does this phrase mean? Adam Clarke opined: "They have not the knowledge of God, nor of sacred things, nor of their own interest, nor of the danger to which they are exposed. They walk on blindly, and perish."¹ The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary reads, "*lit.* 'THE knowledge,' the only true and saving knowledge, the knowledge 'of God' (v. 1), *i.e.*, lack of *piety*... The *plural* implies that the *individuals*, as well as the collective whole "people," were one and all void of knowledge of God... Their ignorance was wilful, as the epithet, "*my people*," implies: they *ought* to have known...."² Do those who do not know God, and

¹ Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary, Vol IV*, (New York: Abingdon Press), page 631.

² *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Vol 2, Part Two*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), page 470.

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therefore do not worship Him, serve Him, and give to honor Him, have excuse? No. Not then and certainly not now.

278. Following the death of King Solomon, the nation of Israel divided in a civil war, with the prophet Hosea being one of the prophets God sent to the northern kingdom of Israel. Early on after the division of the kingdom the northern kingdom of Israel rapidly descended into idolatry, which God had forbidden in the Second Commandment. In Hosea 4.17, the LORD spoke through His prophet: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.” What a terrible fate, to be left alone by God because of idolatry. Idolatry comes in many forms. One form is the love of money, 1 Timothy 6.10. Do you suppose some do not give tithes and offerings to God because of idolatry concerning money? Yet they do not give such conduct a second thought. Is it because God has left them alone, as in Hosea?
279. In Hosea 4.19, the prophet uttered God’s words of judgment against idolatrous Israel: “The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.” Notice that they offered sacrifices, but not to God. People who do not give to God or to advance the Gospel frequently do give, but not to the cause of Christ. They will give to sports, but not to God. They will give to make nice to their car, but not to God. They will give to support their hobby, but not to God. Make no mistake, idolaters give sacrifices, just not to God. God, speaking through Hosea, promised that someday “they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.” Better to give to God now than to be ashamed later.
280. After the death of King Solomon, Israel was torn apart by civil war, with Israel to the North comprised of ten tribes and led by the tribe of Ephraim and Judah to the South comprised of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. Hosea was one of the prophets sent to the northern kingdom, who he frequently addressed as Ephraim, the dominant tribe. Notice what he wrote in Hosea 11.2-3:
- 2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.
- 3 I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.
- Here is the lesson we learn from this passage: They did not sacrifice to God, but to Baalim, literally the various gods of Baal, not knowing that God healed them. Then, as is the case today, there were those who directed their money to selfish and idolatrous pursuits, all the while ignorant that God had wonderfully blessed them. What ingratitude. What wickedness. No wonder God eventually tired of them and visited trouble upon them, as He does to this very day.
281. In Second Chronicles 16.9 we read, “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him.” Is it not a great encouragement to doing right to know that the LORD knows because He sees your obedience in this matter of giving, and that He will show Himself strong on your behalf?
282. In chapter 13 of his prophecy, Hosea rehearsed God’s deliverance of the people from Egyptian bondage and their subsequent turn back to idolatry. Notice how they were warned that God would be ferocious to them in their disobedience, yet helpful should they ever turn to him, verses 5-9:
- 5 I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.
- 6 According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.
- 7 Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe *them*:
- 8 I will meet them as a bear *that is* bereaved of *her whelps*, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

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⁹ O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me *is* thine help.

If only people today would learn from Israel's experiences with God when He is scorned and then when He is embraced. He delivered them in their wilderness wanderings, yet was like a lion, a leopard, and a bear to them when they turned their back on Him once they were in the land of milk and honey.

283. Hosea 14.9 reads, "Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things*? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." To worship, serve, pray and give tithes and offerings to God is right, and those who are just in His sight walk in such ways. Such people are wise and prudent. Those who refuse to so honor and bow before God, however, described by Hosea as transgressors, shall fall therein. Their trouble will come in the very things they are doing that are not right in the sight of God.
284. In July 2012 a mega-church in Winston-Salem, NC sent letters to nonparticipating church members, those who were members who did not faithfully attend, those who were members who did not serve, those who were members who did not give, and told them to fix it or leave. Members Bob and Julie Clark said the letter they received basically called them freeloaders. They were "stunned to receive a letter from their church in July asking them to 'participate in the life of the church' — or worship elsewhere." (<http://www.larknews.com/archives/574>) Is there a scriptural basis for that type of letter? Consider Amos 3.3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Certainly we can agree that in God's Word the notion of peripheral Christianity, with some people neither all in or completely out is not found. People are either growing in their commitment, in their spiritual maturity, in their fruitfulness, or they are falling away. It has been my experience in the ministry that giving tithes and offerings is tied to the direction a person is going.
285. In Jonah 1.2, the Word of the LORD directed the prophet Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, Israel's greatest enemy, and "cry against it." The next verse reveals Jonah's sin of fleeing in the opposite direction aboard a ship. Verse 4 shows the LORD sent a great storm that imperiled the ship and the lives of all aboard. Verse 10 records that Jonah admitted to the frightened sailors that he was the cause of their danger, "because he had told them." Though they refused at first, they eventually cast Jonah overboard as he had urged them, "and the sea ceased from her raging." Do you still imagine that your sinful choices to not obey God have no impact on others' lives? Those strangers were affected by Jonah's stubborn refusal to obey God. How much more those we profess to love?
286. In Micah 1.1-2 we read these words:
- ¹ The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.
 - ² Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.
- How will the Lord GOD be witness for you or against you as you give or choose to withhold your tithes and offerings at this time?
287. In Micah 1.5 the prophet speaks on behalf of the LORD to the people asking, "For the transgression of Jacob *is* all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What *is* the transgression of Jacob? *is it* not Samaria? and what *are* the high places of Judah? *are they* not Jerusalem?" This reminds us that the LORD observes and knows all that we do, every decision we make, and either approves or disapproves.

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288. I read from Micah 2.1: “Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.” This is God’s pronouncement upon those who do not do right. Their motive? The next verse tells us it is because they covet, which is to say they have a selfish desire.³ Do you suppose some people who do not give God His due are quite unaware, while others are motivated by covetousness, because they are aware of God’s will in the matter?
289. The small in size prophetic book of Nahum, which addresses the city of Nineveh as did Jonah a bit more than 150 years earlier, opens up in the second verse of the book with these words: “God *is* jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and *is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.” Lest you misunderstand the longsuffering of the LORD, remember the great revival He mercifully visited upon the city of Nineveh a century and a half earlier, bringing untold multitudes to repentance. However, generations have passed, with the descendants forgetting God though they had been warned. Now God’s jealousy and fury will be displayed in vengeance toward those who worship gods other than Him, who offer sacrifices to others, who do not bow before, serve, and sacrifice to Him. Something to reflect on as we prepare for our offering time. Just because God has not reacted to sin recently does not mean He will not do so in the future.
290. There is a principle found in God’s Word and in human relations from the dawn of time: The lesser gives to the greater. Such has always been the case, and such is the way it will always be. That understood, consider Nahum 1.3: “The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet.” Though God is great in power, and is so lofty that the clouds in the sky are beneath Him, as well He is slow to anger. It is His slowness to anger that causes those who do not pay attention to think they have gotten away with not worshiping Him, with not giving to Him tithes and offerings, with not bowing before Him. Remember. He who will not acquit the wicked and who gets His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, will get His way with you and me, even in this matter of giving to Him as those who are created ought to give to our Creator.
291. Sometimes God’s people think they do not have enough to trust God to take care of them, that they need to withhold their tithes and offerings. However, we should remember what He said through the prophet Nahum to the people of Nineveh in Nahum 1.7: “The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” His motives are pure, He is good. His power is sufficient, He is a strong hold in the day of trouble. His knowledge is complete, He knows them that trust in Him. It will be okay. Do the right thing. You can trust Him, and He knows if you actually do trust Him, or if you actually do not trust Him.
292. In 606 BC the Babylonian captivity of the survivors of the kingdom of Judah began. It would last 70 years, as predicted by the prophet Jeremiah, and would culminate in the return to the Land of some of the people under Zerubbabel, the leader of the people, Nehemiah, the Jewish representative of the Persian emperor, and Ezra, the prophet of God. When came time the people had settled, God raised up the prophet Haggai to take the people to task for their reluctance to finance the reconstruction of the Temple. I read Haggai 1.2-5:

³ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver & Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew And English Lexicon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), page 326.

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- 2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.
- 3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,
- 4 *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste?
- 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.
293. Having rebuked the settlers who had returned from the Babylonian captivity but had stalled in their efforts to rebuild the Temple so they might look after their own needs, Haggai was used by the LORD to point out that their efforts to improve themselves while ignoring what was important to God were not being blessed by Him, Haggai 1.6-7:
- 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.
- 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.
294. Those returned from 70 years of Babylonian captivity had been rebuked for not attending to the house of worship, and were reminded that their efforts to look after themselves instead were not being blessed by God. In Haggai 1.8 they were given explicit directions: "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD." Apparently, God wants to be first.
295. In case any questions remained in the minds of those who returned to the Land from Babylonian captivity about why things went poorly in their attempts to better themselves while they ignored God's priority of rebuilding the Temple, Haggai 1.9-11 addressed their questions:
- 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.
- 10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.
- 11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.
296. Misplaced priorities by God's people, accompanied by withheld blessings from God, and an explanation through the prophet so they would be fully informed concerning why they were spinning their spiritual wheels and not advancing. The result? Haggai 1.12-15:
- 12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.
- 13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, *I am* with you, saith the LORD.
- 14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,
- 15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.
297. Speaking through the prophet Haggai to the people returned from the Babylonian captivity, after the completion of Zerubbabel's Temple, about the future glory of God's house and the coming of "the desire of all nations," a reference to the coming Messiah, Haggai 2.8 reads, "The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts." It is good to always keep that in mind. Everything you possess that is of any value actually belongs to Him.

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298. In Zechariah 2.11 we read this prediction: “And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.” How do you suppose the LORD works in our day to bring this prediction to pass? Is it not the going of God’s Church members, and the giving of God’s Church members to those who are going, that is the means by which those who are not God’s people will hear the Gospel and become God’s people? That is one reason why we give.
299. Zechariah 4.6 contains the very familiar phrase, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” Used frequently, this phrase is understood infrequently. Back from Babylonian captivity, the Jewish leader Zerubbabel was despondent facing great difficulties rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. In a vision in which he conversed with a holy angel sent by the LORD, this message from God to Zerubbabel via the angel meant that what God wants accomplished will be accomplished by supernatural means by His Spirit. It may not always be obvious, but God will work in His own way despite the feebleness of His people, or the power of their foes. Does this apply to the giving of God’s people to advance His cause. It certainly does.
300. What a great comfort Zechariah 4.10 is to us, where we read that “the eyes of the LORD... run to and fro through the whole earth.” When that widow gives her two mites or that child gives his quarter, God observes. He sees. He knows. He remembers. What a great comfort this is to the child of God.
301. Notice God’s message to the returnees even after 70 years of Babylonian captivity, Zechariah 7.5-6:
- 5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, *even* to me?
- 6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat *for yourselves*, and drink *for yourselves*?
- Seventy years of retribution at the hand of God in a foreign land for sin did not in any way correct the nature of the selfish and wicked Jewish people. They were by nature selfish takers and not generous givers. Cured of idolatry? Yes. Cured of selfishness and empty religiosity? Not at all. That requires the new birth.
302. What goes around comes around. The LORD through the prophet Zechariah to the people come back from Babylonian captivity, Zechariah 7.9-13:
- 9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:
- 10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.
- 11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.
- 12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.
- 13 Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:
- They did not hear God cry out to them, so God will not hear them cry out to Him. Oh, how important it is to respond to God so He will respond to you.
303. Have you ever considered the Lord Jesus Christ’s right as a king to require things of His subjects? Consider the prophesy of Zechariah 9.9: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of

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Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” For this prediction to be fulfilled, not only did Christ require the right as king to call for the use of the donkey and her colt, but the owner of the donkey and her colt had to respond with obedience, Matthew 21.2-3:

- ² Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.
- ³ And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

Thus, the Lord called for an offering and someone responded. The Lord calls again, by different means and for different things, but it is the call of the king nevertheless, the royal right of requisition.

304. In Zechariah 11.12 we find predicted centuries before the fact the exact amount of money for which Judas Iscariot betrayed the Savior: “And I said unto them, If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver.” Do you imagine God does not pay attention to exact amounts of money, what is done to obtain that money, and how that money is used? Think again.
305. In Malachi 1.6 we read of the LORD’s indictment against the Jewish people returned to the Promised Land from the Babylonian captivity for failing to honor Him: “A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour?” In what way did the Jewish people neglect to honor the LORD? Proverbs 3.9 reads, “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.” By refusing to give to Him they denied Him the honor that was due Him.
306. In Malachi 1.11 we see the result of missions giving and missionary evangelistic activity in embryonic form: “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.” I am excited to be involved in the ministry of this Church.
307. In Malachi 3.8 we read of the LORD’s indictment against the Jewish people returned to the Promised Land from the Babylonian captivity for robbing Him: “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.” Clearly, then, God objected when His people did not give Him tithes and offerings.
308. In Malachi 3.10 instructions were given by God through the prophet to meet the material needs incurred by those who were called to lead the Jewish people in worship and service: “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.*” This shows that what God calls for He provides for.
309. Pertaining especially to this Sunday before Christmas, I read three verses to you, Matthew 2.1-2 and Matthew 2.11:
 - ¹ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
 - ² Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

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- ¹¹ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Notice the connection displayed by the wise men who came to worship the Christ child and their presentation to Him of cherished gifts. Thus, the connection between real worship and giving is illustrated.

310. In Matthew 2.11 we read of the wise men from the East coming to Bethlehem to see the Christ child: “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” Why did they do that? Why did they fall down and worship Him and why did they give Him gifts? Does it not remind you of the Queen of Sheba’s gifts to Solomon, who was already the richest man in the world? It is appropriate for subjects to give gifts to their Lord, be they magi from the East or members of a Church.
311. We consider Matthew 2.11 and the record of the wise men from the East coming to Bethlehem to see the Christ child: “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” Do you see the coupling together in this verse of worship and giving? It is to be questioned whether worship disconnected from giving is even possible. Not that one gives every time he worships, or that he worships every time he gives. But that one who truly worships also gives and one who truly gives will also worship.
312. In Matthew 2.14 we see a practical consequence of the wise men’s gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh: “When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.” It is doubtful they would have had the means to flee Herod’s wrath had the wise men not given to the Christ child. Thus, we see that giving to Christ (and to His cause) provided a very practical benefit. In that day, making the flight to safety possible. In our day, making the advance of the Gospel possible.
313. Having fled to Egypt to escape Herod’s wrath and fulfill prophesy, Matthew 2.21 records Joseph, Mary and Christ’s response to God’s directive to return after Herod had died: “And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.” Thus, the gifts of the wise men also provided the means whereby God’s directive was obeyed. God’s servants sometimes cannot obey God except the means of obedience be given to them by others who are also obeying God by their giving. Thus, your giving may enable others to obey God.
314. The Lord Jesus Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, in particular His beatitudes, are recognized by leaders of even non-Christian religions as among the loftiest discourses ever spoken to men. Yet almost immediately following His beatitudes, while still at the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus Christ utters these words in Matthew 5.23-24:
- ²³ Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
- ²⁴ Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee.

