



“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase,” Proverbs 3:9.

### **The Stewardship of Substance**

**Central Truth:** Since all material possessions come from God, they should be used rightly.

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**Topic:** Money; Stewardship: Of Money.

God does not change, so the principles of life which He approves do not change. For instance, the principle of man's stewardship before God runs through the whole Bible. We can look in the Old Testament and find teachings which New Testament Christians can follow in fulfilling their stewardship responsibilities today.

First Chronicles 29 is one of the most beautiful lessons on financial stewardship to be found in the entire Bible. David wanted to build a great house for God in Jerusalem. He was not permitted to do so, but was promised that his son would build the house for God (I Chronicles 7). David did not turn from the desire just because his personal plans were not approved. He set about to raise the money and gather the materials and provide the plans for his son Solomon to use in building the house of God.

That historical incident provides the lesson text for this study. In the offerings of the ancient Hebrews to build the temple of God in Jerusalem, there are principles which guide us in financial stewardship today. Look for those principles in the following review of the lesson text.

Study with this thought in mind: Since all material possessions come from God, they should be used in a manner approved by God.

### **I. GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR GIVING (I Chronicles 29:11; Proverbs 3:9)**

**A. Glorify the person of God.** Let your giving testify, *“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty”* (I Chronicles 29:11). *“The LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods”* (Psalm 95:3). *“His greatness is unsearchable”* (Psalm 145:3).

What kind of offerings should we bring to such a God? *“Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?”* (Micah 6:7). *“Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering”* (Isaiah 40: 16). Do not bring second-class gifts to such a God. Give to Him generously out of the best you have. *“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase”* (Proverbs 3:9).

**B. Glorify the possessions of God.** *“All that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine”* (I Chronicles 29:11). *“The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein”* (Psalm 24:1). As we give we confess, *“All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee”* (I Chronicles 29:14). The more generously we give, the more we reflect the resources of God and our faith in Him to continue to provide for us.

**C. Glorify the position of God.** *“Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all”* (I Chronicles 29:11). His person is above the heavens and His glory is above the earth (Psalm 57:11). It is our privilege to exalt Him *“and worship at his footstool; for he is holy”* (Psalm 99:5). We recognize Him as sovereign ruler over all when we return the appropriate portion of all our possessions to Him in recognition of His prior ownership. We give tithes plus freewill offerings because He is God and reigns over all.

## **II. RECOGNIZE GOD’S OWNERSHIP IN YOUR GIVING** (I Chronicles 29:12)

Riches and honor, power and might, greatness and strength are all the gifts of God. Think about that. The land belongs to the Lord (Leviticus 25:23). The livestock belongs to the Lord (Psalm 50:10). The mineral wealth belongs to the Lord (Haggai 2:8). It is all His alone.

God, in loving-kindness, gives to us a portion of what He has. He shares His resources with us! We have nothing that we did not receive from Him (I Corinthians 4:7), so we have no reason to boast in what we have or to claim that it is ours alone. We are like the servants of whom Jesus spoke, whose master gave them five talents, two talents, or one talent and commanded them to be busy using them while he was away (Matthew

25:14-30).

Let us never think of our giving God a part of what is ours. We rather return a part of what is all His. *“Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee”* (I Chronicles 29: 14). In all your giving, recognize God's prior and full ownership.

### III. WORSHIP GOD IN YOUR GIVING (I Chronicles 29:13)

**A. Give with thanksgiving.** *“Now therefore, our God, we thank thee”* (I Chronicles 29:13). Imagine thanking God for the opportunity to give Him some of “our” money! Is that reasonable? Yes, if our giving is an act of true worship!

*“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts”* (Psalm 96:8). That is one way to glorify God. As you bring your offering into His courts, *“enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name”* (Psalm 100:4). You worship God in your giving as you *“sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving”* (Psalm 107:22). Worship God in your giving.

**B. Give with praise.** *“Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name”* (I Chronicles 29:13). There is no better speech than to praise God all the day (Psalm 35:28). That is how we give glory to God (Isaiah 42:12). Even in your financial contributions you can *“shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light”* (I Peter 2:9). Give with joy because *“God loveth a cheerful giver”* (II Corinthians 9:7).

