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Dear Christian: About Your Offering

930-A

Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs

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Dear Christian: About Your Offering

This lesson marks the conclusion of our three part study on the subject of giving. (And all the people said, “amen”!) We seem to have a bad habit in this class of wandering aimlessly into the quicksand of difficult subjects, only to find upon arrival, that the material is too painful for consistent intake, and the principles too personal to be easily dismissed. Our pilgrimage through Proverbs has been marked by such difficult dilemmas, and our present subject is of course no exception. As we mentioned three weeks ago, I don’t recall ever teaching on this before (and I think I would like to be able to say I won’t again) but that’s of course a dangerous thing to say.

Two lessons back, we looked at “The Foolishness of Giving” by looking at those amazing principles from Proverbs on the subject: principles that, as always, are 180 degrees from the ways of the world. To the unbeliever and even to the Christian who has not searched the Scriptures, they are (as are all God’s Principles) sheer foolishness!

In the last lesson, we followed those principles into the New Testament, where Paul devoted two full chapters to explaining to the enthusiastic, but undisciplined Corinthian Church how they were to deal with the difficult subject of giving. Our lesson was entitled: “Dear Corinthians: About That Offering.” So we complete our hurried journey through this somewhat sensitive territory by taking the rest of the New Testament passages that deal with giving and looking at what God has to say: Our more or less logical title then is: “Dear Christians: about YOUR offering.”

- I- Principles for Christian workers (Philippians 4:9-19)
- II- Principles for Christian churches (Acts 2:41-47; 4:31-37)
- III- Principles for Christians
 - A- Priorities in giving (Mark 9:41; Romans 15:25-28)
 - B- Sacrifice in giving (Luke 3:3-11; Mark 12:41-44; I John 3:16-20)
 - C- Enemies of giving (Matthew 6:1-4; Luke 12:15-21; I Timothy 6:6-18)

It has been our desire to cover all the passages that deal with the issue of giving, while at the same time not belaboring the point, for I am as anxious to get on to another subject as you are. Teachers are often tested in whatever subject they are teaching, and this one

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has been no exception. So my wife and I voted unanimously to preach on and press on to another battlefield, so Christians, hold on while we ask ourselves about that offering.

For the sake of those who are on the receiving end of ministry-related giving, and for those who DO the giving, as well, it is important to begin this study by looking at giving from a missionary's perspective. In this case, our missionary is named Paul, and he is writing to the church at Philippi, a church that has been faithful in sending him support, even when other churches have failed to do so. In chapter four of Philippians, we have Paul's perspective of giving from the Christian worker's point of view. Turn to Philippians 4. Paul begins this way:

I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or (actually living) in want.

I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only.

for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.

Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.

I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to GOD.

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Philippians 4:10-20 NIV)

Paul was writing a thank you note to the missions committee

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of a church that had just sent him a sizable gift, after a period of time when they had not contributed to his support at all, because they simply had been unable to do so. This was no mimeographed prayer letter. Paul was writing a personal note of gratitude and expressing some incredibly important principles for churches and Christians and Christian workers to understand.

It is the underlying tone of Paul's letter that is vital. What he is saying, in essence, is this: Boy, am I grateful that you can help me again, not because I would have starved without it, but because my concern is for the treasures in Heaven you accrue by giving. God's going to take care of me, Paul was saying. My support is not dependent on you; my support is dependent on GOD. If you can give, give because it is glory credited to your account, and that makes you happy.

Now, it isn't that GOD always gives me a constant standard of living, Paul went on, sometimes, I've got bunches, seemingly more than I need. Other times, I barely have enough to eat with nothing left over, but that's okay. God is teaching me the "secret of contentment": how to be grateful for much, and how to be grateful for little. In other words, he is teaching how to be consistent with an inconsistent income. And Paul concludes that the same GOD who supplies all my needs will also supply all of yours according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus. Praise His Name. So if you're a Christian worker or missionary, ponder these principles:

1- Paul knew who had and hadn't given, and he was grateful for every gift he had received. He did not presumptuously expect the churches to always give a set amount. When they couldn't give, it gave God a chance to work in a different way in his life. He didn't have a guaranteed pledge program, but rather a group of churches committed to help him as they could, and thus his dependence was totally on God to bless those churches and thus bless him however and whenever God chose.