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Is it not interesting that the Savior envisioned the worship of God as necessarily involving giving offerings to God? How far has mankind slipped in 2,000 years, to be so degenerate that so many imagine the worship of God apart from the giving of offerings to God.

315. Reading from Matthew 6.1, the Savior said, “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.” Notice that our Lord took for granted that men would give to the poor, only cautioning that even when giving to the poor in the sight of others one’s giving to the poor should *not* be done for the approval of others. Truly are God’s people a giving people.
316. From Matthew 6.2, we learn that giving to the poor should not be done to draw attention to yourself. Our Lord Jesus said, “Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” Please consider quietly giving a substantial gift to a ministry God has laid on your heart to bless.
317. In Matthew 6.3-4 the Lord Jesus Christ pointed out that the manner by which someone gives is profoundly important, as well as the fact that they give being important:
- ³ But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:
⁴ That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Recognize that some people give nothing, nothing whatsoever?.In the passage I have read the Savior was not teaching people *to* give, but instructing them *how* to give. One does not find in God’s Word the suggestion that there are some people who claim to be God’s people who give nothing.

318. I read from the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6.19-21:
- ¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:
²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Who can read the Savior’s words and still cling to the delusion that God’s people are not a giving people, or that giving to the cause of Christ is not an integral aspect of one’s relationship with God?

319. Notice what the Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 6.24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Truer words were never spoken, and who your master happens to be is reflected in how you handle your money and what place in your life making money occupies. Does your lifestyle, your devotion to acquiring and then disbursing money, suggest that you serve God or that you serve mammon? That is a question worthy of consideration come offering time.
320. In Matthew 6.33, the Lord Jesus Christ provided direction concerning how people should order every aspect of their lives: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Want to know God’s will for your life? This is God’s will for your life.
321. Are you prone to worrying and fretting about an uncertain future? Are you afraid to give to the cause of Christ today because you are unsure about what events might leave you a bit short tomorrow, or next week, or next month? The Savior spoke to such as you in His Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew

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6.34: “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.” Live today the way today should be lived. You have enough to concern yourself about today. Get through today obeying and serving God.

322. In His Sermon on the Mount, specifically, following His admonishment to “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” in Matthew 7.1, the Savior uttered these words in Matthew 7.6: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” If you are not supposed to give holy things to dogs or that which is likened to pearls to those who are likened to swine, because they will trample the pearls whose value they do not comprehend and turn and attack you, then who should you give such things to? What should you use your money to accomplish in this world?

323. As we come to our offering time, I commend to you the words of the Master in Matthew 7.21: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

324. In Matthew 9.9 we are told the Lord Jesus Christ selected a man sitting at “receipt of custom” to follow Him. His name was Levi (we know him as Matthew), and he became one of the Savior’s apostles. Matthew’s job had been to collect taxes or tolls, most likely from those wanting to cross a Roman bridge or travel along a Roman road. Having received from men on behalf of the Romans, do you think Matthew ever questioned the practice of Levitical priests receiving from worshipers on behalf of God during the dispensation of the Mosaic Law or the practice of Christians giving through the institution of the Church? None but anarchists question the right of a government to support itself by taxing the people, just as none but atheists question the support of the ministry by God’s people.

325. In Matthew 10.7-8 we read Christ’s instructions to His newly selected apostles:

⁷ And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

C. H. Spurgeon observed, “They were not to provide for themselves, others supply their needs. God’s servants are to be supported by those among whom they labor.” Who are those among whom ministers of the Gospel labor but Church people?

326. Have you come to the place in your Christian life that you have doubts and concerns about the propriety of giving to the cause of Christ? Let me remind you of John the Baptist’s doubts, recorded in Matthew 11.2-3:

² Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

³ And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Imagine. The great John the Baptist had some doubts. His faith wavered somewhat. So, how did the Savior respond? Did He rebuke him? Did He chastise or castigate him? Verse 4 reveals what the Savior said to John’s messengers:

⁴ Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see.

The point that I seek to make here is that sometimes solid convictions and sound conclusions need to be reinforced, as was the case with John, with the Savior understanding and responding to the need. Therefore, when in doubt, do not stop doing right, but instead seek reinforcement and a strengthening of convictions and confidence, as did John the Baptist.

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327. Some people imagine the Christian life is impossible to live, that it is too difficult, too wearisome. Of course, that is not true, though it sometimes feels to be the case. I remind you of the words of the Savior to the contrary, in Matthew 11.28-30:

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

328. Responding to the Pharisees who said that He cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the Lord Jesus Christ uttered a statement that has direct application to a Christian's giving to the cause of Christ. In Matthew 12.30, He said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." That is true, it is not? There are only two sides, and there is no neutrality in this spiritual conflict of the ages. One of the ways that I declare for the side I am on, to show my allegiance for the one side and not allegiance for the other side, is by means of my tithes and offerings.

329. In Matthew 12.33, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit." Fruit, of course, is what is produced by someone, and certainly has application to the giving of tithes and offerings, as well as other forms of evidence of one's spiritual nature.

330. I read the Lord Jesus Christ's words as recorded in Matthew 12.35: "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." What a wonderful encouragement to generosity are these words spoken by the Savior.

331. As we prepare for the taking up of our tithes and the giving of our offerings, I read the words of the Savior found in Matthew 12.50: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." I will leave it to you to look up the context in which this encouragement to obedience is found.

332. In Matthew 21.2-3, we are told that the Lord Jesus dispatched two disciples to fetch the donkey colt He would ride into Jerusalem in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the King coming in peace. However, has it been pointed out that when our Lord sent those men to fetch that animal without asking permission He was exercising His royal right as King to confiscate property? No one disputes a ruler's right to confiscate property, the royal right to requisition, therefore no one should dispute His claim on our tithes and offerings.

333. From a portion of a parable the Savior taught we read Matthew 21.28-31:

²⁸ But what think ye? *A certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

²⁹ He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

³⁰ And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not.

³¹ Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first....

As it is better to say you will disobey and then to actually obey, so is it to fail to give tithes and offerings when you should have, but then begin to do right, than to start out being a giver only to then stop. For those who have been slow to begin their faithfulness to the Lord in matters of giving tithes and offerings, it is better to start later than to never start at all, or to begin and then to stop.

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334. I read from Matthew 22.15-21:

- 15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.
- 16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men.
- 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?
- 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?
- 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.
- 20 And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription?
- 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

From this exchange, the Savior made it abundantly clear that it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, to pay your taxes, if you will. What was never an issue with them, and what should not be an issue with any of us today, is whether we should render to God the things that are God's. Of course, we should. God has a greater claim on us than any Caesar, than any government. Therefore, if you pay taxes (and I trust that you do) you should render to God the things that are God's, in the form of tithes and offerings.

335. In response to a question posed by a lawyer in Matthew 22,

- 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
- 38 This is the first and great commandment.
- 39 And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

I would ask you a question: Can you love either God or your neighbor, obeying either the first and great commandment or the second that is like unto it, if you withhold God's tithes and your offerings? No one who cheats God can love Him with all his heart, soul, and mind. No one who will not cooperate with others to evangelize their neighbors loves his neighbor as himself.

336. In Mark 5.1-17, we read of the Savior casting many demons out of man usually referred to as the maniac of Gadera and into a herd of swine, who then plunged into the sea and drowned. When those in the city came to see what happened and learned of the situation they became afraid and urged the Savior to leave. What were they afraid of? The demon-possessed man was now clothed and in his right mind, and the demons were gone. Certainly, they knew the Savior posed no physical threat to them. My guess is that they were afraid of the financial consequences of the Savior's ministry when they saw that the swine, illegal to own under the Law of Moses, were now dead. My guess is they feared financial loss as a result of the Savior's ministry. Only in heaven will we realize how many people traded the opportunity to obtain spiritual blessings in order to hold on to their precious money.

337. Responding to criticism from His enemies the scribes and Pharisees, the Lord Jesus Christ made an observation in Mark 7.6: "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me." Since we know that one of the ways a person honors the LORD is by means of offerings given to Him, Proverbs 3.9, we understand that it is possible for a person to give even a substantial offering to God with a heart that is still far from Him. This is a sad and unpleasant possibility.

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338. Do you remember the account of the rich young ruler in Mark 10.17-20, who insisted he had kept the ten commandments and wanted to know what he had to do to inherit eternal life? In Mark 10.21 we read, “Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.” When the rich young man walked away with sadness, unwilling to forfeit his wealth to obey the Savior, our Lord looked around and said to His disciples in verse 23, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” We typically count accumulated wealth to always be an asset and a benefit. However, the Lord Jesus Christ indicated that material possessions can hinder one’s preparation for eternity. Something to remember as we approach our offering time.

339. What is your attitude toward material possessions and money? You may remember the case of the rich young ruler who was saddened by the Savior’s directive that he divest himself of all his possessions in order to clear away the obstacles to him inheriting eternal life, Mark 10.17-23. Review with me for a moment our Lord’s reasoning: “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God,” verse 23. Verse 24 continues, “And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” It is a matter of where you place your trust, in Christ or in money. Something to remember come offering time.

340. Listen to the Lord’s words in Mark 10.25-27:

²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

²⁶ And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

²⁷ And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Understand that our Lord was speaking to correct a misunderstanding, that people with a lot of money were necessarily blessed by God and were more likely than the poor to inherit eternal life. Not so. “Who then can be saved?” his disciples asked. “With *men it is* impossible.” Salvation is always impossible apart from the miracle-working power of God.

341. Let me read Mark 12.13-17:

¹³ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words.

¹⁴ And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

¹⁵ Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.

¹⁶ And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar’s.

¹⁷ And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. And they marvelled at him.

Propriety, righteousness, justice, equality, balance, integrity, morality, goodness, and truthfulness admits that Caesar had a claim on what was rightfully his and God has a claim on what is rightfully His. As governmental authority has a rightful claim to demonstrations from you that you recognize and yield to governmental authority, so God has a rightful claim to demonstrations from you that you

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recognize and yield to His authority as God, as Creator, and as Sustainer of all things. The question, of course, is do you recognize and yield to His authority?

342. In Mark 12.24 we find the Lord Jesus Christ's response to an inquiry from a religious sect of some prominence during His earthly ministry. Their particular question is not pertinent to us, though the Lord Jesus Christ's answer most certainly is pertinent, since He addressed two of the substantial causes of every mistake and error you have ever in your life been guilty of perpetrating. Allow me to read: "And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" Every error you and I have ever been guilty of is at least partly the result of two things: *First*, ignorance of God's Word, just not knowing what the Bible says. *Next*, ignorance of the power of God, not knowing how very mighty Almighty God really is. Be the problems associated with marital difficulties, child-rearing challenges, job-related issues, or whether or not you respond to the call to give to the cause of Christ, any errors in these matters can be traced to ignorance of God's Word and God's power.

343. Notice what we find in Mark 12.41-44:

- ⁴¹ And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.
- ⁴² And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.
- ⁴³ And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:
- ⁴⁴ For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

Is it not interesting that only 17 verses after we are told by the Savior that errors people make are the direct result of ignorance of God's Word and God's power, the Savior called attention to a poor widow who gave as an offering two mites, which was all that she had, all her living, according to our Lord? Why did she give such an offering? Could it be that the poor widow was not ignorant of Scripture or of God's power? She believed the Bible and knew her God was big and very powerful, therefore she understood that it could not hurt her to give to Him.

344. When the Savior taught His disciples to pray in Luke 11.2, He began by saying, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." Let us, as we pray, purpose to be the useful instruments of that prayer being answered by doing what we know to be the will of God here on earth.

345. When the Savior taught His disciples to pray, He began by saying, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." He then said, "Give us day by day our daily bread." Are we not utterly dependent up God being a giver to us? However, each of us is made in the image of God. Therefore, should we not be, somewhat like Him, givers?

346. Would you like to give to the cause of Christ but feel that you cannot? I then urge you to consider Luke 11.9-10:

- ⁹ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
- ¹⁰ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

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If you ask God to provide the resources for you to give to Him in worship and adoration, do you think He will deny you? If you think you cannot give at present, pray so you will soon be able to give.

347. Would you like to give to the cause of Christ but feel that you cannot? I then urge you to consider Luke 11.11-13:

- ¹¹ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?
- ¹² Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?
- ¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

If you ask God to provide the resources for you to give to Him in worship and adoration, do you think He will deny you? If you think you cannot give at present, pray so you will soon be able to give.

348. In Luke 11.17, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house falleth.” Do you think that has application to giving to the cause of Christ? The citizens of the kingdom of darkness finance their activities. Does it not stand to reason that the activities of the kingdom of God’s dear Son should not also be financed?
349. In Luke 11.23 the Lord Jesus Christ said, “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” Thus, there is no neutral ground in this spiritual conflict, and everyone has a dog in this fight. I suggest that you reflect on the indisputable reality that this activity of gathering is expensive and needs financing, and God’s plan is for that financing to take place through the giving of God’s people, those of us who are with Him.
350. Who is more blessed, the young woman sovereignly selected by God to bear His virgin-born Son, or that individual who actually obeys God? Reflect as I read the Savior’s own words in Luke 11.27-28 before our offering is collected:
- ²⁷ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.
 - ²⁸ But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.
351. Hear the words of the Savior as He sat with a Pharisee to eat a meal, Luke 11.42: “But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” He strongly criticized their failure to exercise judgment and love, but asserted they should add judgment and love to their conduct without refraining from tithing. Thus, He advocating tithing, while at the same time also advocating good judgment and loving one another.
352. Many people are concerned about the invasion of privacy, and rightly so. However, while I recognize the importance of protecting one’s confidential information, there is no such thing as real privacy, as the Savior points out in Luke 12.2: “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.” Something to think about as we prepare to take up the Lord’s tithes and our offerings.
353. In Luke 12.8, the Savior said, “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.” Is confession only what is expressed with words, or would it also include that which is given? The United States Supreme Court has ruled

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that giving money is speech. Applied to this verse, confessing Christ is not only speaking of Him, but also giving money so that His name can be broadcast abroad as well.