### IV. EXPRESS HUMILITY IN YOUR GIVING (I Chronicles 29:14)

**A. Humbly appreciate the opportunity to give.** Some people look on the offering in church as an interruption of worship. God looks on it as an expression of worship. Let us approach it with this spirit: *“Why should I be permitted the honor of giving to promote the kingdom of God in the world?”* The ancient Hebrews recognized that privilege as they gave of their wealth to build a tabernacle for the Lord in the wilderness. They brought gifts day after day until there was more than enough for the work. They did not complain; they rejoiced at their opportunity. *“They came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD'S offering, . . . both men and women, as many as*

were willing hearted” (Exodus 35:21, 22). That is the way to give today, also!

**B. Humbly recognize the source of your gifts.** *“All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee”* (I Chronicles 29:14). We must confess, *“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies”* (Genesis 32:10). Yet, He *“daily loadeth us with benefits”* (Psalm 68:19). How humbly and cheerfully we should give as a thank-offering to Him!

## **V. REMEMBER GOD'S GIFT IN YOUR GIVING** (I Chronicles 29:15)

**A. He has given us freedom.** Ancient Israel was delivered from social bondage in Egypt. We have been delivered from spiritual bondage in sin. But the same God was the deliverer in each case.

We testify today of the provision of God, saying that He *“delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us”* (II Corinthians 1:10). All our lifetime we had each suffered in the bondage from which Jesus has now freed us (Hebrews 2:14, 15). Praise the Lord!

Give in view of the deliverance He has provided for you.

**B. He has given us an inheritance.** The inheritance celebrated by David and his peers was a land inheritance in Palestine (Genesis 15:18-21). The inheritance that we celebrate today is a spiritual inheritance in heaven (Ephesians 1:11, 14, 18). We are now *“partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”* (Colossians 1:12). Give in view of your spiritual resources and your offerings will be amazingly generous.

We Christians are particularly mindful of God's precious gift of His only begotten Son. Our gifts are in response to His gift. How generously we must give!

## **VI. HAVE A RIGHT MOTIVE IN YOUR GIVING** (I Chronicles 29:16)

David had the right motive: *“O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own”* (I Chronicles 29:16).

**A. No selfish motive should be involved in our giving.** *“I have set my affection to the house of my God”* (I Chronicles 29:3). That is the finest motive in giving: a sincere love for God. Get your love right and your giving will get right.

**B. God's glory should be involved in our motive.** *“Blessed be thou, LORD God, . . . for ever and ever”* (I Chronicles 29:10). Give to the glory of

God and in proportion to how much you wish to honor Him.

**C. Follow a proper plan in your giving.** David considered what kind of materials would be needed in God's temple and took an inventory of his own resources to see what he could provide (I Chronicles 29:2). He planned his giving and gave according to his plan. Very seldom does a momentary impression prove sufficient to provide for the Lord's work. God gave a plan of tithes plus offerings. It is impossible to improve on God's plan.

**D. Commit yourself wholly to God in your giving.** He does not want your money; He wants you. *"Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?"* (I Chronicles 29:5). Remember that partial obedience is disobedience. Give to God all you are, have, or can become.

## VII. REMEMBER GOD'S BLESSINGS IN YOUR GIVING

*"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase"* (Proverbs 3:9). But will I not be the poorer for what I give away if I obey that command? Not at all. Look at God's promises of blessings.

*"So shall thy barns be filled with plenty"* (Proverbs 3:10). *"The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself"* (Proverbs 11:25). *"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . 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. . . . All nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts"* (Malachi 3:10-12). *"The LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, . . . for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good"* (Deuteronomy 30:9).

What a privilege it is for you to *"honour the LORD with thy substance."* What a promise He makes to bless faithful stewardship!

However you produce your income, use it to the glory of God. Give 10 percent to Him as a sign of His ownership. Add to that any freewill offerings you wish. Remember that you are responsible and will account to Him for your use of the full 100 percent. Honor the Lord with all your substance.

## Questions

1. What is the historical background of I Chronicles 29?
2. How can we glorify God in our giving?
3. How do Micah 6:7 and Isaiah 40:16 show the greatness of God?
4. What does the Bible say about God's ownership of all?

5. How can you make giving an act of worship for you?
6. How can you express humility in your giving?
7. What has God given you that makes you want to give to Him?
8. How might love guide your giving?
9. How can you make giving money an act of personal commitment to God?
10. What are God's promises about His blessings on us for giving?