2- Paul had learned the "secret", as he called it, of contentment through the very inconsistency of the giving of his supporters. He wasn't presumptuous when he got a large gift, assuming they owed it to him to continue at that level. He praised God for it, and he wasn't depressed when the giving became almost non-existent. He simply crawled up into GOD and thanked him for supplying all his needs, knowing his needs were what GOD thought they were, not what Paul thought they were.

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3- Paul's primary concern was not HIS needs, but theirs. As we said in the last lesson that he prayed regularly for those who gave, and his concern was that they not miss the blessing of giving (rather than that he not miss the blessing of receiving).

4- Paul was quick to remind them that GOD would always meet his needs, whether through them or someone else, and God would always "Dear Christian: meet their needs, whether they had money to give or not. The whole issue was that Paul wasn't concerned about Paul. Paul was concerned about his people, their rewards, their blessings, their needs. He did not just care for those he was ministering to, but he cared about those who were giving to him so he could minister.

So often, all the emphasis is on praying for and giving to those in Christian service. Paul turned it around. He said it's important that you give, but my concern is for your welfare. You're my co-laborers; my burden is for you, not for what you can do for me. He wasn't presumptuous or demanding or ungrateful when times changed. He had learned the secret of contentment, and he counted that worth far more than the secrets of fund-raising.

If you are in Christian work and listening to this lesson, may I encourage you once more to pray regularly for everyone who contributes to your ministry, not for their prosperity so you can be fed, but for their spiritual well-being and for the rewards they are accruing in Heaven as a result of their giving. And if you, by chance, like so many of us, are developing a presumptuous spirit, feeling that those who have always given are now obligated to give, and those that have given large gifts now are obligated to give at that level, and that your present standard of living is now God's standard for you from now on, pay attention to Paul. Learn the secret of contentment; it's worth more than all the funds in the world. Okay? Okay!

Now we go from the missionary to the local fellowship in our quest for questions and answers where giving is concerned, and we turn to Acts 2, where that discomfiting passage seems to clamor for our attention.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number THAT DAY.

(Acts 2:41 NIV)

Now I'd say this was a growing church. You think we've got problems, these guys weren't experiencing growth, they were

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experiencing an explosion! It was a BIG church by anybody's standard. Their first priorities were to teach the Word, build up the fellowship, and pray.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. (Acts 2:42,43 NIV)

There was an awe, a holy awe about their times together. The Word was central; prayer was essential, and fellowship was natural. There was a holy reverence about their lives because of the great things GOD was doing in their midst, but they were not without physical problems. God didn't reach down and prosper each saint, as some today teach He should. God instead allowed some to be unemployed, some to have their goods confiscated, some to lose their standing because they were standing for Christ. But He had a plan. Listen.

All the believers were together and had everything in common.

Selling their possessions, and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in the homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

Praising GOD and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:44-47 NIV)

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions were his own, but they shared everything they had."

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was with them all.

There were no needy persons among them. (Why not?) For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales

And put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. (Acts 4:31-35 NIV)

Now don't be afraid of this passage. It's challenging, but it's

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not devastating. Please don't miss the principles because of the program. The program may or may not have been designed only for that church's needs. The principles are eternal, and we can't escape them. And the principles are these:

1- It was God who was building the church (2:41). Let's don't ever forget that our programs don't build the church, our performance doesn't build the church, our perseverance doesn't even build the church. God builds the church. HE adds and HE builds. It's HIS church. We have the responsibility to be faithful. He has the responsibility to build the church.

2- Our responsibility is to preach and teach the WORD, to build up the fellowship, and to pray without ceasing. Everything else will happen as a result of our faithfulness to those basics. Our job is not to promote. Our job is to teach, pray, and edify.

3- God made Himself known personally (verse 43). He revealed His power in such a way that the people were in awe of who HE was, not in awe of who THEY were. That, my friend, is the mark of a great church. They are unimpressed with themselves, but in awe of their God.