354. If money is rightly recognized as a form of speech, and as confession, how does withholding money suggest withholding speech? I read Luke 12.9: “But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” Is vocally denying Christ the only way He can be denied? Or is refusing to speak of Him also denying Him, and refusing to finance the spreading of His name also denying Him? What do you think?
355. In Luke 12.31 the Lord Jesus Christ told His followers what to do instead of fretting about the cares and affairs of this world: “But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.” In other words, concern yourselves with the things of God and you will find that the things of this life will be provided for you.
356. In Luke 12.34 the Lord Jesus Christ declared, “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” So, where is your heart? That will tell you where you have placed your treasure. To be sure, in our culture you have to have money to live. However, there is a portion of what has been placed into your hands by God that He wants you to use for the benefit of eternal goals and objectives. Do that and your heart will be oriented toward heaven and the things of God.
357. In Luke 12.48 the Savior provided a commentary to instruct His apostles about the meaning of a parable. The second sentence in the verse reads, “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” By this statement our Lord revealed that the corresponding responsibility of those with more is more. Therefore, more is expected of those with more experience, more wisdom, more education, more resources, more opportunity. This is obviously quite different than those who use their resources to avoid responsibilities and to look only after themselves. Something to keep in mind as we take this time to give to the cause of Christ.
358. You are likely familiar with Luke 14.16-24, a parable in which the Lord told of a rich man who made a great supper and invited many to come. However, they one after another made excuses for why they could not respond to his invitation. Though the parable is concerned with other things, what strikes me in the parable is the part about the excuses that were made by those who did not want to respond to the great man’s invitation. The same kind of thing happens with regard to tithing and giving offerings. Excuses, excuses, excuses. And what are excuses, really? One person once said to me that excuses are lies wrapped in the cloak of reason.
359. On one occasion the Lord Jesus cleansed ten lepers. When only one responded with an expression of gratitude, a Samaritan, the Lord asked a question. I read Luke 17.17: “And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?” Our Lord took note of not only what we do, but of what we do not do. As we prepare for giving, keep in mind that the Lord takes note of not only what you do, but also what you do not do.
360. Most of us have heard of the publican named Zacchaeus who because he was a small man climbed a sycamore tree to see the Savior passing by. However, few take note of what he said to the Lord Jesus Christ after climbing down from the tree, as recorded in Luke 19.8: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.” Of course, he was referring to restitution. I wonder how many who profess faith in Christ have any concern to pay back those they have swindled or outright stolen from before their

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professed conversion to Christ? Yet this man publicly declared his determination to repay four times what he stole or cheated from each of his victims. That is something to think about.

361. It was to the tax collector named Zacchaeus that the Lord Jesus Christ declared, in Luke 19.10, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Why say that at that time and to that man? Less than a week from this occasion our Lord Jesus would be dead and buried. One thing is certainly clear: The Savior seeks the sinner to save him, rather than the other way around. That is why He came. That is what He does. Let us as disciples of Jesus Christ be engaged in that great Gospel enterprise of seeking sinners by giving and by going.
362. A few days before His crucifixion the Lord Jesus Christ was in the Temple courtyard in Jerusalem, perhaps on Monday, where Luke 21.1 records His observation: “And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.” It seems that among the Jewish people even those who were men of means were givers. That is a good thing.
363. It was on the Monday prior to His crucifixion that the Lord Jesus Christ was in the Temple courtyard in Jerusalem when He observed not only men of wealth and means giving their offerings, but also a poor widow. Luke 21.2 records what He saw: “And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.” A mite was the smallest denomination of coin at that time, so it seems the poor widow gave what amounted to two cents. This is an example showing that even those with nothing can give something to God.
364. We observed in Luke 21.1-2 that both wealthy men and a poor widow gave their offerings. What we learn in Luke 21.3 is who gave the most: “And he [Jesus] said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.” Whether with giving or any other type of homage and worship of God, be careful to reserve judgment concerning how large or small you think your contribution might happen to be. We see here that the Savior has His own standard by which the greatness of someone’s gift or service is evaluated.
365. Having commended the poor widow who gave but two mites, over against men of means who gave far more, the Lord Jesus Christ revealed how much the widow did give, and commended her for it, in Luke 21.4: “For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.” Did you hear that? She “cast in all the living that she had.” She gave it all to God, some-thing none of the wealthy men had come close to doing.
366. John 3.16 is the most famous verse in the Bible: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” How can anyone read the verse without making a connection between the motive of love and the action of giving? God loves, so He gave His Son. The Christian loves, he gives to the cause of Christ.
367. John 3.16 is the most famous verse in the Bible: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” When God gives the result is sinners not perishing, but having everlasting life. When Christians give the same thing happens, sinners not perishing, but having everlasting life.
368. John 3.16 is the most famous verse in the Bible: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God’s love for the world resulted in Him giving to meet the world’s greatest need, salvation from sins. When someone loves God he, too, gives, also resulting in the world’s greatest need being met, salvation from sins.

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369. In John 3.17 we read, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” God sent His Son so the world through Him might be saved. That is precisely why we give, so the world can hear the good news about Jesus Christ, God’s Son, so the world through Him might be saved.
370. John 3.18: “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Some think that condemnation is the result of rejecting Christ. Not true, according to this verse. Sinners are condemned long before they have heard of Jesus Christ to reject Him. Therefore, we have only to gain and nothing to lose by sending the Gospel to the lost by our giving.
371. John the Baptist’s life can be summed up in a single verse, John 3.30: “He must increase, but I *must* decrease.” Everything he said and did during his brief ministry was for the purpose of calling attention to Jesus Christ rather than himself. How eager we should be, therefore, to give offerings to the cause of Christ so that attention can be directed to Him rather than calling attention to ourselves.
372. Did you know the Father gave everything to His Son? John 3.35: “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” If God the Father gives to His Son, should we not be willing to give to His Son? It is a very Godlike thing for a Christian to do, don’t you think?
373. One of the reasons why we give the cause of Christ to reach the lost is because of John 3.36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” The wrath of God abides on those who are not saved, and those who have never heard the Gospel can never be saved. We give so the lost will have opportunity to turn from their sins and thereby escape the wrath of God.
374. Most of us remember the occasion in Christ’s earthly ministry when He fed 5,000 hungry men. However, it is also usually the case that folks are unaware of the offering the Savior used to accomplish that miraculous feat. I read John 6.9: “There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?” It was one lad who gave what little he had, surrendering the food his mother presumably had prepared for him and having no idea what the Savior would do with it, that resulted in the feeding of 5,000. I wonder how many miracles are withheld because folks are unwilling to forego lunch in order to give an offering? Only eternity will tell.
375. Some people have grave doubts and concerns that it is God’s will for them to give to the cause of Christ at offering time and no amount of Bible study convinces them. To such a mentality the Lord Jesus Christ once spoke in John 7.17: “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.” Do you really want to know if it is God’s will? Do it and you will know. If you are not willing to do it so you shall see then you are not really serious about discerning God’s will. That is Christ’s remedy for those unconvinced.
376. The night before His crucifixion the Lord Jesus Christ uttered the words found in John 15.5: “I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” However, fruit is recognized to mean different things in different contexts. In the parable of the soils fruit is evidence of genuine salvation. In John 15 fruit seems to be others brought to Christ. In Galatians 5 fruit is the Holy Spirit’s effect on the believer’s personality. Finally, in Paul’s letter to the Romans fruit is among other things freewill offerings given

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to advance the cause of Christ. No wonder the Savior said, “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”

377. In John 15.8 the Lord Jesus Christ said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” What kind of fruit was He referring to? Offerings, a Spirit-controlled temperament, or others witnessed to and brought to Christ? Though the latter of the three types of fruit are in context His emphasis, all three types of fruit are necessarily interrelated in the Christian’s life.
378. How does one show that he has been chosen by Christ? Hear the Savior in John 15.16: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” You show your selection by the Savior by bringing forth fruit.
379. The night before His crucifixion the Lord Jesus Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. John 17.17 records one of His pleas to His heavenly Father: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” He asked God the Father to use His Word, the Word of God, which is the truth, to sanctify. Surely, then, it is needful for us to take the Word to the nations, to preach the Word to all people, so the Father will continue to use His Word to sanctify, which is to say to save and to set apart, those who hear and respond to His Word.
380. The night before His crucifixion the Lord Jesus Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. John 17.18 records His plea to His heavenly Father: “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” This says it all, does it not? The Father sent the Son. The Son sent His apostles and disciples. We have been sent as a result. In turn, we also send people into the world. God may raise up someone from this Church for us to send. Others raised up from other Churches can be sent by us through our missions giving. That is why you give.
381. One would think what the Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples after He rose from the dead would be worth remembering, and you would be correct. In John 20.10 we read these words: “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” This short sentence refers to the present, the past, and the future. The present is “Peace *be* unto you.” The past is “as *my* Father hath sent me.” The future is “even so send I you.” A state of peace with God exists when one has faith in Christ. One’s authority for service and ministry is based upon Christ’s dispatch from God the Father. One’s future ministry reflects what the Savior wanted from His apostles and what He wants from you. Because we know Christ, we have been sent ourselves and give to send others.
382. In Acts 1.11, while the risen Savior’s disciples stood in amazement as He ascended from their sight to sit at the Father’s right hand on high, two men (presumably angels) asked them, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?” Why would they ask such a question? My own opinion is to avoid any possibility of them thinking it was God’s will for them to stand there doing nothing in Christ’s absence, but to be about the ministry of praying, of studying, of serving, of witnessing, of going, and of sending others to be about the Master’s business. Time spent contemplating heaven is not time well spent if that is all that is done. Await the Master’s return by praying, by serving, by witnessing, by going yourself, and by sending others by means of giving, while also awaiting His glorious return. That is time well spent.

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383. Thousands were in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, intending to return to their homes and livelihoods immediately thereafter. God had other plans. Three thousand of them were saved. It was God's plan for them to remain in Jerusalem for several years to be discipled, to be trained, and to be taught God's Word. Where would they stay? How would they eat? Those few believers in Jerusalem had to step up and step up quickly, and that is precisely what they did, Acts 2.42-47:

- 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
- 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.
- 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
- 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.
- 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,
- 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

How would you react if someone was suddenly converted to Christ, had no place to stay, had no food to eat, and needed to be taught God's Word? Would you step up like the poor believers in Jerusalem did? Sometimes our ministry of giving is more than simply putting money in the offering.

384. Acts 4.32-37 is an interesting passage describing how a group of believers and an individual believer gave to the cause of Christ in the early days of Christianity in Jerusalem to meet the needs of the recently converted new Christians after their personal resources had been exhausted. At the beginning of verse 35, we see what the many who gave did with their offerings: "And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet." In verse 37, we are told what one man did with his contribution. He "brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet." There was no drum roll. No pageantry. But also, no privacy. They did not call attention to themselves who gave, but neither did they make an effort to conceal their actions. Why so? Because God always sees what you give or withhold. And so does everyone else, actually, eventually. What you give, if you give, will be known to your spouse, to your children, to the ushers, to those who count, to those who maintain giving records. Not that you should call attention to yourself or make an effort to show off by giving. But does your giving help or harm your credibility to those who see, to those who know, to those you witness to?

385. Do you question whether God takes this matter of giving offerings to Him seriously? Listen as I read Acts 5.1-6:

- 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,
- 2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.
- 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?
- 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.
- 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.
- 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

386. Many times a Christian woman will feel absolved of responsibility to give because of decisions made by her husband. Acts 5.7-10 speaks to that situation:

- 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

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- ⁸ And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.
- ⁹ Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.
- ¹⁰ Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

This passage clearly shows us that God deals with a Christian woman on an equal footing as He deals with her husband, holding each responsible for their stewardship choices.

387. In Acts 20.4 we read, “And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.” These are the men who accompanied the Apostle Paul and his party on their journey to Jerusalem from Greece. Why did those men accompany Paul? Remember, Paul had raised a large offering to buy food for the impoverished Jewish believers facing starvation. These men were to serve as witnesses that Paul had disposed of the money given in the manner intended. Thus, we see Paul handling the offerings given by Christians in a responsible and accountable way. That is a pattern we seek to follow here, with alternating teams of Church members counting the offerings and making deposits, with professionals handling our accounting, by use of purchase orders to authorize and track expenditures, and so forth. We seek to maintain accountability toward each and every Church member, to earn trust and exemplify faithfulness.
388. In Romans 1.13 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.” This is the first of six times in Romans that Paul used the word fruit. What, specifically, did he refer to in this verse by the word fruit? In Romans 1.15 he wrote, “I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome,” so one might think fruit here is a reference to converts, souls brought to Christ. However, in Romans 15.20 he wrote, “Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.” Therefore, while he was ready to preach the Gospel in Rome, he withheld Gospel preaching where the Gospel was already declared. What, then, did he refer to in his Romans 1.13 reference “I might have some fruit among you also,” if it was not converts? It was offerings. Paul was a missionary who solicited prayer support and financial support. Fruit in Romans 1.13, then, refers to God's people giving money to support Paul's missionary enterprise.
389. We know that a Christian's giving is needed to support the ministry of the Church where he, as a member, worships and serves. We know that a Christian's giving is also needed to support the missionary enterprise, which along with his Church's ministry is a fulfillment of the Great Commission. However, that is not all. In Romans 12.13 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.” Thus, the giving of time, the occasional giving of food, the giving of a place to eat and a place to sleep, are all a part of giving lifestyle of the Christian's new life in Christ. God gave His Son. Christ gave His life. The Christian gives himself, his time, and his substance.
390. Romans 15.4 establishes an important principle related to the study of God's Word: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Everything in the Bible occurred, was recorded, and has been preserved for our benefit, that we might first do and then learn. Thus, among other lessons, the

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examples of sacrificial giving we have reviewed throughout God's Word before our Sunday offerings are, according to this verse, in place precisely for this type of benefit.

391. Romans 15.24: "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*." Is this not what we should expect from a missionary like Paul? His plan was to journey to Spain and to stop off in Rome along the way. His expectation was for the Romans to provide him with company and then to be brought on his way. That is, he expected them to provide him with material means, money if you will, to complete his journey to Spain. That kind of thing only happens when God's people are faithful in their giving.
392. The Apostle Paul told of his plan to travel to Rome and then onward to Spain. However, before doing that, he was headed back to Jerusalem with a special offering for the beleaguered saints in that region who were facing famine, Romans 15.25-26:
- ²⁵ But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.
²⁶ For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Thus, it was the taking up and the delivering of a special offering from the Greek and the poor Macedonian Churches that Paul deemed to be more important than traveling directly to Rome. That shows how important offerings can be.

