

7

REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS CONTRIBUTE INTO THE CHURCH TREASURY



Introduction

1. At some point during our worship service we pass around the bag/plate to take up the collection. This is not a human tradition, but a commandment of the Lord for the work of the church (edification, evangelism, benevolence).
2. Some, though, do not have a complete understanding *why*, as Christians, we give. Where there is a lack of understanding there is, perhaps, a tendency for one to be “conservative” in one’s giving.
3. Another reason why some might be overly conservative in their giving is because of an undue attachment to money and possessions – something that Jesus warned against (**Luke 12:15; Hebrews 13:5**). Most people grow up with a “this is MINE” attitude toward possessions and money, and such an attitude makes it difficult to give as we ought.
4. The aim of this lesson is to highlight the reasons we give and, in the process, correct any bad attitudes toward wealth and possessions we may have adopted growing up. This will encourage us to give with the right spirit.

7 REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS CONTRIBUTE INTO THE CHURCH TREASURY

Christians give into the treasury because...

1. Giving Is An Obligation (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**).
2. Giving Is A Privilege (**2 Corinthians 8:3-5**).
3. Giving Is One Dimension Of Our Stewardship (**1 Peter 4:10-11**).
4. Giving Is An Act Of Worship (**Philippians 4:18**).
5. Giving Is An Investment (**Philippians 4:17**).
6. Giving Is An Act Of Self-Sacrifice (**Romans 12:1-2**).
7. Giving Is An Expression Of Brotherly Love (**2 Corinthians 8:8, 24**).

7 REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS CONTRIBUTE INTO THE CHURCH TREASURY

1. GIVING IS AN OBLIGATION

God’s people have always been under obligation to give something back to God that which He has graciously given.

- a. The Israelites were obliged to give a tenth of *all* their increase (**Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Haggai 1:1-11**).

“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is Yahweh’s. It is holy to Yahweh. If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to Yahweh. He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed” (**Leviticus 27:30-33**).

- b. Christians, too, are obliged out of love to give into the weekly collection in order for the church to do its work (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7**):
 - 1) To support elders (**1 Timothy 5:17**), teachers, and evangelists (**1 Corinthians 9:5-14**).
 - 2) To help those in need (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:1-16**). To meet urgent needs (**Titus 3:14**).
 - 3) To edify the church (**Ephesians 4:11-16**).
- c. Giving into the treasury does not in any way free us from our individual responsibility to support teachers (**Galatians 6:6; 3 John 1:5-8**), assist needy brethren (**Romans 12:13; 1 John 3:17-18**), visit orphans and widows (**James 1:27**), and help anyone in need (**Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 4:28**).

2. GIVING IS A PRIVILEGE

Those that have no interest in seeking first the kingdom of God will put a token amount into the treasury each week simply out of habit. But those that do seek first the kingdom of God and understand *all* that giving means consider it a great privilege to generously contribute in the fellowship of the gospel.

- a. When we consider for what the money in the treasury is used – the edification of the church, supporting the preaching of the gospel (**Philippians 1:3-7; 4:10-16**), and supplying the needs of the saints (**2 Corinthians 8:3-5**) – and the fact we share (fellowship) in those things, then we can see what a great privilege it is to give.
- b. Jesus said that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (**Acts 20:35**). In discussing the Philippians’ giving, Paul said, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account” (**Philippians 4:17**). Note the following comments:
 - “They [the Philippians] meant Paul to be the gainer from their generosity, and so indeed he is; but on the spiritual plane the permanent gain will be theirs” (Bruce).
 - “More than the advantage which a gift yields to him personally, Paul desires the fruit of spiritual enrichment among them” (Muller).
 - “He rejoices in their gift chiefly because they have gained spiritually by their giving. It has been a real benefit to them. They have really been enriched by their transaction” (Erdman).
- c. The churches of Macedonia were models of generosity in giving, even though they were poor. They gladly gave out of gratitude toward God and love for their brethren (**2 Corinthians 8 and 9**; see especially **8:4, 9**). Paul reminds us of Jesus’ teaching that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (**Acts 20:35**).

