

SHARING YOUR POSSESSIONS
(FROM CHAPTER 8-9)

INTRODUCTION

In 1923 A very significant meeting was held at Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending the famous gathering were nine of the world's most successful financiers. The president of the largest steel company, the president of the utility company, the largest gas company, the greatest wheat speculator, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, a member of the President's Cabinet, the person in the Wall Street, the head of the world's greatest monopoly, and the president of the Bank of International Settlements were all present.

Those men were known as supreme masters of the finance world.

But Twenty-five years later, in 1948 the picture was much different. Charles Schwab died bankrupt. Samuel Insull died a fugitive from justice. Howard Hopson became insane. Arthur Critten went to prison. Jesse Livermore, Leon Fraser, Ivar Kreuger all died by suicide.

All these men, masters financially, were soon mastered by their finances.

Theme: A key to overcoming servitude to your possessions is by sharing your possessions.

Kent Hughes said this, "Givers of God disarm the power of money."

The word *koinonia* in the New Testament is most commonly used to indicate sharing possessions with those in needs.

Sharing our material good with those in need in the body is a very important practice regarding our fellowship and relationship with each other.

Today we will understand the purpose, promise, power and the practice of sharing. That will give us a better understanding of fellowship regarding our possessions.

THE PURPOSE OF SHARING

The primary purpose or motivation for sharing or giving is to obey and glorify God.

1. *The purpose of obeying God*

Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 3:17

After identifying many different verses of the Bible in regards to giving, we acknowledge that it is not a matter of choice but of obedience.

Though it is an act of duty we must realize to never forget the devotion behind the duty. "For an action to be truly obedient to God, it must be done from a motivation of genuine love and gratitude to Him." – Jerry Bridges.

2 Corinthians 9:7 – "God loves a cheerful giver."

Your attitude matters as much as your action. The motivation behind giving is obedience and the motivation behind obedience is love.

2. *The purpose of glorifying God*

2 Corinthians 9:11-13 – "You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. 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."

We find here a twofold purpose of giving: To supply the needs of the saints, but also to glorify God. God can receive glory by letting the person in need find money on the side walk. But why do you think He often uses fellow believers to meet each other's needs? He gets more glory from the act of our obedience and generosity. Also He strengthens the fellowship among believers.

THE PROMISE OF SHARING

From the Bible we see blessings or promises made to those who give.

1. ***True satisfaction***

In *2 Corinthians 8:2* the Macedonians were found to have abundance of joy in the midst of their poverty. The Macedonians were known for their generosity.

Regarding money, joy does not come from the amount we inherit in earth, but true joy comes from the amount we invest for eternity.

2. ***Provision from God***

Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6

Though God will not always give money when you give money, God does promise to give back. Sometimes it is by money, by gifts, health, and different kind of blessings. This is not a prosperity gospel, but rather it is the promise of God. It is not clear how God will bless but it is clear that God will bless.

You must understand that you are not able to out-give God, that God always have the bigger shovel.

THE POWER OF SHARING

Sharing is not a natural human attitude or action.

1. ***A personal sacrifice***

Hebrews 13:16 — “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”

In Mark 12 we know the story of the widow who gave her mite, who sacrificed what she had.

God mentions that this sharing, this *koinonia* is a sacrifice. It is not free; it does cost something.

In *2 Corinthians 8* the Macedonians were used by Paul as an example of giving—though they were in great affliction and in poverty they still wanted to give. How is that possible? In verse 5 the Bible mentions that they gave their own selves to the Lord first.

A sacrificial hand towards giving is attached to a sacrificial heart towards God. When you give yourselves to God you will learn to give to others.

2. ***A product of the Spirit***

Galatians 5:22

Jerry Bridges states that “generosity is a fruit of the Spirit.”

We find that in other translations of Galatians 5:22, the word “goodness” is rendered “generosity.”

Generosity/goodness comes by the enabling and empowering of the Spirit, and should be characteristic in the life of every believer.

THE PRACTICE OF SHARING

As we understand the purpose, promise and power of sharing let us notice the different ways we can practice sharing.

1. ***Support your local church***

Though there are many different organizations and para-church ministries that request for funds, there is a priority of supporting your local church (cf. Galatians 6:10). God has instituted the local church to carry out the Great Commission of evangelizing the sinners and edifying the saints. There is safety giving to the local church, for there you know that your money is getting invested for eternity.

The amount you give must be between you and God. There is your tithe, missions, building, and different areas you can give to.

1 Corinthians 16:2 states that we should give regularly

In to giving to para-church ministries or organizations, we should ask two questions: what do they believe and how do they behave? Jerry Bridges considers their work and their worship before deciding to give to them.

2. ***Support your pastor***

Galatians 6:6 – “Let the one who is taught the Word share all good things with the one who teaches.”

1 Corinthians 9:11, 14 – “If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?... In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.”

“Giving to the Pastor is not based on the matter of law but of love.”
– Jerry Bridges

3. Support each other

Romans 12:13 — “Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

John Murray said, “We are to identify ourselves with the needs of the saints and make them our own.”

Charles Hodge said, “We are to regard the needs of the other saints as our own because we are, in fact, members of the same body.”

The basis of sharing is relationship. Parents are obliged to meet the needs of their children because of their relationship. When we come to a realization that we are in a relationship together as a body of Christ, it makes much more sense that your needs are my needs, that it is our responsibility to share materially with each other.

1 John 3:17 — “But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?”

4. Support the needy

Galatians 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.”

It is not practical or biblical to restrict the sharing of our material to believers only. Though there is a priority to share with the believers, we must not forget about the unbelievers.

Dr. Farrell said, “Touch the body to touch the soul.”

We find Jesus throughout His earthly ministry supplying the spiritual and physical needs of men and women.

CONCLUSION

God is pleased when His people share with each other on a spiritual basis, but He is also pleased when we share with each other on a material level.