



Lesson 2: THE STEWARD'S ROLE IN GIVING (Ryon Reasen)

INTRODUCTION

Fellow “money managers”, welcome to Week 2 in our series on Financial Stewardship. This topic this week is on giving. Pastor Keith did an awesome job last week in our opener of this series and he laid out the importance of Financial Stewardship to our own spiritual walk. This week we are going to dive a little deeper and stay a little narrower in focus as we talk about giving.

You know a lot of times we tend to create arbitrary groups of people based on things we see in them or believe about ourselves. As an example, we often classify people as either *extroverts* or *introverts* – generally people lean one way or the other. I’d be more of an introvert and my wife would be more of an extrovert by nature. However, we can learn habits that help us cross over those classifications that we have set up. Likewise we tend to classify people as either *Savers* or *Spenders*. Let me say up front that there are good things about both and there are bad things about both.

Poll: Who would say they are more of a spender? Who would say they are more of a saver? OK, laying those two classifications aside, I won’t ask you to raise your hand on this, but who would classify themselves as *givers*? I believe there are already some in here.

In I Timothy, Paul is writing to Timothy and instructing his disciple on how to disciple others. As Paul wraps up his writing to Timothy his final verses are charging Timothy to “fight the good fight of the faith”(6:12). As part of that salutation to Timothy, Paul then tells Timothy how he should be instructing the believers around him concerning their wealth and their attitude and responsibility about giving. Lets look together at what Paul tells Timothy he needs to do. Paul tells Timothy: (I Tim. 6:17-19) *“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty,*

nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

So then as the teacher...I must listen like Timothy and exhort you on your attitude about Finances and our responsibility in giving. The reality is that you and I are completely surrounded every day with the world’s mindset about money. And the truth of the Old Testament is still the truth of today in that really every man does that which is right in his own eyes. So if we just look around us for guidance on financial stewardship, we can be assured to be infected by flesh driven priorities and teaching that in reality is contradictory to God’s word and His plans for us as His “money managers.”

As we study together in this series on Finances, we simply cannot overlook the topic of giving.

GIVING IS VIVIDLY DEMONSTRATED IN THE TRINITY.

1. **God the Father – Represents the Giver.** John 3:16 — *“For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*
 - God the Father GAVE the GIFT of His only Son
 - God’s motivation was love
2. **God the Spirit – Represents the Gift.** Acts 2:38 — *“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
 - Holy Spirit is a gift to us at salvation.
 - II Cor. 1:22 refers to the Holy Spirit as the “earnest” or down payment for the promise of our eternal inheritance. (ESV uses the word “guarantee”).
 - Explanation of “Earnest Money”

3. **God the Son (Jesus) Represents the Gift and the Giver.**

- He is the gift of salvation that we must accept b/c as (Acts 4:12) says, *“There is salvation in no one else, for there is in other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*
 - We already reminded ourselves that John 3:16 says that God so loved the world that He *gave* up His son – so Jesus is the gift.
- However, He himself willingly gave Himself to us. In John 10:11-18, Jesus Himself says 4 times that He lays down His own life. Phil. 2:8 says *“And being found in human form, he humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”* Jesus gave everything!

Some might say, then, that we never look as godly as when we are giving.

GIVING IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP.

We saw week that the *love of money* is the root of all kinds of sins. As we deal with money, we will continue to deal with issues of the heart and mind. Notice the real heart of David as we turn to I Chronicles 29 and read his prayer.

1. **Giving provides an opportunity to acknowledge the source of our gifts.**

- (I Chron. 29:10-14,16) *“Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.”* *“O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.”*

- Imagine if we memorized a passage of scripture like this and meditated on it every time we *gave* to God.
- David’s heart attitude agrees with James – **(James 1:17)** *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”* Pretty easy in this passage above to pick up the heart attitude of David in his prayer. He clearly understood the source of all good gifts and in giving back to Him he made it a time of worship.

2. **Giving isn’t a luxury of the rich; it is a privilege of the poor.**

- As we give we have *opportunity to rightfully acknowledge* the one who has given to us.
- Giving is the joyful surrender to a greater person and a greater agenda.
- Surrender – obviously the process of giving heightens our awareness of the struggle we have between our flesh and our Spirit.