3. GIVING IS ONE DIMENSION OF OUR STEWARDSHIP

Very often Jesus spoke of the stewardship of His people in terms of money (see **Luke 16:1-13**). Our faithfulness as stewards in this “little thing” of money has a bearing on what other (and greater) responsibilities we will be given (see **Luke 16:9-12**).

- a. We are stewards of God’s possessions. A steward is a person responsible to use someone else’s property to accomplish work for the owner. God owns the earth and everything on it, including animals, silver, and gold (**Psalms 24:1-2; 50:10, 12**).
- b. Our possessions were given to us by God (**1 Chronicles 29:12, 14; Deuteronomy 8:11, 17, 18; James 1:17; Job 1:21**). Thus, while we have the power to decide how to use what God has given to us, we are expected to be good stewards.
- c. Christians shared with needy believers (**Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35**) because they knew their possessions were not really their own. If we view our possessions as “ours,” we may resent giving them to others. When we realize that these things really belong to God, not to us, then we should willingly use them for whatever God wants.

4. GIVING IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

The Israelites could only approach God in worship with a *sacrifice*, and this sacrifice was a contribution, whether whole or in part. In the New Testament, contributions were also described as *sacrifices* offered up in worship (see **Hebrews 9:1-10; 10:1-25; 13:10-16**).

- a. Worship, in part, may be described as *an expression of awe, devotion, and love* - from man, the creature, to his Creator. One aspect of this reverential disposition can entail the presentation of gifts.
- b. Worship “given”:
 - 1) God, being entirely self-sufficient, requires no gift from man to sustain Him in any way. He is not “served by men’s hands, as though He needed anything” (**Acts 17:25**; cp. **Psalms 50:10-12; Romans 11:35**). He is pleased, however, when we exhibit the spirit of generosity (**2 Corinthians 9:6-7**).
 - 2) It is a fact beyond dispute that the act of “giving” can be an overture of worship. Consider: in the Old Testament, sacrifices to the Lord were designated as “gifts” (**Numbers 18:11**; cf. **Hebrews 5:1**).

When the wise men from the east came to worship Jesus, their devotion was manifested in the form of “gifts” (**Matthew 2:11**).

It is generally conceded that the “fellowship” mentioned in Acts 2:42 (in concert with other items of worship) embraces the act of “giving” (cp. **Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 9:13**).

When the Philippian saints gave their money for the support of Paul, God viewed it as “an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (**Philippians 4:18**).

An inspired writer admonished: “But to do good and to communicate [be generous] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (**Hebrews 13:16**).

- c. In view of the foregoing passages, it necessarily would follow that if the New Testament places upon the Christian the obligation to “give” of his means unto God, and when he neglects that responsibility, he has refused to worship his Maker, at least in that respect.

5. GIVING IS AN INVESTMENT

Some people are of the opinion that we ought to give without expecting anything back. Jesus, though, often spoke about being rewarded for all that we do (**Matthew 5:11-12; 6:3-4; 10:42; Luke 6:35**).

- a. Generally, when Jesus returns, He will reward each person according to what they have done (**Revelation 22:12; Ephesians 6:8**). Indeed, even the smallest good deed will receive a reward (**Mark 9:41**).
- b. If we give alms in the right manner, then the Father will reward us (**Matthew 6:3-4**). “The encouragement for performing our acts of charity in secret is that it will be pleasing to God; that he will see the act, however secret it may be, and will openly reward it. If the reward is not granted in this life, it will be in the life to come. In multitudes of cases, however, alms given to the poor are ‘lent to the Lord’ (Proverbs 19:17), and will be repaid in this life. Rarely, perhaps never, has it been found that the man who is liberal to the poor has ever suffered by it in his worldly circumstances” (Barnes).
- c. In discussing the Philippians’ giving, Paul said, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account” (**Philippians 4:17**). What is the fruit that would abound to their account? Paul is seeking spiritual good to be credited to their account; he considered their support “a profitable investment in the service of God, for God will repay them rich dividends by adding interest to their account” (Loh & Nida). The dividends may refer to future rewards at the coming of Christ, or they may come in the form of spiritual growth that continually occurs as one engages in good works.