4- There was an indescribable closeness in the fellowship. It wasn't a club or a lodge or a meeting hall filled with men and women who were interested in the same GOD, but disinterested in each other. They were a family, a close-knit family, bound together by the threads of love that Jesus Christ had woven for them at Calvary.

5- So they considered their possessions common property (verses 44-45). Now, the key here isn't some socialistic plot to rob men of their financial distinctives. The key is that they were so in love with Jesus, and so in love with each other, that it never dawned on them to cling to something as fleeting and inconsequential as "things."

6- When necessary, from time to time, they even sold what they had (in order to have money to give away). They weren't commanded to, they wanted to. They didn't all do it all the time, but from time to time, and it apparently was a fairly common occurrence. If there was a need within the family of the church, it wasn't simply, "Do I have loose change to drop in a special offering, but is there anything I can sell that will allow me to have even more to give away?" Now we're not dealing with a legalistic system of church finance, but with an incredible example of what happens when God takes

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control of a church. They preach the Word; they pray, and they are so concerned with building up one another that, if ANYBODY has a need, the whole body rushes to try to meet it, if need be, selling what they have to have the more to give. Now that principle is not obsolete. That's not some antiquated activity for another dispensation. That's New Testament Christianity. And a church that preaches and teaches, but is unwilling to become a family of saints, who meet each other's needs, isn't a New Testament church at all. I don't care how straight their doctrine is or how awesome their teaching is.

7- The more they gave, the sweeter the fellowship became, and the more powerful their message became, and God kept saving men and building His Church, and the other result? "They kept praising God and having favor with all the people." What a church! What a testimony! What a GOD!

So we've looked at how Christian workers should look at giving, and at how giving works when the church is meeting one another's needs. Now, let's look at some principles on giving where we, as individual Christians, are concerned. We'll divide this part of our study into three parts: Priorities for giving, Sacrifices in giving, and Enemies of giving.

Obviously, you can't give to everything, and you can't give to everybody. So where do our priorities lie? A couple of priorities have already emerged:

1- You give to the local body of believers we call the church. They had all things in common; they brought what they had to the apostles and laid it at their feet for them to distribute as there was need. Your first responsibility is to the church, particularly if the church is fulfilling its Scriptural requirements of ministering.

2- You give according to the leading of the Spirit in answer to specific prayer. Do you pray before you give? Specifically? Paul reminded us last in the lesson that everyone, as he purposes in his own heart, ought to give, not grudgingly or under pressure. So pray about every cent you give, and pray for wisdom. "If any man lack wisdom, he can ask of God who gives liberally and upbraids us not for asking." God delights to give instruction to His children. So how much, and in some cases to whom, you give will be determined in answer to specific prayer. But there are some other considerations. The first we find in Mark 9:41 where we read

I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my

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name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41)

There are several principles in this passage, not the least of which is the fact that God takes note of the most seemingly insignificant gifts (a cup of cold water). But we're asking to whom do we give? And God is answering. "You give to my work in my name."

So the third priority is you give to the work of the Kingdom. Now I know that seems to be unnecessary, but so many Christians have been led to believe that if they give to any charity they are glorifying God, simply because they are Christians. But the reason we give IS to glorify God, and how is God glorified when we give to those who do not name His name, or believe in His Word, or place as their underlying priority the transformation of the Spirit through the regenerative work of Christ on the Cross. There are obviously exceptions. There are times when we give to non-Christian groups to maintain our testimony of generosity to our unbelieving neighbors; there are times when we give to non-Christian groups whom God has used to meet specific needs in our families, but the basic rule is give to the KINGDOM, nothing else is eternal. So nothing else glorifies God. And if you're listening and are long on the United Way or some other way, please forgive me; but I believe our responsibility is to give to the Master's way and to the Master's work. Sometimes you give to an unbeliever in Jesus' name as a testimony, but whatever you give, ask yourself, will it further the Kingdom? Will it lift up the savior? If it will do neither, ask yourself, why give it?