3. **Ensure genuine worship is part of your giving.**

- *Song Service* – have you ever neglected to truly worship during a song service?
 - Often times if we are honest with ourselves we can find ourselves at the end of a song service and not really even remember the words that we just sang. If that is the case, if our minds were not engaged in lifting up those words of praise to God and exhortation to those around us then likely we missed out on the “worship” aspect of the song service.
- *Offering* – When was the last time you engaged your mind during the “Offering”? Do you just toss in your spiritual obligation when the plate passes at church and just use that time to read the bulletin or plan what you are doing after church? It’s even easier to “zone out” during an offering than it is during a song service and likely we all do it.

- OT offering wasn't easy.
- NT offering is easy – I give online → I give online for Colonial and so most Sunday's I pass the offering plate and think maybe I should wear a T-shirt that says "Don't judge me! I give online." Seriously though, while I do give online I personally have decided not to set up recurring transactions from my account because I know that I will then miss out on the worship because the tithe would happen without my thoughtful engagement in the process.

- *God wants our worship!*

WE MUST PURPOSE TO GIVE BECAUSE IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

1. *Giving is a responsibility the new believer is to "put on" (Eph. 4:17-28).*

- (Eph 4:28) In the book of Ephesians, Paul is writing to the church of Ephesus and as he gets to Chapter 4 verse 17, Paul starts telling this body of believers things that should be part of "the new life." He talks about putting off falsehood, your former manner of life and then tells them not only what to put off, but what they are to put on – what they are to start doing as new believers. We then come to Eph. 4:28 and what does Paul tell these local church members? Eph 4:28 *"Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need."* Paul says they are to put off stealing and put on *giving*. It is his expectation that this be part of the new believers life.

a. "Putting on" takes effort

- If you are going to "put on" giving as part of your N.T. Christian walk, it is going to take effort. You will absolutely fight against your flesh in this process. However, the good news is that when you engage in this responsibility you are partnering with the gift of the Holy Spirit. You may find yourself like Paul saying that *"I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."* (Rom. 7:18)

b. "Putting off" takes effort

- In Eph. 4:28 this new believer is to stop stealing. Now you probably didn't come in here tonight thinking of yourself as a thief. However, our flesh is highly selfish and the heart of a thief absolutely lies within every one of us. Properly living as stewards means having the right perspective of why I have things and what the Master wants me to do with them. If I'm using "seed" He has given to me and not "sowing" it appropriately them I am essentially stealing from the Master.

2. *We are to labor now for a new purpose.*

- Paul doesn't just tell these new believers what to put off and what to put on. He provides them with a totally different perspective, a totally different *purpose* for their labor. What is it? Why are they to labor?
- Paul tells them to labor for a new *purpose*. *What a picture of transformation*. Imagine a thief showing back up where he has been stolen and doing genuine labor so that he can have the ability to give. That is the picture of transformation that is given to us as believers. At salvation our heart should turn from taking to giving.
- Taking/stealing is purposeful – it is based out of selfishness; Paul doesn't tell us to stop being purposeful but to change that purpose to that of giving. He doesn't say *labor* to consume upon yourself, labor to store up earthly treasures – He says labor....so that you will be able to give. Paul tells us that we must *purpose to give*.

RAISE MY STANDARD OF LIVING OR MY STANDARD OF GIVING?

Perhaps for most of us here that statement can seem almost a little controversial in our own minds

2 Corinthians chapter 9 is one of the great passages on giving in the N.T. Paul is taking up collections from the Corinthians *gentiles* for the church in Jerusalem and starting in chapter 9 verse 6 he talks about the "cheerful giver" – so many of us are familiar with this passage in general. But lets take a special look at verses 10-11 where we see scripture further establishing our *giving responsibility*.

What is the difference between an owner and a steward?