A Christian that is not continually engaged in good works is not experiencing spiritual growth.

6. GIVING IS AN ACT OF SELF-SACRIFICE

All Christian service should be a sacrifice (**Romans 12:1-2**). In giving, we should not seek man's praise, but God's (**Matthew 6:2-4**). We should not give with the hope of getting ahead in this life, but with the faith that God will reward us in heaven (**Luke 14:12-14**). We should not give under pressure, but willingly and cheerfully, with gratitude for God's grace to us, according to our ability (**2 Corinthians 8 and 9**).

- a. All Christian service should be a sacrifice (**Romans 12:1-2**).
- b. Giving is an acceptable sacrifice.
- 1) When the Philippian saints gave their money for the support of Paul, God viewed it as “an odor of a sweet smell, a **sacrifice** acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (**Philippians 4:18**).
- 2) An inspired writer admonished: “But to do good and to communicate [be generous] forget not: for with such **sacrifices** God is well pleased” (**Hebrews 13:16**).
- c. Christian’s gave sacrificially;
- 1) Christians **sacrificed land and houses** to provide for needy brethren (**Acts 4:32-37**).

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; **neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own**, but they had all things in common” (**Acts 4:32**). Most of us have grown up believing that all that we have – money and possessions - are “MINE”. We are, perhaps, more attached to our money and possessions than we’d like to admit. Worse still, many of us are not content with what we have and always want MORE. Two things are absolutely essential: (i) To learn to be content with food and clothing (**1 Timothy 6:8**), and (ii) to adopt the same attitude as those early Christians: “**neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own**”. Without these essentials it will be impossible to give generously and sacrificially.

- 2) “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, **and beyond their ability**, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God” (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

- 3) A poor widow put “**all she had to live on**” into the temple treasury (Mark 12:41-44).

7. GIVING IS AN EXPRESSION OF BROTHERLY LOVE

Giving is an expression of brotherly love and of Christian unity. The principle is set down in texts such as Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 3:11; Romans 12:13; James 2:15-17 and 1 John 3:15-18. The practice of this principle is seen in Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 11:27-30; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Philippians 4:14-19.

- a. Giving is an expression of our love. If we love (agape) others, then it will be expressed in our willingness to meet their needs:

- 1) God expressed His love toward man by the giving of His Son (far more precious than money) (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- 2) The good Samaritan expressed his love by helping a man that had been beaten and robbed, and paying for his care (Luke 10:30-37).

“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:9-11).

- 3) We express our love for our brethren by giving when they are in need (1 John 3:16-18; James 2:14-17).

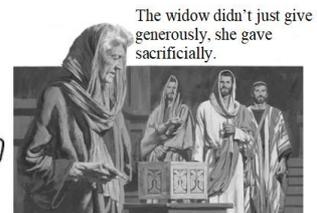
- b. Giving into the treasury to support and further the work of the church is an expression of our love. In discussing the Corinthians’ responsibility (as a church) to give support for needy saints, Paul says, “I am testing the sincerity of your love...” (2 Corinthians 8:8), and, “Therefore show to them, and before the churches the proof of your love...” (2 Corinthians 8:24).

If we have the love of God dwelling in us, then we will always be concerned for wellbeing of others. Love motivates us to give to make provision to give to those in need (Ephesians 4:28; cp. Galatians 2:20; John 15:13; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 John 4:9; Ephesians 5:2, 25).

- c. The practice of the principle is seen in Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 11:27-30; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Philippians 4:14-19.

Conclusion

1. As Christians, we give into the treasury on the first day of the week, and we understand that the money is used to fulfill the work of the church – edification, evangelism, and benevolence.
2. However, it is this limited understanding, combined with a “what I have is MINE” attitude that is responsible for “conservative” giving (to say the least).
3. In this lesson we have attempted to correct wrong attitudes that some may have towards their wealth and possessions, and revealed seven reasons why we give into the treasury each week.
4. Let each of us ensure that we have the right attitude towards our wealth and possessions, and that we fully understand the reasons why we give, so that we will be zealous in giving.



“The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself” (Proverbs 11:25).