Fourthly, you give specifically to those who shared the gospel with you and made it possible for you to know Christ. In Romans 15, verses 25-28, Paul describes his itinerary and says I'm on my way to Jerusalem to take an offering (the one we talked about last week) that was given primarily by the churches in Macedonia and Achaia. In verse 27, Paul makes this statement: "They were pleased to do it, and indeed THEY OWE IT TO THEM." (Now that's a rather strong statement. Let's see why they are so indebted.) "For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews spiritual blessings; they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings." In other words, they brought the gospel to you, you are responsible to see that their material needs are met. (Paul reminded them of that when he wrote them his second letter.)

If you were led to Christ by an individual, a group, an

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organization, or a church, be sure in your giving, no matter who else you give to, that there are not still unmet needs in the life or lives of those who are, in effect, your spiritual parents. You owe your life to their witness; you share in their needs.

Fifthly, you give to those who are building you up in the faith.

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. (Galatians 6:6 NIV)

Or as one translator puts it,

“contribute towards their livelihood”

That means whatever church or ministry is responsible for helping you to grow by revealing the Word to you, ought to be on your list of those to whom you give. If you listen to Chuck Swindoll daily on the radio, and through his teaching you are growing, send something as a love-gift to God for using him in your life. Those programs aren't free. If Dobson, or Hendricks, or Dr. McGee minister to your growth, you minister to their support.

If a Christian group is helping either you or your children grow (the Navigators, Youth For Christ, or others), and you're not giving to help them keep the work going, you are violating this principle. It doesn't say give to those who badger you the most, it says give to those who help you the most. You may be receiving the bulk of your spiritual input from your own church, then just give the more to the ministry of that church, but don't overlook whoever God is using to build you up.

And sixthly, and most important of all, you give to those who are spreading the Gospel around the world. Your giving is to go from Jerusalem to Samaria to the uttermost parts of the World. You can't always go, but your money can. So invest in ministries and ministers and churches who are taking the Word where the Word needs to go, and evaluate a work before you give. That's your responsibility!

Here are some questions to ask yourself about a ministry.

- 1) Is it glorifying Jesus or men?
- 2) Is it wasteful or wise in its spending? (Do they spend all the money you send on letters asking for more?)
- 3) Is the Cross central in its teaching or is it off on a tangent?
- 4) Is bearing fruit or treading water?

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- 5) Is it building and working in harmony with the local church, or is it working against it?
- 6) Is it cooperative with the Body at large, or exclusive and condemning of other Christian groups?
- 7) Does it, by the way it raises money generate confidence in God or confidence in its program.

Ask these questions before you give, then once you have determined God's will, give. Give to the local church God has placed you in, give as the Spirit leads, but be careful to give primarily if not exclusively to the work of the Kingdom, giving special attention to those who led you to Christ, to those who are helping you grow in the faith, and to those who are taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

The sacrifice of giving.

We have asked ourselves to whom we give. Now we ask ourselves how much and when, and the answer once again is clear. We will look at three passages of Scripture, Luke 3:3-11, Mark 12:41-44, and I John 3:16-20 for some answers.

Answer #1 is found in Luke 3. First of all, you give anything you can spare (anything you're not using). In this passage, John the Baptist is preaching with a fiery call for repentance, and the convicted crowd cries out, "What then should we do?" John answers in verse 11, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." In other words, "If you have two coats," the Living Bible paraphrases it, "give one to the poor; and if you have extra food, give it away to those who are hungry." And this concept carried its way through the entire New Testament!

You begin by giving away everything you have that you absolutely don't need. Either you give it away, or sell it and give away whatever you get for it. The Kingdom, John was saying, will be characterized by people giving themselves and all they have away. Do you want to prove you've repented? Then give!

I think there probably needs to be some garage sales and some closets emptied in a lot of our houses. I believe we ought to begin to be more cautious about how much food we waste, while others have no food at all. If you have something you're not using, and someone else, someone in particular in God's family, needs what you're not using; to hoard it or store it, or ignore it is sin. The least you can do, (John seemed to be saying) is give away what you're

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not even using!