393. Churches such as ours give forward to support missions in unreached regions. However, Romans 15.27 shows that Paul led newly planted congregations to give back to those from whom they had received the Gospel: "It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." What is crucial to observe in this verse is that it is distinctively Christian to give, to give, and always to give, for giving reflects the very nature of the God we serve, and to explain why countries like Korea and Philippines are now sending missionaries back to the United States.
394. Paul's reference to fruit in Romans 1.13 was not a reference to converts. Neither was it an allusion to the fruit of the Spirit, but to Christian giving to advance the Gospel. I now read Romans 15.28 to substantiate: "When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." Of course, "this fruit" was the money given to be taken back to the Christians in Judea, as opposed to the fruit mentioned in Romans 1.13, which was the money to be raised from among the Romans for the ministry in Spain. Thus, Christians bear three kinds of fruit: Fruit #1 is other Christians, the produce of our evangelism. Fruit #2 is the fruit of the indwelling Spirit, Galatians 5.22-23. Fruit #3 is the fruit of money given to advance the Gospel enterprise.
395. In First Corinthians Paul wrote to a congregation he had established while supporting himself as a tent maker. The reason he supported himself rather than instructing the new believers in Corinth to provide for him was to prevent gainsaying by unbelievers who might accuse him of being in the Gospel ministry for the money. However, having left Corinth to take the Gospel elsewhere, he then wrote to instruct the Church members the principles of giving to provide for the Gospel minister. I will leave it to you at this point to read First Corinthians chapter nine to confirm what I have said.
396. In First Corinthians 9.1 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" Why did he write those words? Because he was about to address a very sensitive topic with those Christians, their own wallets and their

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responsibility as Christians to give to support their pastor. His starting point in that discussion were his qualifications as an apostle of Jesus Christ, one of the chosen few blessed to have seen the risen and glorified Lord. An important consideration as we consider giving to the cause of Christ through this ministry.

397. In First Corinthians 9.2 the Apostle Paul wrote, “If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.” Having established that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul then moved to a more intimate setting with the Corinthians, reminding them that they were the seal of his apostleship. They had come to Christ as the direct result of his apostolic calling and ministry. In God’s scheme of things, an important relationship exists between a believer and the man under whose ministry and calling he heard and believed the Gospel. An important consideration as we consider giving to the cause of Christ through this ministry.
398. In First Corinthians 9.3 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Mine answer to them that do examine me is this.” The matter of supporting the pastor through Church members’ giving was not an isolated problem. It was an issue the Apostle Paul had dealt with on other occasions, and he knew there was criticism of him about his stance. Few issues are more provocative to Christians than giving, especially giving that supports the Gospel minister. If you liken Church to a restaurant, there are always Church members who want to come, sit down, order a juicy steak, and then leave without touching their wallets. Rather than reaching for their wallets, some would rather stop coming. However, the Apostle Paul showed in subsequent verses the vital Biblical principles involved in a Christian’s giving. Something to think about we come to offering time.
399. In First Corinthians 9.4 the Apostle Paul asked, “Have we not power to eat and to drink?” There are literary styles found in God’s Word, just as elsewhere, that form something of a shorthand for the reader. We find that here in Paul’s question. Allow me to paraphrase Paul’s question to the Corinthians: “Are not my church planting colleagues and I authorized by the Lord we serve to be provided for while we are working hard to bring you and your loved ones to Christ?” In this verse, Paul challenged those who advanced two false ideas: #1, that materially supporting Gospel ministers was too much to ask as a response to those ministering God’s grace to the saved and the lost. And, #2, that those in full-time ministry were enabled to more effectively bear fruit if they were not at the same time burdened by the need to support themselves. That Paul chose to work while ministering to others while in Corinth was not a commentary on what he was authorized by the Savior to expect and to demand if he so chose.
400. In First Corinthians 9.5 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?” The Apostle Paul offered a specific example of the principle he referred to previously. Other apostles, particularly the Apostle Peter (referred to here as Cephas) had a right to marry and take their wives with them as they traveled. That Paul did not marry, and those with him likewise were not married, was no indication they had no right to marry. It was his right to marry or not to marry, just as it was his right to be supported by those he ministered to, and no one should impose upon him their will for his life. Therefore, in this world where people are always claiming their rights, the professing Christian who withholds giving to the cause of Christ really does deny the Gospel minister his right as granted by the Savior they both claim as Lord.
401. In First Corinthians 9.6 the Apostle Paul drew a preliminary conclusion concerning the need of the Corinthian members to give and the authorization of those who ministered to them to be supported:

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“Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?” His question asked, if I may paraphrase, “Am I and Barnabas the only men in the ministry that are not authorized to forbear working secular jobs?” The implication being that none of the Gospel ministers who served God elsewhere were burdened in this way by the reluctance of some Church members to give in support of their material needs.

402. In First Corinthians 9.7 the Apostle Paul began to drive home in a personal way the claim he advanced that showed the need and responsibility of Church members to faithfully give to the cause of Christ: “Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?” Have you ever heard of a soldier who had to buy his own bullets? Ever heard of a vine tender who was not allowed to pluck a grape and eat it if he wanted to? Ever heard of a goat herd denied the right to drink some of the goat’s milk that was produced? Of course not! Then by what right does a Christian withhold his offerings that are used to support the man who brought him to Christ and the man who ministers to him God’s Word?
403. In First Corinthians 9.8 the Apostle Paul revealed that what common sense dictates and what God’s Word in the Old Testament established as a principle of giving were in full agreement: “Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?” Thus, the Church member who withholds from giving is not only functioning in an illogical and unwise fashion according to the dictates of human insight and experience, he is also at odds with what is clearly presented as right conduct in the Hebrew Scriptures. There is a biblical basis for a Christian’s giving. It is not a religious charlatan’s moneymaking scheme.
404. In First Corinthians 9.9 the Apostle Paul cited Deuteronomy 25.4 when he wrote, “For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?” When God established in the Mosaic Law that Israelites were not to prevent oxen pulling plows in the field from biting off and eating what they could as they labored, was God’s real concern for those draft animals? Or was He establishing as a principle allowing one who labors in the field to benefit in his field of labor? Thus, as soldiers are maintained while they are under arms, while vine tenders are granted permission to eat from the vines they tend, while goat herds are permitted milk from herds they oversee, and while even oxen are permitted while laboring in the fields to be nurtured, by what logic, by what rationale, and according to what Bible principle, does a Church member withhold from giving to support the men in the ministry of his Church?
405. In First Corinthians 9.10 the Apostle Paul provided the reason back of God’s principle recorded in the Old Testament that shows Gospel ministers as much as oxen plowing fields deserve to be supported in their labors: “Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.” Paul, as a Gospel minister, and writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, concluded that the reason Deuteronomy 25.4 is in God’s Word is to provide hope for the one who plows, hope for the one who threshes. Thus, to be maintained, to be supported by the giving of God’s people, is described by Paul in these words: “should be partaker of his hope.” “The point is that all the workers (beast or man) share in the fruit of the toil.”⁴

⁴ Robertson, A. T., Word Pictures in the New Testament: Concise Edition (p. 441). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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406. I suspect the Apostle Paul anticipated great resistance from some Church members with respect to their giving and this matter of supporting Gospel ministers. No doubt some felt they didn't make enough money and couldn't afford to give to provide support for the man who ministered grace to them. I read what he wrote in First Corinthians 9.11 in response to such thinking: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" Paul suggested that you sit down and compare the relative worth of what the Gospel minister provides for you and what you are to provide for him. There is no comparison of relative worth. The person who withholds his giving of support for the Gospel ministry is by his actions declaring that ministering grace that addresses eternal needs is less important and worthy of support than material things. Wow. Is that revealing.
407. In the Great Commission where the Lord Jesus Christ said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth," the Greek word translated "power" refers to authority, not might. In like manner, we have the word power appearing in First Corinthians 9.12, where Paul wrote, "If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." What Paul referred to in his communique to the Church members in Corinth was his authority to receive material support from those he ministered to. Paul was authorized to receive an income from them while serving as their spiritual leader, though for reasons related to wisdom he chose of his own accord to forgo what the Savior had authorized him to receive. Does the pastor receive a salary or does the pastor not receive a salary? He is authorized by the Head of the Church to be supported, though the pastor may choose to forgo material support if he so chooses.
408. In First Corinthians 9.13 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" What temple is referred to, the Temple in Jerusalem or the various pagan temples found in Corinth? The principle Paul referred to applies in both situations. No Corinthian Church member had ever seen or heard of a temple wherein those who attended the altar were not permitted to partake of that which was offered. Paul pointed out that the same principle applied to that which was given through their own congregation.
409. In First Corinthians 9.14 the Apostle Paul drew the grand conclusion he had been building toward throughout the entire chapter: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Those who withhold their contributions deny this principle in practice by their decision not to participate through giving. And my response to someone who thinks I am overbearing with respect to this matter? Please keep in mind that Paul wrote, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."
410. In First Corinthians 9.15 the Apostle Paul wrote, "But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." Paul did not take money from the Corinthians, and did not write these words to obtain money from the Corinthians. His purpose was to show the Christians in Corinth that it was their responsibility to support their pastor. Paul would rather die than allow some malcontent to claim he was in the ministry for money. That accusation, however, cannot be made of others since it was Paul who wrote First Corinthians chapter nine, and not any Church's pastor.
411. In First Corinthians 9.16 the Apostle Paul wrote, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" No one

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would deny that Paul's commission, calling, and commitment was to getting the Gospel out by preaching. However, not everyone is so commissioned and called. Most Christians have a different vocation. That said, every Christian ought to embrace a personal commitment to do his part according to the grace of God given to him and the spiritual tools God has provided for him to get the Gospel out. What most Christians are called upon to do is give in order that those called to preach can do so without encumbrance or obstacle.

412. In First Corinthians 9.24 the Apostle Paul continued his effort to persuade the Corinthian Church members to give for the support of the ministry by writing, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." Alluding to the Greek fondness for athletic competition such as was found in the Olympic games, he likened the Christian life to a race and giving to the cause of Christ to actually running. What is the point of being in a race and not running? "So run, that ye may obtain."
413. In First Corinthians 9.25 the Apostle Paul addresses the matter of giving to the cause of Christ in terms of the self control exercised by the athlete so he will be prepared to participate and compete effectively: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." To train for the race you have to make choices. You have to do without certain things. You simply cannot have it all. Determination, dedication, and denial are the marks of a champion. Is it any different in the Christian life and giving? No, it is not, except that our crown is more than a wreath of leaves that will dry up and shrivel. Therefore, in order to give you may have to do without a coffee, or a diet soda, or a dessert. After all, you cannot have it all. Choices have to be made to run the race, to give to the cause of Christ.
414. The entire ninth chapter of First Corinthians is devoted to the matter of Christian Church members faithfully giving to support the Gospel minister as he labors to get the Gospel message out. Notice how Paul closed out the chapter in First Corinthians 9.27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Using himself as an example for all to follow, Paul pointed out the importance of self-discipline as a necessity in both preaching the Gospel and giving to finance Gospel ministry. Thus, it should be anticipated that Christians will need to exercise considerable self-discipline with respect to spending and lifestyle choices in order to participate in this great Gospel enterprise, be it preaching the Gospel or financing the advance of the Gospel.
415. In First Corinthians 10.6 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." To be sure, Paul changed the topics he was dealing with from First Corinthians chapters nine to ten. However, is it merely coincidence that on his way to his next topic Paul made reference to God's people in Old Testament times being hampered by lust, by sinful appetites and desires? When you think of it, is that not what holds back many professing Christians from faithfully giving to support the Gospel ministry, inappropriate appetites and desires? As has been said so often before, you cannot have it all. Choices have to be made. Sometimes you have to simply say "No" to your urge or your appetite so you can say "Yes" to the will of God.
416. In First Corinthians 10.21 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." Choices have to be made. You cannot have it all. In this verse the Apostle pointed out to the Corinthian Christians that real worship and communion must be either or, and cannot be both and. Thus, you find that there is

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an inconsistency existing that makes it impossible for you to direct your resources to selfish pursuits and at the same time to truly spiritual pursuits. Therefore, if you feel you do not have it to give to the cause of Christ it may very well be that certain other things you spend your money on simply have to go, because you cannot have it all.

417. In First Corinthians 10.22 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?” Some people provoke the Lord to jealousy by the way they handle their money, by what they choose to finance with what God places into their hands. A question only you can answer is if you are one who provokes the Lord to jealousy by not giving to Him?
418. In First Corinthians 10.23 the Apostle Paul wrote, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” I hope this puts to rest the notion that anyone tries to make Christians do what they do not want to do, for that is not the case at all in the Christian’s life. What dictates Christian conduct is expediency, and not the kind of expediency that comes to most people’s minds. This has to do with expediency as it relates to being best for the cause of Christ, advancing by legitimate and spiritual means the cause of Christ, without violating anyone’s conscience. Christians rightly give for two reasons: First, Christians give because they want to. Second, Christians give because they want to want to. Give for the second motivation for long enough and it will become your first motivation.
419. In First Corinthians 10.24 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s *wealth*.” This speaks to the issue of selfishness, doesn’t it? I suspect that is the real reason why those who profess to be Christians do not give regularly, routinely, and faithfully to the cause of Christ so the Gospel message can be advanced. Selfishness, pure and simple.
420. In First Corinthians 10.31 the Apostle Paul provided for us the chief goal of the Christian’s life: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” If this is the way you live your life, if this is what truly drives you, if this is what gives life to your expressions, then your giving to the cause of Christ take care of itself.
421. In First Corinthians 10.32 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” Whatever you do in the Christian life should not offend Jews, Gentiles, or the Church of God. Consider this matter of giving. Does it offend Jews, Gentiles, or Church members for me to give to the cause of Christ? No, no, and no. Consider not giving. Does it offend Jews, Gentiles, or Church members for me not to give to the cause of Christ? No, no, and yes. I illustrate with a line of men passing buckets of water from a pump to a burning house to put out the fire. However, standing in the line with all the other guys is one fellow who never reaches for a bucket, never carries his share of the load, and never uses his strength and endurance to do his part in fighting the fire. Do you think the other men in that bucket line will form no opinion of his unwillingness to give in this case his effort?
422. Giving to the cause of Christ is an activity that anyone can engage in, be they saved or lost. However, what about those who claim to be Christians but who do not reflect by their giving their profession of faith in Christ? The claim they make for owning a new life in Christ is not supported by faithfully, joyfully, and eagerly giving to the cause of Christ. Those folks need to pay close attention to First Corinthians 15.2, especially the final phrase: “By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” Did you catch that? “Unless ye have believed in vain.” That is most oftentimes the simplest explanation for why the

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professing Christian is not a faithful giver. He has believed in vain, that is, he has believed to no effect.