- Owner does whatever he wants with the item (Personal admission of prior wrong definition of stewardship)
- Steward has the responsibility of understanding and following the desires of the Master → Steals – when he does what he wants with the item

1. God's gifts come with stewardship responsibility.

- (2 Cor. 9:10-11) "He who supplies *seed to the sower and bread for food* will supply and multiply *your seed* for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God."
- Giver (He who supplies) and Receiver (the one given the seed) in this passage
- The passage clearly says, "You will be enriched...to be generous."
- So here comes the *responsibility!* As we read this verse we see that the one who supplies the sower with seed and bread supplies it for a reason – *for sowing*. The master gives to the steward his seed so that he will sow (not eat, store up, consume).
- "You will be enriched in every way" for what purpose?.....how does our heart finish this sentence? How does our life answer the question about why we have been enriched? The truth of God's word should now fill our minds that with our *responsibility* in *giving*.
- I'm God's "Money Manager."
 - We are the managers of the money God has entrusted to us!
 - We are stewards, not owners.

2. God's gifts to us can be blessings and tests at the same time.

- We are naturally grateful and happy when we receive material blessings. I doubt any of us ever had a discussion with our friends saying – "Oh man – you won't ever believe what happened to me – I got an unexpected raise today! Now what am I supposed to do?" We don't generally receive blessings and then think, "Hmmm I wonder why I've been given this blessing?" Our flesh just cries out, "Yes – I deserve this...its about time!" In fact we probably already have a list of what we want and we now we think how many of those things on that list can I get, how many can I check off "my list"?
- When God provides excess income, we often suppose, "This is a blessing." It would be just as biblical to think, "This is a test."

3. The "American Dream" stands in stark contrast to the "Heavenly Command."

- (Matt 6:19-20) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."
 - God entrusts me with His money not to build my kingdom on earth, but His kingdom in heaven.
 - *American dream* is not God's dream.

4. Poor stewardship manifests itself in visible spiritual diseases.

- (1 Tim. 6:10) "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils."
 - a. Affluenza** – the vain pursuit of affluence → Dave Ramsey says "We go in debt to buy things we can't afford to impress people we don't even know."
 - b. Stuffitis** – the foolish thinking that the "stuff" of life that vanishes away will bring happiness.

c. **Possession Obsession** – “It’s Mine!”; opposite of David’s heart we saw in I Chron. 29.

- Did you realize that God actually tells us to guard against the “American Dream” mindset. We should guard ourselves against it as if it were a disease – in fact it really is a spiritual disease.

PURPOSELY GIVING HELPS US FULFILL OUR PURPOSE.

Before we move onto other passages of scripture, there is really one more important point about giving that we can draw out of this passage in 2 Cor. 9:10-11. This passage already helped us see that we have a responsibility to give purposefully and then secondly the passage showed us that God chooses to give to us not so that we raise our standard of living but to raise our standard of giving. The final point I’d like us to see from this one passage is that *purposefully* giving helps us fulfill our *purpose* as Christians.

So let me ask you, what is our purpose as Christians? Why did God create us?...to bring Him glory! To bring him fame. To bring Him honor. To magnify His name. To tell His Good News!

Let’s look at 2 Cor. 9:10-11 again: “He who supplies *seed to the sower and bread for food* will supply and multiply *your seed* for sowing and *increase the harvest of your righteousness*. *You will be enriched in every way* to be generous in every way, *which through us* will produce thanksgiving to God.” 2 Cor. 9:13 “*By their approval of this service*, they will glorify God because of your submission *that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others.*”

1. Proper stewardship through giving brings glory to God (II Cor. 9:11,13).

- Notice that when we obey in our responsibility to give, when we obey in stewarding what the Master gives to us according to His purpose, the end result is that others give thanksgiving to God. God allows us the opportunity to bring him glory and fame (to fulfill our created purpose) when we obey in this area of giving.

- Not all giving shines the light of glory upward! Some choose to shine the light on themselves thereby stealing God’s glory for themselves.
- Anonymous Giving – sometimes we need to just give anonymously so that we ensure our heart is striving to bring Him glory and not ourselves.

