

Week 4 - Cheerful Giving

W.A. Criswell, writes, "J.L. Kraft, head of the Kraft Cheese Corporation, who had given approximately 25% of his enormous income to Christian causes for many years, said, "The only investment I ever made which has paid consistently increasing dividends is the money I have given to the Lord."

It's a great feeling to give money or time that we spend will give great returns. Whether it's taking your child to the park or putting some money in his/her college fund, we wear a smile thinking that this will bless our child. What makes a cheerful giver to God?

A cheerful giver to God is one who gives because He loves God and wants to honor, please, and bless Him, realizing God doesn't need his gift, but enjoys it.

A cheerful giver gives as God gives to all men – graciously. He is a giver that has compassion on others like Jesus Christ and wants to bless (see Cana miracle in John 2) or help (see Jesus' healing miracles and feeding of the multitudes) those who are sad or in need.

Summary: **The cheerful giver has joy in the joy of God and joy of others by his/her giving.**

QUESTIONS for THOUGHT:

- 1) When you give money or time to God and others do you feel joy?
- 2) What is hindering this? Note: these may be the same reasons you thought about in Week 3.

Each Day: 1) Read the Passage.

2) Answer study questions

3) Memorize the passage

4) Close with Song & Prayer

MY LIFE IS AN OFFERING

Sovereign Grace Music

This life is an altar
Where I want to offer
My soul, and my mind, and strength
Cleansed by Your mercy to live a life worthy
Of the One Who called my name

Jesus, be glorified
Jesus, be magnified
Let me be a pleasing sacrifice
Jesus, be glorified
Jesus, be magnified
Here on the altar
My life is an offering

How could I not love You?
You authored my rescue
Raised me up from death to life
Your Spirit is in me, revealing Your glory
Oh what joy as I give my life

Jesus, be glorified
Jesus, be magnified
Let me be a pleasing sacrifice
Jesus, be glorified
Jesus, be magnified
Here on the altar
My life is an offering

I choose to lose my life, Lord and find it in You
Jesus, be glorified
Jesus, be magnified
Let me be a pleasing sacrifice
Jesus, be glorified
Jesus, be magnified
Here on the altar
My life is an offering

Listen at: youtube.com/watch?v=Vn8_br6O72s

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February Memory Verse Song & Devotions

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap also bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."



Week 1 - Sowing and Reaping

Jesus used agricultural examples and parables to teach as does the Apostle Paul in this passage. It is clear to anyone, not just farmers, that you can only reap, if you sow. You can only reap much if you sow much. If you sow only a few seeds, then you will reap a scant harvest.

In this passage, the sowing is financial giving, and the reaping is the blessings that come as a result of that giving. It's hard for us to think that a God of grace would bless on the grounds of financial gifts, but in reality, it is not the money given, but the heart to give which Paul acknowledged later in this passage. When Jesus acknowledges the widow giving the pennies in Mark 12:43-44 He says,

"Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 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."

The amount was not the issue to Jesus; it was the fact that she gave all she could.

QUESTIONS for THOUGHT:

- 1) Am I giving Jesus all I can of my life: finances, time, learning, recreation, relationships, etc.?
- 2) Can I expect God's blessing if I give my all to Him?
- 3) On the other hand, what should I expect if I do not give God my all?

Close by reading Romans 12:1-2 & singing song of the month.

Week 2 - Deciding to Give

"...Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Matthew 6:20 -21

Just as Jesus teaches in this passage that giving reflects the heart, so Paul teaches in our memory passage this month that godly, gracious giving is a fruit of a godly heart. Outer circumstances are not to dictate our giving. Otherwise, the giving could result in pride (consider Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5). If a heart is eager to give to God, then the heart is loving God – God is that person's treasure.

"Where your pleasure is, there is your treasure; where your treasure is, there is your heart; where your heart is, there is your happiness."

Augustine

QUESTIONS for THOUGHT:

- 1) Think about what you give money and time to – make a list. Go through the list and ask yourself if the things to which you are giving money and time are things that you want to treasure. Be honest and your list will give you an accurate evaluation of your heart.
- 2) Now do the same thing as above with your family. Then with your church. Share your findings and thoughts about your lists considerately and respectfully with others involved, especially leaders.

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare."

C. S. Lewis

Week 3 - Reluctant Giving

A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church "Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself," she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. "Well," said the little girl, "I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I'd be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did."

From Bits & Pieces

We've all probably experienced the time in life when we have had to decide how much we would give, and it was a difficult decision. Why are we sometimes reluctant to give to the Lord's work – church, missions, or charity?

- Perhaps we think we don't have the money to give. Read the context of the memory passage and you will find that Paul was saying if you give much, you will "reap" much, so you can give more. Saving money leads to sparse harvests.
- Perhaps we do not see the significance of giving to God's work because "Someone else will give it," we think. Remember that giving to God's work is not for God's benefit (He already owns it all); it's for your own heart's benefit.

Reluctant giving comes from restricted loving.

Give and love God with no strings attached.

QUESTIONS for THOUGHT:

- 1) What's keeping you from giving financially to the Lord's work?
- 2) Do you think you are better off honoring these answers (from #1) or honoring God by giving?