423. Are you one of those fellows who claims to be a Christian but does not faithfully give? We considered that you may have believed in vain, back in First Corinthians 15.2, which is to say your faith is empty and without effect. It is a possibility. You are just not saved. That would explain it, would it not? Perhaps, however, there is another reason. First Corinthians 15.33 reads, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” Don’t be tricked into thinking that who you hang around, who you are friends with, does not affect your behavior. Do you hang around and are you influenced by unsaved people, or those who profess Christ but who do not live for Christ? If that is the case, and if the example your friends set (that you follow) is an example of not giving to Christ, you need a new set of friends. Why so? You are a follower and not a leader and you are following the wrong leaders.
424. First Corinthians 15.34 reads, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.” It is a shameful thing for anyone who professes to be a Christian to not do his part, by witnessing, by inviting people to Church, and by giving to advance the Gospel, so those who are not saved can hear the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ and be saved. I urge you to respond to the challenge of God’s Word as we prepare for our offering.
425. In First Corinthians 16.1 we are reminded of a special offering Paul was collecting (referred to in other epistles he wrote) for Christians in the vicinity of Jerusalem: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.” He was urging the Corinthians to do what he had urged Churches in Galatia to do, give as a congregation to meet a serious need. Clearly, if the apostle urged congregations to give for the benefit of those already Christians, he would also desire Churches to give to advance the Gospel among those who are not yet Christians.
426. When do Christians gather for worship? What do Christians do when they gather for worship? First Corinthians 16.2 answers those questions, in part: “Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” The congregation in Corinth gathered for worship on Sundays, rather than on the Jewish sabbath days of Saturday. As well, we see they were also directed to take up their offering on that day, surely at the time they gathered for worship. Therefore, one of the things Christians in Corinth were advised by the apostle to do when they gathered for worship was take up offerings, as we do here in following the example of the Corinthians.
427. Please notice something about the Corinthians’ giving to the cause of Christ in First Corinthians 16.3: “And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.” That word liberality translates the Greek word for grace. This shows that you are providing God’s grace to someone who benefits from your gift. Salvation is by grace through faith. We know that from Ephesians 2.8. But did you know that getting the Gospel message to someone so he or she can respond by faith and be saved by God’s grace is in itself also gracious? Thus, when you give to the cause of Christ you are a participant in, you are a means by which, God graciously provides the Gospel message to an unsaved person to hear and to then respond to.
428. Paul closed out his first letter to the Corinthian congregation in 16.23, where he wrote, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.” Interesting words. What do you suppose he meant? He was expressing his desire that the Corinthians avail themselves of God’s available grace by hearing and

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reading God's Word, by listening and responding to the preaching of God's Word, and of course by means of prayer and actually asking for God's grace. But how can one tell when God's grace has been received? One way is when after it has been received it is then given, such as when the Christian graciously gives. One way is by ministering grace to others via the spoken word, as Paul observed in Ephesians 4.29. Another way, which we saw in First Corinthians 16.3, is when Christians give through their Church to be a blessing to those with needs.

429. We know from First Corinthians 16.3 that God's grace is linked to Christian giving, and that as we minister grace to someone by with the words we speak and write so we also minister grace to others by means of the offerings we give. That said, can we understand Paul's words to the Corinthian congregation in Second Corinthians 1.2 apart from a careful consideration of our giving of offerings? "Grace *be* to you and peace *from* God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." I don't think so. Withhold words to benefit and you withhold grace. When the child of God withholds offerings the child of God also withholds grace. In Second Corinthians 1.7-10 the apostle made reference to the terrible suffering and discouragement he had endured at a point in his ministry. In verse 11 he commented on how God delivered him: "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf." God comforted him in his tribulation, verse 4, but by what means? By means of their prayers for him and their gift to him. God shows Himself to be the God of all comfort when Christians pray and when Christians give to advance the cause of Christ.
430. We know that Gospel ministers must sometimes travel to accomplish their various tasks. So it was with Paul, who had to get to Judea to give the brethren the offering he had raised to meet their dire need. The question is, how did Paul get there? By what means? He did not use any of the offering given to pay his travel expenses, that would be unethical. He wrote in Second Corinthians 1.16: "And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea." Notice that last phrase: "of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea." Part of our holy privilege as Christians in a Church is to help Gospel ministers get to where they need to go to properly represent Christ. That is only accomplished when we give.
431. In Second Corinthians 1.24 the Apostle Paul referred to the relationship that exists between those who receive the ministry of the Word from Gospel ministers and those Gospel ministers who are supported and advanced by the gifts of God's people by means of their offerings: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand." On our part, we are helpers of your joy without having dominion over your faith, while on your part you stand by faith, understanding that it is a faith that listens, responds, and accordingly gives to finance the Gospel ministry.
432. Anyone familiar with Paul's second letter to the Corinthian congregation will remember that chapters 8 and 9 contain Paul's comments to the Corinthians about the sacrificial giving of the desperately poor Macedonian Church members. With that in mind, let me read Second Corinthians 8.1: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia." Thus, the Apostle Paul appraises the Macedonian Churches' willingness to give to the cause of Christ despite the fact that they were very poor to God's grace bestowed on them. When God blesses His people they give.
433. Notice how the Apostle Paul described the product of God's grace in the lives of the Macedonian Church members, in Second Corinthians 8.2: "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of

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their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” They endured affliction, while they were in deep poverty, yet they had an abundance of joy and were liberal in their giving. Two conclusions can be drawn from this one verse: *First*, one can be greatly blessed of God while enduring affliction and being in poverty. *Second*, you can have joy when you have nothing else and you can still give if you choose to give even when you are in poverty. Those are facts to be admitted unless you deny the truthfulness of God’s Word.

434. Let me read to you Second Corinthians 8.3, wherein Paul describes the key ingredient that enabled poor and afflicted Christians to do what they simply could not do: “For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves.” When you see the word power in this verse, understand that what is meant is ability, might, the Greek word *δυναμις*. However, it is the phrase at the end of the verse that is especially telling, “willing of themselves,” the single Greek word *αυθαιρετος*. It means “voluntarily, of one’s own accord; i.e. ‘Spontaneously and voluntarily, out of one’s own initiative, without request and without coercion.’”⁵ Thus, you can do what you cannot do if you want to, and both the wanting to give and the ability to give will come not from you but from God, and it is called grace.
435. In Second Corinthians 8.4 the Apostle Paul informed the Corinthian congregation (who he had urged to give an offering for the beleaguered saints in Judea) about the request of the impoverished believers in Macedonia (who he had not invited to give an offering): “Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” Two things we learn from this verse: *First*, the very poor Christians in Macedonia literally begged Paul to let them give an offering, seeing it is a tremendous privilege and opportunity for them. *Second*, we see that Christians who give engage in “the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” and that those who do not give have no part in it. I suspect this causes non-givers to feel over time like outsiders and non-participants by their own choice to pass on the opportunity to participate. The remedy, of course, is to minister to the saints by giving.
436. In Second Corinthians 8.5 the Apostle Paul reveals what I identify as the heart sequence of events that led to the poor Macedonian Christians’ participation in the offering he was taking up: “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.” Here Paul explains that the Macedonians exceeded the wildest expectations of Paul and his missionary colleagues. How so? They did two things: *First*, they gave themselves unreservedly to the Lord. *Second*, having given themselves to the Lord they then gave themselves to the Lord’s servants. In practical language, they jumped in with both feet to do whatever they could to advance the cause of Christ with their gifts.
437. In Second Corinthians 8.6 we learn from the Apostle Paul that it was Titus who first visited the Corinthians and urged them to give to the special cause, and that Paul wanted Titus to be the one who brought things to a conclusion. However, we also learn that what was a grace for the Macedonians was also a grace for the Corinthians: “Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.” Though the Corinthians were not poor like the Macedonians, Paul pointed out that materially well off or not, giving is for the rich and the

⁵ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 479.

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poor and everyone in between very much a matter of God's grace; so much so that Paul's wording is "the same grace."

438. The Macedonian Christians with their little gave much. In Second Corinthians 8.7 the Apostle Paul turned his attention back to the Corinthians who, having much, he expected to give in corresponding manner: "Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also."
439. Be mindful that giving is identified in Second Corinthians 8.1 as a grace. To further clarify what the grace of giving is, he writes Second Corinthians 8.8: "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love." The Apostle Paul wants the Corinthians to know that participation in the special offering for the saints in Judea is not in any way obligatory. No Corinthian was required to give to that cause, though Paul does urge them to do so for two reasons: *First*, the impoverished Macedonians have set a wonderful example for them to follow. *Second*, it proves to the Jewish Christian community in Judea that the Gentile Christians in Corinth really love them. The same is true in our day. Though there are legitimate reasons to encourage Christians to give, there is no requirement set forth mandating that any believer gives freewill offerings.
440. In Second Corinthians 8.8 the Apostle Paul showed that giving offerings, though certainly not required, does follow the wonderful example provided to Christians and does exhibit the sincerity of a Christian's love for those who benefit from the gift. In Second Corinthians 8.9 the apostle showed that giving offerings is also a Christ-like gesture: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."
441. Good intentions do not always count for much unless there is follow through. A year before the Apostle Paul had asked the Corinthian Church members to consider giving to the special offering he was taking up and they indicated they wanted in and would participate. However, people frequently say they will do something only to back out at the last minute or come up with an excuse why they are unable to do what they have committed to doing. In Second Corinthians 8.10 he offered apostolic advice with respect to doing what you said you would do: "And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago." Thus, it is beneficial to you to do what you previously said you would do when it comes to giving to the cause of Christ.
442. Put yourself in the shoes of a Corinthian Church member. A need has been presented to you that can only be met by the freewill offerings of God's people. You have considered giving to meet that need. I now read what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in Second Corinthians 8.11 to encourage them to move from decision to action: "Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have." You were willing. Now perform the doing of it. However notice, your performance should come from "that which ye have." Do not give what you do not have.
443. Sadly, it is the case in many Churches that guilt motivation and unscriptural manipulation have been used to provoke people to give money they really do not have to give. To offset that type of thing, take note of what the Apostle Paul wrote to warn the Corinthians in Second Corinthians 8.12: "For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he

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hath not.” Here we see two requirements for Scriptural freewill offerings: *First*, a willing mind. You have to want to. *Then*, you have to have it to give it. “... not according to that he hath not.” No matter how badly you may want to give, unless and until you actually have it to give you cannot.

444. In Second Corinthians 8.13 the Apostle Paul explained his prohibition against giving what you do not have with this caution: “For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened.” Some profess to be Christians who could very well give to the cause of Christ, but they do not do so because they are willing to let others at the table pay for their meal, and to let others at the diner pay for their coffee. They are takers rather than givers, who make sure they leave their money at home when they step out of the house. Paul’s concern about not giving what you do not have is not for the purpose of enabling such people who are always looking for a free ride at Church. He wants us to know that.
445. In Second Corinthians 8.13 the Apostle Paul indicated what his directive did not seek to accomplish; giving a free ride to loafers who are cheapskates. In 8.14 he indicated what his directive did seek to accomplish: “But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality.” This is what makes congregational action by one and all so beneficial. Those who are able to give do so. You do what you can when you can, and someone who cannot now give will be able to give at another time.
446. In Second Corinthians 8.15 the Apostle Paul compared Christians in the Church giving what they can when they can and not giving when they cannot to the gathering of manna described in Exodus 16.18: “As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.” One guy gathered a lot of manna (more than he needed) while another gathered less than his family needed, but when each got home with the manna they found that God provided each family the amount they needed. Interesting, is it not? Paul compared the giving of money in freewill offerings of the Corinthians to the gathering of manna by the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings. In both instances the common factor is the unseen governing activity of God.
447. Still encouraging the Corinthian Christians to give as much as they can for the special offering, notice what Paul wrote in Second Corinthians 8.24: “Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.” Paul exhorted them to show by their giving the proof of their love so other congregations would be made aware. This is a far cry from keeping a Church’s giving a secret, is it not? Thus, we see two reasons to give in this verse: *First*, to meet the need at hand. *Second*, to encourage by your giving the giving of other congregations.
448. In Second Corinthians 9.4 we find the Apostle Paul referring to a facet of Christian giving that is very often overlooked: “Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.” He warned the Corinthians not to be unprepared. Most spiritual behavior is planned. You must decide what you are going to do and then formulate a plan that you then execute. The Corinthians had decided to give. They had apparently planned to give (with help from Paul, First Corinthians 16.1-4). However, it was up to them to execute the plan and actually give what they had purposed to give. If you do not actually do what you have decided and planned to do you will be, in Paul’s words, “unprepared.” That is not good.

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449. In Second Corinthians 9.5 the Apostle Paul explained that he had written to explain how he exhorted the Corinthians to do what they had formerly committed to doing: “Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a *matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness.” First, he sent men to remind them to do what they had purposed to do. Then, he wrote this letter to further spur them to action. Thus, we see that it is entirely legitimate and spiritual to encourage Christians and Churches to do what they have committed to doing of their own free will, and to provoke them by words to doing the right thing.
450. To further encourage the Corinthians in their giving, Paul invoked the principle of sowing and reaping that applies to every area of life, Second Corinthians 9.6: “But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” Thus, when you give to the cause of Christ you are both sowing and reaping. If you give sparingly your sowing and reaping are correspondingly sparse. If you give bountifully your sowing and reaping are correspondingly bountiful. Is it a reach to connect a Christian’s giving to sowing and reaping, an allusion to our Lord’s parable of the soils in which that which is sown is the Word of God? Paul didn’t seem to think so.
451. In Second Corinthians 9.7 the Apostle Paul made mention of the Christian’s freewill offerings: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Who decides who gives? You do. What if you don’t want to give freewill offerings? Then don’t. What if you do want to give freewill offerings? Then do. Who decides how much you give? You do. Recognize that the Corinthian Church, just like every other New Testament Church of Jesus Christ, is a free association of born again, Scripturally baptized believers, who are brought together to worship and serve God with Jesus Christ as our Head and the Word of God as our guide. We do this because we want to, with reliance upon God’s Word to know what we ought to want to do.
452. In Second Corinthians 9.8 the Apostle Paul wrote, “And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work.” Here Paul declared that God provides grace so you will have both the desire and the means to sufficiently abound to every good work. In other words, God has you covered by His grace, available to you through the means of prayer, Scripture, preaching, and the ministering of grace to you by other believers, so you can live the Christian life and give the Christian life.
453. In Second Corinthians 9.12 the Apostle Paul provided the reason he was taking up an offering from the various Churches on behalf of the believers in Judea: “For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.” Two simultaneous results derive from these impoverished Christians’ freewill offerings: The Judean Christians’ want is met. That is, their need is met. And God will be abundantly thanked by so many, both those who have received and also by those who gave. If the result is that God is thanked, and the needs of Christians are met, what reason is there for not giving?
454. Notice what Paul wrote in Second Corinthians 9.13 in connection with the freewill offerings collected for the starving saints in Judea: “Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*.” The starving believers will be fed, and God will be thanked, according to verse 12. Verse 13 declares that God will be glorified as a direct result of those Christians giving to

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feed Christians, because of their subjection to the Gospel of Christ. Such things happen when Christians give freely.