2. God entrusts us as His couriers and coworkers through giving.

- Pastor Keith has recently challenged us on the concept of being a good “co-worker” with Christ. Workers generally have a job description and it is only when they fulfill that job description that they would be called a “good” co-worker. Here we see the opportunity to be the “hands and feet” of God to others. He puts “grace” into our hands with the anticipation that we will then hand that “grace” to those in need around us. In doing so, they see God’s grace to them and *praise Him*. But what if we mess up? What if we don’t steward these seeds of blessing that we’ve been given?
- You are “God’s couriers” – that’s our job description, that is our responsibility. When we do it well, we have the opportunity to elevate God and make much of Him in the hearts and minds of those around us. Not because we’ve given to them something of “ours” but we simply transported to them something God intended us to deliver to them. God couriers.
- “*Just because God puts money in our hands doesn’t mean he intends for it to stay there!*”

GIVING IS THE ONLY ANTIDOTE TO MATERIALISM.

What is Materialism? Materialism is the tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual virtues. We might also think of materials as “me-terialism.” Where do we see materialism in your generation? How is materialism manifested?

1. **Money will either propel out hearts toward or away from God.**

- Money is never just money! It is constantly propelling us either into deeper partnership with God or deeper into our own self-centeredness. It is an either/or relationship.
- (Matt. 6:24) *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”* “Money” in this verse refers to money or possessions.

2. **Giving realigns our heart towards God’s priorities.**

- Our flesh is naturally drawn toward the love of money and materialism. In the battle between the flesh and the spirit we have to follow God’s plan. Luke 12:34 says that giving is God’s *antidote for materialism*.
- (Luke 12:34) *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

**TREASURE PRINCIPLE: YOU CAN’T TAKE IT WITH YOU,
BUT YOU CAN SEND IT ON AHEAD.**

In full disclosure, many of my points that I will share with you tonight come from one of my favorite books on Finances and that book is *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn.

Jim Elliott is famous for his quote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” The reality is that in light of eternity, earthly treasures are worthless really. That thing we just bought, we don’t even know if we will be around one year or even another day to enjoy it.

1. **God anticipates that we build eternal wealth.**

- (Psalm 49:16-17) shares with us the *futility of earthly treasures* *“Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases. For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him.”* It’s gone. It vanishes away.

- (I Tim. 6:17-19) *“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”*
- The contrasting verse we’ve already looked at is found in (Matt 6:19-20) *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* Whenever you find these sections in the Bible where you read “Do not”...this direction but “do”....this direction, we can almost always look internally and find the struggle between our flesh and our spirit as God guides us not to follow our flesh but to follow *truth* and His Spirit that He has implanted inside us at salvation.

2. **Godly financial stewardship provides risk free investments with guaranteed returns!**

- We started today’s lesson commenting on the fact that God has made each and every one of us “Money Managers.” Like it or not, that is part of the expectation that God has for us in that he has given each of us stewardship responsibilities with the earthly treasures that He hands to us to “Manage.” Professional Money Managers will always tell you to invest in things that “appreciate”/ go up in value. They’ll say “don’t invest in depreciating assets” – things like cars that only go down in value as soon as you drive them off the lot. They will tell you to focus on the long-term investment – and we should. All of that is wise counsel. But here in these verses God shows us that we have the opportunity to invest “risk-free” into assets that will *never* go away – eternal treasures.

IT IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE ... SAY WHAT?

Maturity – let me offer to you that it takes maturity to see and really feel this truth. Christmas example:

- Children (the young ones, ones who have yet to learn and mature) – they absolutely *love* the receiving part of Christmas. It is the highlight and they wait all year for that day and then wait all day for that part of the day and then that entire part of the day for when it is finally “My Turn!” Children want to receive! But the reality is that it isn’t just children though, if we are honest, all of us have things in our lives that we “*want*” – sometimes we express those things as “*needs*” – “I really need _____!”
- Grandparents – admittedly grandparents have more wisdom than small children and it is always the grandparents who just can’t wait to give. They’ve thoughtfully planned out just the perfect gift for each grandchild, oftentimes even calculating very closely that they spend the same amount on every grandchild so as not to show preference. They can’t wait for the part of the day *to give*. Grandparents still love to receive, but if you watch them, it is the *giving* that is their highlight. They’ve learned that the blessing of giving is far greater than the blessing of receiving.

Acts 20:35, “*It is more blessed to give than receive*” → This isn’t a statement up for evaluation; it is a biblical statement of fact.

1. *Blessing of obedience for the giver.* – (Psalm 19:11) *Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.* (Josh 1:8) *“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”* God’s word promises us that blessing comes from *knowing* and *obeying* God’s word.

