



“They came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD'S altering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments” (Exodus 35:21).

Giving to God

Central Truth: The offerings of God's people fund the work of God's kingdom.

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Topic: Giving: To God; Moses.

Who receives the offerings you give when you go to church? Are the offerings given to the church? Are they given to some ministry of the church (as missions, benevolence, education, or building fund)? Are they given to the association of churches or the ministries it sponsors? No. Your offerings are given to God.

God receives, sanctifies, and blesses each offering you give. It may go to support the local ministry of your church, to support missions in a distant place, to further Christian education, to provide benevolence, or to any of many other worthy ministries. But wherever the offerings are invested in the work of the kingdom of God, they are given to God himself. Each Christian is to give; there are no exceptions.

Each is to give what he has. God expects no more than that, but He definitely expects that. He demands no more than you are able to give, but He expects you to give what you are able according to the standard He has set for giving.

God loves a cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:7). Any other spirit mars the gift. You can give cheerfully when your heart is free from covetousness and you look on your gift as an offering to your Lord.

What to Give: Give what you have

Ancient Israel set a worthy example for us to follow in giving to special projects. The people wanted to build a tabernacle where God might dwell among them and where they might meet with Him. The Lord called on them to provide from their personal resources, as a special love offering, what was necessary to build the tabernacle. Their gifts were of two types, the same as the gifts you present to the Lord today.

Give of your possessions. What do you have in the form of material, tangible wealth? God expects you to give out of the possessions He has enabled you to accumulate.

Do you have cash? God accepts offerings of silver and gold and honors the giver. Give a cash offering to the Lord.

Do you have houses and land? Many faithful saints have sold their real estate to give the income to the Lord (Acts 4:34). Others have left it in their wills.

Do you have valuable jewelry of precious metals and precious stones? I have known of ladies placing their rings in the plate when an offering was received for the Lord's work. That can be turned into cash and used for the glory of God.

Do you have stocks or bonds? They are as good as cash if you will transfer their ownership to the church or sell them and give the proceeds.

They would be better used now for the work of God than to be kept until you die.

Do you have cash value in an insurance policy which you could withdraw and give? Would you make your church the beneficiary of your insurance policy? God will accept that as an offering from your hand to His.

Do not look at your current bank account and determine whether you can or cannot give. Consider your whole estate. You are to hold it all available for His use when He calls for it. Most Christians can give far more than they think they can.

But there is another type of giving that you may practice. Give your service. What skills do you have which can be used for the Lord? Some people in Israel brought their material goods, and others devoted their skills to build the tabernacle of the Lord (Exodus 35:5-10). Donated skills are as valuable as donated cash.

A group of carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and dry wall finishers can cut the cost of building or repairing the house of God by thousands of dollars. They simply donate their skills without salary. It has been done on mission buildings at home, mission buildings in foreign countries, and in educational institutions. You can have a part in that kind of giving.

What do you have to give? If you can give cash, give it. If you can give skilled labor, give it. God requires nothing of you that you do not have, but He does require a portion of all you have. Be faithful in your giving to the Lord.

How to Give: Give because you may, not because you must

Take particular notice of the spirit which motivated Israel to give for the tabernacle of the Lord. No one was to feel compulsion in giving. Moses said, *“Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD”* (Exodus 35:5). Notice the response of the people. *“They came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD'S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted . . . and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD”* (Exodus 35:21, 22). It reminds you of Paul's admonition that each is to give as he purposes in his heart because God loves a cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:7).

Do your gifts to the Lord through your church arise from a willing heart? Are they motivated by concern for the good of people and the glory of God? God wants you to give in that spirit. Ask Him to put that spirit in you if you do not have it. Give from a willing heart out of your personal resources. Read Exodus 35:22-28 and notice the recurring phrase, “with whom was found. . . .” That indicates that the items mentioned were in the possession of the person who gave them. The one who had linen cloth brought it. The one who had animal skins brought them. The one who had precious stones brought them. *“The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses”* (Exodus 35:29).

That is all God requires of you. Give because of your concern for the kingdom of God. Give with a willing (joyful) spirit rather than with regret and from compulsion. Give out of whatever personal resources you may have. God does not require you to give the same item as another or to give the same amount as another. Here is God's rule for your giving: *“If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not”* (II Corinthians 8:12). Oh, how that liberates you in your giving to special projects for the Lord! Will that make a difference in your gifts to your Lord?

When to Give: Give when you have the opportunity

Give your tithes and freewill offerings as often as you have income. Do you receive your salary each week? Then give on the first day of the week as the Lord has prospered you (I Corinthians 16:2). Do you receive your salary every two weeks or once a month? Then give on the first Lord's day after you receive your income. That is the way you can "*honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase*" (Proverbs 3:9). The tithe of all your increase should be paid as regularly as you have income.

There are times when special needs arise. Those should be met by offerings above your tithe and any other offering you may present out of love for your Lord. You give those special offerings as often as you are aware of the special need.

A special need may arise on a home or foreign mission field. A crisis might arise at a Christian college or children's home. Natural disaster might strike (storms, floods, fire, drought) and special offerings may be needed. In such cases, give an offering which is over and above what you give regularly to the Lord through your church.

Keep on giving those special offerings until the need is met. The Israelites brought their offerings for the tabernacle every morning (Exodus 36:3). They kept bringing them until there was enough for the project. Then the offerings ceased.

Who is to Give: Every one who has goods or services should give to the Lord (Exodus 35:20-29)

Note carefully these words from the sacred record: "*They came, both men and women,*" "*every man,*" "*all the women,*" "*and the rulers*" "*the children of Israel.*" It seems that all the people participated in giving, doesn't it?

How wonderfully the needs of the kingdom of God would be met if God's people responded like that in their giving today. The Israelites seemed to feel that giving was a privilege, not a burdensome obligation. There is always enough to meet the need when God's people give freely of what they have.

A little lad gave Jesus his lunch, all that he had to eat. Jesus took the little and blessed it to make it much. Thousands of people were filled with a lunch prepared to feed one boy. In much the same way, God can take our little and make it much when He adds His blessings to it.

Give what you have to the Lord. Do not worry about what another person has or gives (or refuses to give). You be a faithful steward of your own resources. God will take care of the rest. He is able to take the little and make it much. And He will do it if His people are faithful in their personal stewardship. Thank God for those who are.

Each believer should be a good steward of his resources. Those resources would include finances (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.); they would also include natural talents and acquired skills. There were women in Israel who could weave curtains, and they donated that skill to the Lord. There were men who could work with precious metals and set precious stones. They donated their skill. Each was giving what he or she had to the Lord.

Look at the types of offerings you can give to the Lord. (1) Percentage giving means that you give at least 10 percent of your increase to your Lord. (2) Freewill offerings are those funds you give extra to the Lord as a sign of your love for Him. (3) Faith offerings are those you give to the Lord out of what you do not presently foresee you will give, but you promise to give them as He provides. All three methods are valid for you to follow in your gifts today. You will experience fullness of joy when you give in all three areas. Try it and rejoice!

“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Proverbs 3:9, 10).

Questions for Discussion

1. How do tithes differ from special offerings?
2. Why are special offerings needed in God's work?
3. Why were tithes not used to build God's sanctuary?
4. What types of “goods” can be given to God today?
5. What types of services can be given to God today?
6. How can you cultivate a heart that rejoices to give?
7. What opportunities for special offerings do you see?
8. Who should give regular and special offerings to the Lord?
9. How are the offerings given to the Lord if they are given through your church?
10. How can you honor the Lord better through your giving?