455. I read Second Corinthians 9.14, in which Paul provided yet another benefit of giving freewill offerings: “And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.” Those who benefit from your gifts will pray for you. Who does not need prayers sent heavenward on his behalf? Those who are blessed as a result of your freewill offerings are of the opinion that God has exceedingly graced you. Are they wrong? No, they are not wrong. When you give freewill offerings, you should recognize that by so doing you demonstrate that God has given you abundant grace to so affect your mind and heart and so influence your material situation that you can and do such a wonderful thing.
456. In Second Corinthians 9.15 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.” What was he referring to when he wrote of God’s unspeakable gift? Perhaps it was the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the context of the verse suggests that Paul referred to Christ’s work in the life of the believer who gives such a freewill offering. In a world of takers, the Christian who gives freely of his substance to be a blessing to those he will never in this lifetime meet or receive thanks from has received an unspeakable gift from God. For that, the giving Christian should be thankful.
457. Let me read to you Second Corinthians 11.7-9:
- 7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?
- 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service.
- 9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.
- Paul here reminds the Corinthians that his evangelistic ministry to them cost them nothing. He used freewill offerings from other congregations to support his efforts to bring the Gospel to them and was, therefore, chargeable to no man. As a matter of fact, the money he used to bring the Gospel to them was money given by the poor Macedonians. That said, since others gave so that you might hear the Gospel and be saved, what will you do to advance the Gospel to others?
458. In Second Corinthians 12.13 the Apostle Paul asked the Corinthian congregation to forgive him. What was the wrong he sought their forgiveness for? I read the verse: “For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.” The Apostle Paul asked them to forgive him for not asking for contributions to the cause of Christ from them. He admitted he was wrong for not asking them to give offerings. How distorted is the thinking of so many that they think it is wrong to ask for offerings to the cause of Christ rather than it being wrong not to ask, thereby denying to Christians the great blessing of giving so the Gospel can be advanced? Something to consider as we prepare for our offering.
459. In Galatians 6.6 the Apostle Paul sought to address one consequence of the Judaizing influence of false teachers, which was a disrespectful attitude toward Gospel ministers that was revealed by Church members who withdrew their financial and material support of the ministry: “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” This reflects what he had taught in First Corinthians 9.14: “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” Thus, it seems to have been a widespread issue, Christians willingly

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receiving from Gospel ministers their teaching and instruction but unwilling to provide for Gospel ministers by their giving.

460. What a wonderful heavenly Father we have, who so willingly gave to us His only begotten Son. What a wonderful Savior we have who not only gave Himself for us on the cross of Calvary to suffer, bleed, and die for our sins, but also after His glorious resurrection and ascension to God's right hand on high has further given to us gifts, according to Ephesians 4.8: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Who are these gifts? Ephesians 4.11: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." How wonderful for God and His Son to give so freely and graciously to us. How significant it is, therefore, that we be willing to give to our Lord for the support of His gifts and the advancement of His Gospel.
461. Ephesians 4.28: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." God the Father is a giver. The Lord Jesus Christ is a giver. The Holy Spirit of God is a giver. Those who are adopted by the Father, saved by the Son, and indwelt by the Spirit are so affected by the Triune God that we gradually begin to reflect certain aspects of our God's nature, one aspect being that of a giver rather than a taker. That is one reason why Christians give to the cause of Christ, instead of only taking from the Christian ministry the Gospel message and the Bible instruction that are provided, to support the Gospel ministry here and advance the Gospel ministry there.
462. In Ephesians 5.2 the Apostle Paul wrote, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." Is it not wonderful that the Savior gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God on our behalf? How important it is, therefore, for those of us who are blood-bought and blood-washed children of God to reciprocate by giving to advance the cause of Christ. Is this not truly walking in love, as Christ also hath loved us?
463. In Ephesians 5.7 the Apostle decried the conduct of the unsaved and urged his readers with the following words, "Be not ye therefore partakers with them." Our conduct should be *nothing* like the behavior of those who do not know the Savior. The apostle went on to write in verse 10, "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." To prove means to examine and to try, the way a chemist would subject material to a laboratory analysis to determine its nature and its value. Thus, Christians are not to act like the lost, but are to examine, are to try, are to put to the test what is acceptable unto the Lord. This is not limited to giving, of course, but neither does this exclude giving to the cause of Christ.
464. In Ephesians 5.16, as part of his general encouragement to his Christian readers to apply the principles of Christian doctrine to their newfound life in Christ, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." To redeem the time means to recover it from loss, to make the best use of your time. We are to do this because time, once gone, can never be recovered in these evil days. However, what is money but your time? If you are paid ten dollars per hour then \$100 is ten hours of your time monetized. Have you ever considered that one way of redeeming the time, recovering it from loss and making best use of it might be to give a portion of it to the cause of Christ? Is that not one way of putting your valuable time to best use, rather than allowing it to slip away through the casual and indifferent use of your money?

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465. Flying home from a funeral several years ago, I sat next to a young couple on the plane on their way to Las Vegas. They might have been thirty years of age, did not dress or speak in such a way to indicate they were either educated or successful. Yet they were going to Las Vegas to blow a large amount of money that could certainly have been put to better use. Ephesians 5.17: “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.” Is it the Lord’s will that you give all your money to the cause of Christ? No, it usually is not. Is it the Lord’s will that you give none of your money to the cause of Christ? No, it is not. To discern the will of the Lord you must acquire wisdom. But what folly it must be to simply throw your money away on nonsensical and ridiculous pursuits that not only have no effect on eternity, but waste opportunities to provide for your own future in this present life.
466. In Ephesians 5.25 we see that Christ’s love for us was demonstrated in the same fashion as is a husband’s love for his wife, by giving. How then is one’s love for God or one’s love for the Savior to be expressed? Kind words? Affectations of tenderness or intimacy? Or costly acts of giving? Remember what David said in Second Samuel 24.24, when Araunah offered to give him the threshing floor on which the Temple would later be built? He would not offer to the LORD burnt offerings which cost him nothing. David knew that what you give to the LORD, for your gift to be meaningful worship, should be costly to you.
467. Sometimes passages in God’s Word require an awareness of Christian giving to fully understand them. Philippians 1.3-5 is just such a passage:
- 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,
4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,
5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.
- The Apostle Paul expressed thanks in prayer for the fellowship in the Gospel he had enjoyed with the Philippians from the first day until the occasion of writing this letter. Do you have any idea what such fellowship is? Have you ever experienced such fellowship with others in the Gospel yourself so that you would know what it is? Many professing Christians admittedly have not. Fellowship in the Gospel includes but is not limited to working with someone to get the Gospel out, praying with someone to plead with God to bless, experiencing with someone else the ups and downs of exhilaration over conversions and disappointments due to betrayals and discouragements. And then there is the money, the giving and the receiving that makes ministry possible. The usual fellowship in the Gospel a church member has with a missionary is when he gives to support missions.
468. In Philippians 1.7, writing from Roman imprisonment, Paul said, “Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.” How do you think they were all partakers of Paul’s grace? First, those were partakers of Paul’s grace who had come to Christ by means of his Gospel ministry. However, even those Christians not brought to Christ under Paul’s ministry could be (and were) partakers of his grace by their involvement in his ministry through the means of prayer and freewill offerings giving to support his ministry enterprise.
469. From Paul’s letter to the Philippians I read 4.9: “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” Do you think it was at all possible to learn, to receive, to hear, to see, and then to do as Paul wrote it here to the Philippians without being fully committed to the support, by prayer and by freewill offerings, of

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missions? Thus, to follow the example of Paul, who followed the example of Christ, a Christian must give to missions.

470. I read Philippians 4.10, written by the Apostle Paul from Roman imprisonment: “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.” What was their care of him that had only recently flourished after previously they had lacked opportunity? Was it the sending of Epaphroditus to them? I don’t think so, since Caesarea, where he had previously been imprisoned for three years, was actually more convenient to Philippi. Their care of him is properly understood to be their freewill gifts of money to support his missionary activity.
471. Philippians 4.13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” This is an oft quoted verse. Some people favor only the first half, “I can do all things,” which is simply not true. Others quote the entire verse while ignoring its context: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” It was the statement of a Christian devoted to the will of God for his life and absolutely committed to obeying God. Thus, this verse is properly understood as meaning that Christ will empower His servant to undertake and to succeed in his service to Him. Thus, if the Savior wants you to support His ministry with your freewill giving, He will enable you to do just that.
472. In Philippians 4.14 the Apostle Paul congratulated the Philippian congregation for giving financial support to him during his time of distress: “Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.” Why did he use the word “communicate?” Because translating the Greek root word for communion, when you give to support a missionary like Paul who is going through dire financial difficulties, you actually become a partner with him in his ministry when you financially support his ministry. This is what giving to missions is all about.
473. In Philippians 4.15 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.” Paul acknowledged that the Philippian Christians had always generously supported his ministry, from their earliest days as Christians, whenever they possibly could, and to a degree of faithfulness unequalled by other congregations. I would like to think our Church will rise to that level of faithfulness.”
474. In Philippians 4.16 the Apostle Paul wrote, “For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.” My goodness. Paul was only in Thessalonica for a bit more than three weeks. Therefore, this verse shows how very timely the Philippians were in their giving to support his efforts to advance the Gospel. Let us understand that timing when giving can also be very important.
475. What Paul wrote in Philippians 4.17 is most illuminating: “Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.” We know from Romans 1.13 and 15.28 that giving to advance the cause of Christ was labeled by Paul as “fruit.” From John 15.1-8 we learn from the Savior that conversions are also fruit. However, it is in this verse that the Apostle Paul connects the two for us, showing that the giving of money to advance the cause of Christ very definitely results in “fruit that may abound to your account.”
476. Philippians 4.18: “But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.” Here the Apostle Paul likened the money Epaphroditus brought from the Philippian congregation to him in Rome to burnt offerings given to God that produced “an odour of a sweet smell,” that was “a

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sacrifice acceptable,” and that was “wellpleasing to God.” Therefore, when you give to missions to advance the Gospel, be sure your gift given God’s way to advance God’s cause is a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice given to God.

477. Philippians 4.19 is another of those oft-quoted and frequently misunderstood verses: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” This is not a blanket promise made to all Christians everywhere. Paul was writing to an assembly of born again, Scripturally baptized, believers in Jesus Christ, who were actively engaged in the support and advance of the Gospel ministry. God’s promise of supplying to meet needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus was made to active and engaged members in congregations such as that.
478. In Colossians 1.13 we read of but a single of the many results of sinners coming to Jesus Christ by faith through the preaching of the blessed Gospel: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son.” When someone becomes a Christian he is instantaneously translated by God from one sphere of existence to another that is entirely different, though occupying the same physical space. From the kingdom of the power of darkness, the new believer in Jesus Christ now occupies “the kingdom of his dear Son.” I ask you, who would not give to missions so that such transformations are made possible by taking the Gospel message to the four corners of the globe? I submit to you they are those who have not themselves been so transformed.
479. Notice what happens according to Colossians 1.14 when a sinner comes to faith in Christ, when he responds to the preaching of the Gospel message: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.” Redemption! The forgiveness of sins! How wonderful is that? When you give to advance the cause of Christ, when you finance the spread of the Gospel message, when you enable Christ’s name to be made known among the heathen, the result is redemption through Christ’s blood and the forgiveness of sins.
480. Notice what Paul wrote in Colossians 1.23: “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” He wrote, “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.” Who would not continue in the faith? I submit to you they are those who claim to be Christians who do not pray, who do not read God’s Word, who do not give, who do not witness, and who do not display for all to see the fruit of the Spirit in their personalities. It is said by some that if God does not have your wallet He does not have your heart, and if He does not have your heart He certainly does not have your soul.
481. Encouraging his readers who have received Christ Jesus the Lord to also walk in Him, let me read what Paul wrote in Colossians 2.7: ‘Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.’ Notice how he likened the Christian to a healthy tree, with roots growing deep and trunk growing high, established in the Christian faith, “as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” What were they taught to do? What did they abound in doing with thanksgiving? Can anyone imagine a vibrant and growing Christian who does not give freely to support the advance of the Gospel? I am certain the Apostle Paul could not.
482. Let me read the Apostle Paul’s opening remarks to the first Church he wrote an inspired letter to, only weeks after being with them but a short time, First Thessalonians 1.2-5:

² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

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- ³ Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
- ⁴ Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.
- ⁵ For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Paul wrote to them, “For our gospel came... unto you.” The Gospel is a message that has to be conveyed. It has to be brought and actually delivered to people. That is what happens when you give to advance the cause of Christ. You enable a missionary to go with the Gospel message to those who need it most.