- God honors and blesses obedience. When it comes to “receiving”, rarely is there an active decision in the process of the recipient – you rarely have to “obey” to “receive.”

- However, giving takes a conscientious effort on the part of the giver.
 - Identify the recipient
 - Select the appropriate gift
 - Transfer the gift joyfully

2. *Blessing of the giver becoming a recipient.* – Luke 6:38 goes on to reveal to us the wonderful plan that God has for givers – that plan is that givers also become recipients, not of man’s blessings, but of His blessings.

- (Luke 6:38) “Give, and it will be given to you, *A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.* For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”
- Giving is “reciprocal” – givers receive; how about that for countercultural teaching.
- God’s blesses proportionally –
 - (Luke 6:38) “*For with the measure you use, it will be measured unto you.*” It is pretty easy even in this verse to see the stewardship principle in place. The blessing or gift back to the giver is measured in the same way they stewarded over what was already given to them.
 - (Matt 25) – Parable of the talents: the steward was honored
 - (2 Cor. 9) – Teaching on cheerful giver: vs 6 “*He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*” These are scriptural truths!

Application:

- Have you experienced this truth of God in your life? Have you experienced God honoring you because you honored Him in what He has lent to you to steward over?
- Are you reaping bountifully? Can you actively see God’s blessing on areas of your life? If not, might it be because of your lack of sowing? Or, are you sure you’ve sown and just waiting for God to bless His seeds you’ve been spreading?

BASICS ON GIVING BIBLICALLY

1. ***Give Purposefully*** (II Cor. 9:6-15) – Purpose to give and give purposefully. I’m not sure God wants us giving to the guy holding the sign saying, “I’m not going to lie, I’ll use it on alcohol.” Likewise there are endless opportunities to put our money towards “good” things when our Master wants us to find His will so that we are giving towards the “best” things. Every year at work I have countless opportunities and requests to give towards “causes” but most of them have no eternal value associated with them at all. If we will be obedient Christians we must purpose to give, but in our giving lets be sure to do so purposefully – towards His agenda.
2. ***Give Personally*** – We are to be both givers and stewards of our time, talents and possessions. Giving doesn’t have a black and white description with clear boundaries around it. Sometimes it will be financially, sometimes it will be non-financial giving. Sometimes it will be little and sometimes it may be large but God expects each of us to personally engage in giving. Giving personally though does not have to mean that the recipient knows that you are the giver. After all, the real reason we are giving is to be the obedient God couriers of his gifts to others so that He receives honor and praise – not us. Giving personally does not me ensuring that we are recognized personally.
3. ***Give Practically*** – not always money; includes time, talents, possessions
4. ***Give Proportionately*** – I Cor. 16:2 shows us that our giving should be proportionate or “as God has prospered us.” We are all given proportionately different wealth and talents but regardless of how much we’ve been given, our giving should be proportionate to that with which our Master has entrusted us to steward.
5. ***Give Planfully*** – If you plan to give then you better give it some planning.
 - The reality is that if we really want to obey God in this area of financial stewardship then it is going to take some personal planning. In a few weeks our session is going to be on the topic of personal budgeting – not really a topic that

gets everyone excited. However, a personal budget can be a tremendous blessing and enhances the likelihood that we appropriately steward what God has lent to us. As part of that personal budget I think it is imperative that you not only have a category for your tithe but that you also have a specific category where you set aside money to GIVE as God brings you opportunity.

- (Gal. 6:10) “*So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*” If you are not planning to give then it is unlikely that you will have the capability to give when the opportunity arises – planning helps align the opportunity with the capability.

CONCLUSION

I hope this session on *giving* has been insightful and probably even a little challenging to our flesh. I remember Pastor Phelps saying that “often God’s counsel is not easy, but always God’s counsel is right.”

To really help you out and kick start you down this path of obedient giving I have a gift for each of you which is the book *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn. Please stop by and grab one – it will challenge you and be a blessing to you in your spiritual walk.

At the back of the book you’ll find:

- *My Giving Covenant* - 6 Steps
- *31 Radical, Liberating Questions* to ask God about your giving