- 483. First Thessalonians 1.7 reads, “So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.” And good examples they were, as we find out from Second Corinthians chapters 8 and 9, which tells of the sacrificial giving of the Macedonian Churches. Every Christian is an example to others, whether you are consciously aware of it or not. What kind of example are you setting with respect to giving for your children, for your extended family, for your Christian friends? What kind of example are we setting for other Churches to follow? We are setting an example. The question is what kind of example?
- 484. Notice what Paul wrote in First Thessalonians 2.18: “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.” How do you suppose Satan hindered Paul from coming to minister to that congregation in a time of need? Was it physical persecution only? Or could Satan have hindered Paul’s movements by restricting his resources so that he could not afford to travel? Did Satan hinder Paul by influencing Christians not to give, to hold on to their offerings, and thereby restrict the missionary’s material resources? I hope Satan never hinders a missionary’s activities because of any stinginess on my part.
- 485. Listen to the Apostle Paul’s comment to the baby Christians in the newly established Church in Thessalonica only weeks after bringing them to Christ. I read First Thessalonians 3.6: “But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you.” Faith, charity, and good remembrance. Do you think Paul was referring to kind words only relayed to him by Timothy from the Thessalonians? I do not. I think those wonderful new Christians immediately began to give as a token of their love for Christ and the Apostle Paul, doing what they could to support the advance the glorious Gospel.
- 486. I read Second Thessalonians 2.13-14:
 - ¹³ But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:
 - ¹⁴ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.Paul declares that God had from the beginning chosen those Thessalonian believers to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. That is in verse 13. In verse 14 he declares the means whereby that salvation and sanctification is made known; “by our gospel.” Thus, it is the declaration of the Gospel that is the means whereby God makes His eternal purpose known in an individual; he hears the Gospel and savingly responds to the gospel by trusting Christ. I ask you therefore, should not that means, the advance of the Gospel so that God’s purpose could be made

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known, be financed by God's people? We give so that the Gospel is advanced, so that we might come to see by their responses to the Gospel, who has been chosen to salvation and sanctification by God.

487. I lift a phrase from Paul's first epistle to Timothy, First Timothy 2.3-4: "God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Is that not something everyone should be made aware of, everyone should hear, everyone should be told? No matter his background, disposition, religion, or geographical location, does not every human being have the right to be told that God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth? Yet how are people to be told unless and until those who already know commit themselves to seeing this truth spread? And how is this truth to be spread but by giving?
488. One of the most important passages that identifies the Lord Jesus Christ as the sole mediator appointed by God is First Timothy 2.5-6:
- ⁵ For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;
⁶ Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
- Interesting to note, the last phrase of the passage reads, "to be testified in due time." This refers to telling people the truth in a timely fashion, making sure they are giving the information about God's will for all men to be saved and His sending His Son Jesus Christ the only Mediator to make it happen. How is this truth to be told? How is this reality to be made known? Christians must give.
489. First Timothy 3.16 is one of the truly great verses in God's Word: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Notice, however, that before Christ can be believed on in the world He must be preached unto the Gentiles. How is that done? By what means is that expensive and complicated effort accomplished? If you figure out a way for Christ to be preached unto the Gentiles in a personal way without great expense that is met by the gifts of individual Christians, please let me know.
490. In First Timothy 5.3 the Apostle Paul directed Timothy to "Honour widows that are widows indeed." The question is what did he mean by honoring widows that are widows indeed? Did he mean being respectful, addressing them with courtesy and such as that? If you read the next thirteen verses it become clear that Timothy was being instructed to lead the congregation to provide for the material needs of a certain class of individual, a widow of a certain age and meeting certain qualifications. One might ask where the money was supposed to come from to take care of such a woman? It was supposed to come from God's people through their Church giving. What kind of a religion does not take care of the old widows who have given their lives to the service of the Gospel? What kind of a Christian does not give to take care of such qualified women as they certainly are? Honor, then, means money.
491. If honor refers to money in First Timothy 5.3, what do you think double honor means in First Timothy 5.17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour"? Especially when considering what Paul wrote in the next verse: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward." As the draft animal is to be fed from the field of its labor, so the Gospel minister is to be provided for from the field of his labor. Honor, in verse 17, refers to what honor referred to in verse 3, money, material provision, meeting the Gospel minister's physical needs. The same Christian who gives to provide for qualified widows also gives to provide for his spiritual leaders who feed his soul with spiritual nourishment.

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492. In First Timothy 6.7 Paul wrote, “For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.” Why do you suppose Paul wrote those words to Timothy? Could it have something to do with the material needs of the congregation where he served and the importance of advancing the Gospel? Something to consider as we prepare to take up the offering.
493. Have you ever considered the implications of Paul’s words to Timothy in First Timothy 6.8? “And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” You have enough to eat and good clothes to wear. How much more do you need? Not to deny your physical needs and the proper exercise of good stewardship, but it seems to me that Paul was calling into question the entire pattern of more, always more, ever more. Have you ever considered that the reason God gives you more might not be so that you will have more, but so you will be able to give more?
494. Is it always better to have more? Is it always better to be richer than poorer? Consider what Paul wrote to Timothy in First Timothy 6.9: “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” Who would deny that God’s Word reveals that a number of God’s choice servants were men of wealth and power, but that God’s Word also declares that increased riches means increased danger? Temptations, snares, foolish and hurtful lusts, that poorer people are not exposed to, can drown rich men in destruction and perdition. These are important considerations when deciding how much of what you earn you should keep, versus how much of what you earn you should give to the cause of Christ.
495. Have you ever thought about the love of money? Paul wrote in First Timothy 6.10, “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Do you love money? You don’t have to have money to love money. Just know that coveting after money, wanting money really badly, has caused some people to err from the faith and to cause great sorrow in their lives. One way of making sure you do not love money is to faithfully and generously give to the cause of Christ. It is very difficult, after all, to err from the faith when you are committed through giving to spreading the faith.
496. Listen carefully as I read the closing passage of Paul’s first letter to Timothy, First Timothy 6.17-19:
- 17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;
- 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;
- 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Paul told Timothy what to urge upon Christians who are wealthy; that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, that they do good, ready to distribute, willing to communicate (meaning share what they have), laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come (meaning heaven). In short, Paul told Timothy that he needed to encourage Christians who are rich to be generous in doing good works, in distributing what they have, and to be big givers.

497. It doesn’t take long for a Christian to learn from Bible reading that Timothy was mentored in his Christian life and service by the Apostle Paul, who loved him very much. Consider what Paul wrote to young Timothy in Second Timothy 2.1: “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Would either Paul have intended, or would Timothy have understood, Paul’s exhortation to be strong in grace, without recollecting what was written in Second Corinthians 8.1

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concerning God's grace bestowed on the Churches in Macedonia as seen in their sacrificial giving? It is unimaginable that Paul could think his beloved Timothy would be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus without him also being generous in his giving to the cause of Christ. Timothy, too, could not have imagined himself to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus unless he was eagerly committed to Christian giving. Grace and sacrificial giving are, after all, inseparable.

498. Notice what Paul wrote in Second Timothy 2.2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Did Paul have a reputation for, among other things, generosity? He certainly did. He was always giving of his time, giving of his means, giving of every aspect of his life and assets to advance the cause of Christ. That was what Timothy was called upon to commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.
499. We who are Christians need to learn to be tough-minded, to not be quick to quit, to stick by the stuff when we are tired, when we are weary, when we don't feel good. In Second Timothy 2.3 Paul wrote, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Toughen up, Christian. Don't stay home because you are tired. Don't bail out because you had a hard day. Don't stop giving because finances are a bit tough. No matter how soft you might have been at the time of your conversion to Christ, make sure you understand that God's transformative work in your personality by His Spirit is intent on you becoming tough-minded, on you becoming resilient, on you becoming durable, on you becoming tenacious to get the job done and to advance the Gospel by whatever means and by whatever cost. A Christian may start out his new life in Christ as a soft and wimpy fellow, but by God's grace we should not remain that way. As good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we learn to endure hardness of every kind without compromising our duty or our mission.
500. In Second Timothy 2.10 the Apostle Paul provided for Timothy one of his personal motives for ministry: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul would not stop serving, would not stop witnessing, would not stop praying, and would not stop giving... for the elect's sake." To be sure, he did what he did for Christ's sake, but not only for Christ's sake. Paul had an eye on Christians and those who would become Christians at all times, and he wanted Timothy to do likewise. We should do the same. When you go home after Church, when do you go home? Is your departure time determined by consideration of the Savior and the elect? When you serve, how and in what manner do you serve? Is your service conducted with consideration of the Savior and the elect? When you give, do you give faithfully, generously, with joy and delight? Is there thought of the Savior when you give? Is there thought of the elect when you give, both those who know Christ and those who do not yet but who will come to know Christ? Think of them as well as Him when you give.
501. It seems very bizarre to us today to consider the existence of a slave-owning Christian, an actual believer in Jesus Christ who owned slaves, but such was the case in the first century after Christ. It was to one such slave-owning believer that the Apostle Paul wrote these words in Philemon 6: "That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." The short letter was written about matters pertaining to a runaway slave named Onesimus, but part of what Paul wrote concerns the sharing of Philemon's faith becoming effectual, or effective. It would be difficult to understand how a Christian man's faith could be effectively spread so long as he was reluctant to give to the cause of Christ.

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502. Most of us have heard professing Christians claim that tithing is not for today because tithing was God's plan for His people under the Law of Moses. And indeed it was. However, that does not mean tithing was a principle known only under the Law. Consider Hebrew 7.1-3, where the writer to the Hebrews made reference to Abraham and Melchizedek, who lived four hundred years before the Law was given:

- ¹ For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;
- ² To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;
- ³ Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Though the purpose of the passage is certainly to show Melchizedek as a type of Christ who was honored by Abraham, the patriarch of the Israelites, attention is called to the fact that Abraham gave him a tenth, a tithe. Thus, tithing is reported in the life of Abraham more than four centuries before the command to tithe was given to the Jewish people via Moses on Mount Sinai, showing us that tithing cannot be condemned for being a practice employed only by those living under the Law.

503. In Hebrews 7.4-7 the real principle of tithing is presented, having nothing to do with the Law of Moses:

- ⁴ Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.
- ⁵ And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:
- ⁶ But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.
- ⁷ And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

If Abraham showed Melchizedek's greatness by tithing to him, then those who descended from Abraham (and lived under the Law) were in a sense inferior to Abraham, and therefore inferior to Melchizedek though they tithed according to the Law. Thus, what we see is that the principle of the lesser giving to the greater still applies with or without the Law of Moses.

504. Hebrews 7.8 is an interesting comment on the matter of tithing: "And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." Hebrews points out that under the Law of Moses the Jewish people gave tithes to priests who all eventually died. Melchizedek, on the other hand, who we believe to be the preincarnate Christ, lives forever. Therefore, tithes given to Him are tithes given to one who does not die, a very different thing than was the giving of tithes by the Jewish people under the Law of Moses.

505. Hebrews 7.9-10:

- ⁹ And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.
- ¹⁰ For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

Is it not interesting that when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, his great-grandson Levi, the head of the priestly tribe, was in essence paying tithes to Melchizedek? Yet Jews under the Law paid tithes to the priests of the tribe of Levi. Jewish people paying tithes to a priestly Levite, who in turn paid tithes through his ancestor Abraham to Melchizedek. Thus, in a sense, those under the Law were honoring through their ancestor Abraham the priest-king Melchizedek, the preincarnate Christ. The

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matter of honoring Christ is a timeless principle, not restricted in any way to the dispensation of the Law of Moses.

506. In Hebrews 8.3-4 we read, “For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.” Priests offer gifts and sacrifices. So Christ, so the Aaronic order, and so Christians who are believer priests, according to Revelation 1.6. Our sacrifices are prayers, and our gifts are offerings. What would you think of a professing believer, which is to say a professing priest, who does not act like a priest, offering neither the sacrifice of prayer or the gifts of offerings?
507. In Hebrews 10.31 we read, “*It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Those who read this verse and take its truth to heart are motivated to do their part to advance the Gospel message, which is the power of God unto salvation. The only alternative to falling into the hands of the living God is exposure to the Gospel and a response by trusting Christ. Christians give so the whole world can hear this vital message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
508. In Hebrews 10.38 we read, “Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” First seen in Habakkuk 2.4, the phrase “the just shall live by faith” is repeated three times in the New Testament including the verse I just read. However, most who read the Bible seem unaware that “the just shall live by faith” refers not only to how the spiritually dead come to be spiritually alive through faith in Jesus Christ that brings about conversion. It also refers to the lifestyle of the believer after conversion, and is the very life pattern of the genuinely born again Christian. Thus, “the just shall live by faith” is not only the clarion sound of a Gospel sermon, but also of the offering time when the saints give to support the Gospel ministry.
509. Notice what we find in Hebrews 11.4: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” A person, as in the case of Abel, actually obtains witness of his righteousness in the sight of God by means of his gifts to God. Thus, the real impact of your gifts to God are known only to God, Himself.
510. In Hebrews 13.16 we read, “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” C. H. Spurgeon wrote about this verse, “Give help in money, in comfort, and in instruction, as men require it.”⁶ Adam Clarke wrote, “These are continual sacrifices which God requires, and which will spring from a sense of God’s love in Christ Jesus. Praise to God for his unspeakable gift, and acts of kindness to men for God’s sake. No reliance, even on the infinitely meritorious sacrifice of Christ, can be acceptable in the sight of God if a man have not love and charity towards his neighbour. Praise, prayer, and thanksgiving to God, with works of charity and mercy to man, are the sacrifices which every genuine follower of Christ must offer: and they are the proofs that a man belongs to Christ; and he who does not bear these fruits gives full evidence, whatever his *creed* may be, that he is no Christian.”
511. In Luke 6.38 we read a portion of our Lord’s sermon on the mount: “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.” However, it is James 1.22 that I urge you to consider: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,

⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Devotional Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

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deceiving your own selves.” Thus, the person who only hears God’s Word without properly obeying God’s Word, such as our Lord’s admonition to give, deceives himself.

512. I read James 1.23-24:

²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

We are here told that it is not a good thing for anyone to hear but not then do God’s Word. Such a person is likened to someone who sees himself in a mirror but who simply does not learn, including learning the benefit of giving to the cause of Christ in compliance with the Savior’s wishes.

513. I read James 4.17: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.” Is it good to give to the cause of Christ? Is it God’s will for His children to advance His cause with their giving? We know from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians that no one is to give what you do not have. However, if you can give to advance the Gospel, but you do not do this good thing you know you should do, it is a sin.

514. In Third John 2, a verse that is likely quite familiar to you, the Apostle refers to the three areas of a believer’s life and the priority placed upon them by God: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” Thus, we have prosperity of the soul (or spiritual well-being), prosperity of the body (which is one’s physical health), and material prosperity, with the most important listed first and the least important listed last. We know from the entirety of God’s Word that God’s will for His children is that we be, like He, givers. Some of God’s children, obviously, want to give but they cannot because you cannot give what you do not have. However, those who can give to advance the cause of Christ most assuredly should give to advance the cause of Christ. That is indisputable.

515. In Third John 4 we read, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” To be sure, a spiritual father figure, any spiritual leader, is thrilled when those who are his spiritual heirs walk in the truth. That certainly includes doing what they can, by witnessing and by giving, to advance the cause of our precious Lord.

516. I read Third John 5-8:

⁵ Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

⁶ Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

⁷ Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

⁸ We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

Admittedly, poverty was a significant factor in the lives of most first century Christians. Notice, however, what was done (and what could be done today) by those who have little or no money to give. To help advance the cause of Christ, John commended those who helped traveling preachers by providing a place for them to sleep and by sharing their food. In other words, use your imagination concerning how you can advance the cause of Christ in a practical way even when you have no money to give. I assure you, it is wonderfully received by God.

517. Jude 20-22:

²⁰ But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

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21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference.

Is it not compassion that is a big reason why we give, especially to missions and for outreach to our own community? After all, people are without hope, dead in trespasses and sins, facing damnation for their sins unless they hear the Gospel and respond to the saving of their souls. How can we not do what we can, all the while praying to God that He would enable us to do what we cannot do, to bring the good news that Jesus Christ saves to the world, both far away and nearby?

518. I read the final verse of the very small epistle written by Jude. Jude 25:

“To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

The Savior is unique. Only He can and will save by means of faith in His name, that is brought into a sinner’s bosom by the Holy Spirit with the preaching of God’s Word. How can we not do what we can, when we can, where we can, to make Him known among all men. The lost, you see, have no other hope.

519. In Revelation 2.4 we find a portion of the glorified Lord Jesus Christ’s letter dispatched to the angel of the Church of Ephesus: “Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” While generally commending this man we take to be the pastor of the Church in Ephesus, the Savior admonished him for leaving his first love. What is leaving your first love? Diminished prayer life? Lackadaisical approach to ministry? Unfaithfulness in giving? Perhaps all of these things reflect a life that is no longer singularly devoted to the believer’s most important relationship, his relationship with his Savior.

520. After admonishing the angel of the Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2.4, the Savior directed him to repent in Revelation 2.5: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Though many think repentance is purely a heart matter, it is clear from our Savior’s words that addressing a spiritual problem requires action on the part of the Christian, to remember, to repent, and to repeat what things were previously done. Did you used to pray? Then pray again. Did you used to attend every Church service? Then do so again. Did you used to serve faithfully? Do that as well. Did you used to give with enthusiasm? Once more, return to previous deeds.

521. We read that our glorified Lord rebuked the angel of the Church of Sardis with these words: “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” The word translated “perfect” in this verse is the Greek word for fullness. In other words, that pastor had stopped doing something he used to do and should have done. In the next verse the Savior directed him to “remember” and “repent.” In other words, reflect back on what he used to routinely and faithfully do and repent of the sin of not doing that good thing still. What do you think it was this fellow had stopped doing? Did he stop praying like he used to pray? Did he stop giving like he used to give? Did he stop reading and studying his Bible like he used to? Had he stopped witnessing? Whatever it is he used to do and should do again, he is told to repent and fulfill his duty as a Christian.

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522. The scene of Revelation 4.10 is heaven, after the Rapture, with God sitting on His throne and twenty-four elders sitting nearby. Then, “The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne....” The casting of their crowns before the throne is a worshipful act of giving back to God what He had first graciously given them. So you see, this practice and glorious habit of giving to God offerings to honor Him and to worship Him never stops. We who are believers begin to do this upon our conversion to Christ, continue doing this throughout our Christian lives, and will be continually engaged in this practice throughout eternity. Giving is practicing for life in heaven.
523. The scene is heaven before the throne of God, with the elders having just fallen before God in an attitude of worship. Notice, from Revelation 4.11, what they will say: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” This verse tells us the reasoning behind everything God does. However, notice that the twenty-four elders say in unison, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power.” Worthy to receive honor. Yet we know from Proverbs 3.9 that God is honored with the first fruits of our increase. Thus, this matter of honoring God with your giving is a timeless principle, practiced before the giving of the Law of Moses, practiced when the Law of Moses was in effect, practiced during our age of God’s glorious grace, and a principle to be observed in heaven in eternity future. God is worthy of honor, and one of the ways in which He is honored is when His people give to Him the first fruits of their increase.

524. Revelation 7.11-12 records a scene that begins in heaven with angels, elders, and four beasts standing before the throne of God:

- ¹¹ And all the angels stood round *about* the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,
¹² Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

From Proverbs 3.9 we understand that God is honored with the first fruits of our increase. Therefore, we must wonder if on this occasion when these three kinds of God’s creatures are on their faces before Him and among the comments they make as they worship is a reference to honor, they also give to Him an offering that is not specifically mentioned. Though we do not know for sure, there seems to be a pattern in Scripture showing a link between giving God honor that is due Him and also giving Him offerings.

525. Those of us who are of the pretribulational and premillennial disposition are convinced Revelation chapter 19 is a record of events in heaven in what is yet the future, leading up to the Second Coming of our glorious Lord in power and great glory. Thus, Revelation 19.6-7 records a heavenly choir who sing praises to the Lord God that pique our interest. I read:

- ⁶ And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”? Does honor here reflect the giving of offerings, as it usually does elsewhere in the Bible? Is this a reference to wedding gifts being given to the Lamb of God in

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preparation for the marriage of the Lamb? Will gifts be given to the Lord even in heaven as they have been given to Him by His own throughout human history here on earth? It seems so.

Appendix A

- In his biography of C. H. Spurgeon, well-known Church historian Tom Nettles notes that Spurgeon was convinced the sanctification of the Christian demanded that he see his earthly wealth as a means of heavenly glory. “Men should not boast, but give,” Spurgeon said. As well, “A man who is perfect before the Lord lays out his substance for God’s cause, depend on that.”⁷ Some things to ponder as we prepare for our offering time.
- In his biography of C. H. Spurgeon, notable Church historian Tom Nettles quotes Mr. Spurgeon as declaring, “We are persuaded the bait of ‘No collections’ is needless and demoralizing.” This was Spurgeon reflecting on the effect on Gospel ministers of those who receive spiritual blessings but who do not give offerings to support those same men. He continued, “To teach men to give of their substance for the spread of the Gospel is a part of the Gospel, and tends greatly for their own benefit.”⁸
- “Do you have any idea how encouraging it is to receive an offering in the mail from someone who cannot attend a Church service, for reasons of ailment, health considerations, or travel? My wife and I always give whether we are here or on vacation, and we also give a love offering for the visiting speaker who takes my place. Is it just me getting jaded in my old age, or do others entertain the suspicion that some people give an offering as a fee for services rendered, and when they don’t attend, they don’t give. Others, however, seem to have a grasp on the grace of giving, which is a tremendous blessing to the ministry.”
- ***Current Thoughts and Trends*** summarized an article by Steve Thurman in the “Evangelical Beacon” as to how a believer can judge when he or she is guilty of becoming materialistic. The first thing on his list was this: “When you worry about your money instead of simply managing it.” Something to think about as we approach this time of worship through giving.
- ***Current Thoughts and Trends*** summarized an article by Steve Thurman in the “Evangelical Beacon” as to how a believer can judge when he or she is guilty of becoming materialistic. The second thing on his list was this: “When you become envious of others who have more by comparing yourself with them.” Something to think about as we approach this time of worship through giving.
- ***Current Thoughts and Trends*** summarized an article by Steve Thurman in the “Evangelical Beacon” as to how a believer can judge when he or she is guilty of becoming materialistic. The third

⁷ Tom Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), page 348.

⁸ Ibid.

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thing on his list was this: “When you become ungrateful, focusing on what you don’t have, instead of being thankful for what you do have.” Something to think about as we approach this time of worship through giving.

- ***Current Thoughts and Trends*** summarized an article by Steve Thurman in the “Evangelical Beacon” as to how a believer can judge when he is guilty of becoming materialistic. The fourth thing on his list was this: “When you lose the joy of giving.” Something to think about as we approach this time of worship through giving.
- J. L. Kraft, founder of the Kraft Cheese Corporation, who gave approximately 25 percent of his enormous income to Christian causes for many years, said, “The only investment I ever made which has paid constantly increasing dividends is the money I have given to the Lord. Pastors will do their greatest service in leading their men to understand the truth of God concerning the stewardship of time and money.”
- W. A. Criswell, the late longtime pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, wrote, “Tithing is not a money raising scheme. It is a soul-growing, character-developing program. The purpose of tithing is to secure not the tithe but the tither, not the possession but the possessor, not your money but you, for God.”
- W. A. Criswell, the late longtime pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, asked, “If tithing is only a scheme to get money, why not get a real money-raising scheme? Let people gamble or draw numbers, and you will raise big money for a while. Tithing is not a scheme of preachers, prophets, or seers, but a plan and program of God to enrich character, develop souls, and enlarge vision. There is nothing normally or spiritually elevating in buying a bowl of oyster soup with a lone oyster for a dollar in order to help a Church. But to bring one’s tithe into the storehouse and place it on God’s altar, thus honoring God with your substance, is worship - a concrete expression of your love to God. It is opening up the depths of your compassion and keeping the stream of benevolence flowing from your heart. This is the means, and the end is a greater soul, a richer character, and abundant blessings of God. God wants us to be like Himself - great givers. This is His purpose supreme.”
- Might I suggest a method by which you can train your children to grow up to be adults who know how to honor the Lord with the first fruits of their increase? Three practices will help every parent:
 - #1 Make sure that each of your children uses offering envelopes. In this way your child’s own envelope will help him or her to realize the importance of giving. If your child is like mine was, he will love to give in this manner.
 - #2 Put paper into that offering envelope, not coins. My daughter gave coins until I read something about the relative importance attached to things. So, to impress upon Sarah the importance of giving as she was growing up, she put a check or a dollar into her offering envelope. After all, you need a dollar to buy an ice cream cone. Should she give God less?
 - #3 Take the time to review with your child the giving records that are mailed out. Three things this helps to accomplish: *First*, it makes sure that offering envelope makes it to the offering plate. *Second*, it makes sure our Church giving record is accurate. *Third*, it reinforces to your child the importance of giving. Let us say your tithe will be \$95.00 this week and you have two kids. Cut a check for \$5.00 for each of them and make your check out for \$85.00. Or, make your check out

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for \$93.00 and put a dollar into each of their envelopes. Something you can do to train your child to honor God. Train them to honor God and they will be more likely to honor you.

- The televangelists spend so much time talking about prosperity that you would think the only important thing in the Christian life is the accumulation of money and possessions. I am sure that some of the more sensitive lost people who observe this imbalance shy away from what they perceive to be crass materialism. However, Biblical Christianity is not crass materialism and possessions. Listen to what one very wise pastor once wrote about money and possessions: “The possession of goods or wealth is not a sin; it is the ‘love of money’ which ‘is the root of all evil.’ With the fully surrendered life, money is no longer king. Said Christ: ‘Ye cannot serve God and mammon’; yet the Christian may serve God with mammon.”
- How important are tithes and offerings to Christians of deep spirituality? The late Richard Wurmbrand, in his book *Tortured For Christ*, in which he detailed his life in a communist prison camp in Romania before the fall of communism, wrote: “When we were given one slice of bread a week and dirty soup every day, we decided we would faithfully ‘tithe’ even then. Every tenth week we took the slice of bread and gave to weaker brethren as our ‘tithe’ to the Master.” Something for those who think they do not earn enough to tithe to think about.

Appendix B

Top 10 Reasons People Don’t Tithe

By Charles Stone (posted 5/10/2015)

Tithing is a spiritual discipline many Christians practice. In its simplest form, it means giving back to God 10 percent of what you make. I’ve practiced it for years as a regular part of my giving. I tithe ‘plus’ to my local church and I give to other causes on top of that. However, throughout my 35 years of ministry I’ve seen 10 common reasons that church people give for not tithing. I list them below with a counterpoint below each.

Point, Counterpoint

- It’s all mine anyway. Why should I give?
Counterpoint (CP): Everything we own is actually God’s (Ps 24.1; 50.10).

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- I give elsewhere. This is the person who counts his giving to secular causes, his time, or paying for his child's Christian school tuition as his tithe.
CP: Do causes around the purposes of God get the lion's share of your giving?
- Tithing is not in the New Testament. This is one of the most common.
CP: When Jesus fulfilled the law, He didn't revise spirituality downward.
- God will provide through other people. This person believes that other people will give to support the cause of Christ in their church.
CP: God chose to release His resources through all believers.
- My gifts don't really count. This person thinks that because he can't give much, his giving really doesn't matter.
CP: Don't minimize the size of any gift (recall the story of the poor widow in Mark 12.41-44).
- I don't trust preachers. This is understandable due to the few high profile ministers who misuse God's money.
CP: If you lead a Church, make sure you instill the highest standards of stewardship and accountability.
- I only give to projects I like. This is the control freak who only gives to projects he or she can designate funds to. Some people in this category even hold back their giving in their Church because they haven't gotten their way.
CP: Trust your Church leadership to wisely manage God's money.
- I have no control over my finances. My husband does. In this case (and it's almost always a wife in this position) her husband controls the finances and although the wife wants to give, he prohibits it.
CP: Rest in the Lord, He knows your heart.
- I will tithe when I can afford it.
CP: If you wait, you probably never will. Research shows that contrary to what we might assume, the more money a person makes, the less percentage they give.
- I'm afraid to. These people honestly fear what might happen to them or their family if they give.
CP: Step out in faith knowing that God promises to meet your needs.

Church Member's Stewardship Evaluation

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The principle of the tithe (10%) before the Law was established with Abraham (Genesis 14.20), acknowledged by Jacob (Genesis 28.22), was then codified into Law (Leviticus 27.30), endorsed by the Savior (Matthew 23.23), and referred to in (Hebrews 7.5-9). Thus, giving tithes to God is not a legal issue.

The principle of giving freewill offerings above the tithe is referred to in Leviticus 22.18 and Malachi 3.8, and was also practiced by Christians in Rome, Corinth, and Macedonia (Romans 15.26; 1 Corinthians 16.1-2; 2 Corinthians 8.1-6).

Faithfulness In Giving Checklist:

- Compare annual income to Tithes & Offerings total for the year 2013. The tithe should amount to 10% of annual income. *My tithes for the year are one-tenth my 2013 income.*
- Compare dates when pay is received to dates when tithes are recorded as given. If you are paid monthly there should be no months without a record of tithes given. Some are paid twice per month and give tithes twice per month. The Biblical pattern is to collect tithes / offerings each Sunday (1 Corinthians 16.2). *I give when I get.*
- All giving of tithes & offerings is properly seen as a consequence to one's personal consecration and devotion to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8.5-6) following the example of the impoverished Macedonian Christians. Thus, giving is the intensely personal gift offered on behalf of the Savior to promote "obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name," Romans 1.5. *When I give I give to Him and for Him.*