The second thing we know about how much to give is that we are to give whenever a need arises, and we ought to do it compassionately! We read:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (I John 3:16-18 NIV)

Now let me ask you, how eager are you to find someone in the Body of Christ who has a need? If you're want to know what some real needs are, just call your church office. There are families with critical needs who simply need to know somebody else cares. That's true as a church as well as individuals. That's why churches need to beware of budgeted inflexibility of not leaving room for people with needs whose needs could not possibly have been known 8 months before at budget time. And we as individuals need to be setting money aside for special needs, and then we ought to be praying for and looking for those needs to meet. You say, but I don't have any extra money. Then sell something you have that you aren't using, or just give a dollar or fifty cents or whatever you CAN afford. But when you see a need help meet it. You're meeting Jesus' needs when you do.

Thirdly, give beyond what is comfortable. Mark 12:41-44 tells us the story of what God considers to be REAL GIVING. It's the story of the widow's mite. I won't read it again, but I would remind you again, that real giving to Jesus is when you give everything you have or at least give out of a sacrificial spirit, not just out of what's left over after all your own wants have been met. So you give anything you can spare, you give whenever a need arises, and you give beyond what is comfortable. You give until you know you've given. That's what God calls the sacrifice of giving.

You say, "Well I can sit here and listen, or read these passages and know I ought to give more, but it simply isn't my nature to give." You're absolutely right! It's not! But it's God's nature to give, and God's nature is in the process of taking control of your life so giving ought to be becoming an increasingly important part of your Christian walk.

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But Satan does not want it to happen. He'll fight it at every turn. Spiritual warfare will break out in your household, and you'll be tested, if you take a stand on the issue of giving. and he usually attacks you in one of three ways. The New Testament tells us about three specific enemies of a giving spirit, watch for them. Here they are.

First, there's the enemy of procrastination. That's good intentions postponed. I Corinthians 16:1-4 is a passage in which Paul once again refers to this collection being taken up for the Jerusalem church. Here was his original instruction. Now take note. He knew of their spirit of procrastination so he says about the collection for God's people. Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come, no collections will have to be made."

In other words, don't put it off. If you do, you'll never do it, and the money will be gone. So Paul gives the Corinthians some practical advice. Every Lord's Day put aside God's portion of whatever you have made that week. Do it according to what you've made, Paul goes on, not a set amount for everyone, but everyone according to his own ability. But do it weekly; otherwise time will go by, and so will the money and I'll come and you'll be embarrassed. (And sure enough, they were!)

There's something to be said for giving weekly, anyway. If every time you give, you give yourself, then every Lord's Day it is appropriate to give a fourth of what you would give each month. At least give every pay period, so you can't put off till the next check what you plan to give away. Take it out first then spend what's left. God's great enemy of giving is procrastination. Don't let it rob you of the blessings that are yours.

The second enemy is the enemy of greed. Greed is the desire of man to increase his possessions beyond what God has determined is his real need. You read of it in Luke 12 and the parable of the foolish farmer. We discussed this in a previous lesson. And you read about greed in I Timothy 6:6-19.

There Paul reminds us of our priorities where possessions are concerned.

Godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

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But if we have food and clothing, we ought to be content with that.

People who want to get rich (who are becoming greedy) fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But you, man of God, flee from all this.“ (In other words, do whatever it takes to protect yourself from the trap of greed.)

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in (their) wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. (I Timothy 6:6-19 NIV)

What Paul is saying is that money and possessions have in themselves a built-in potential for self-destruction. They create an insatiable appetite for themselves that is never satisfied. The result is spiritual ruin. He is saying that ambition begets greed and greed destroys every thing worth having. You can't take it with you, Paul says, but you can send it on up ahead by giving it away.

And then the third enemy of giving is even more insidious. It is an enemy that only robs us once we have given, but rob us it does. Matthew 6:1 tells us how. Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your father in heaven. SO when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men, I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

The third enemy of giving is pride. In other words, you can give the right amount to the right people and still lose your heavenly rewards, if you are giving to be seen of men. If you simply must have recognition, or simply must let someone else know you have done it, you win the battle, but you lose the war.

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Whenever you can, give anonymously. Whenever you can't, give quietly, without fanfare without the trumpets of self-righteousness calling attention to either your giving or your gift. You don't need a plaque on a pew or listing in the bulletin or even the recognition of the pastor. In fact that very sought for recognition here robs you of your real recognition in heaven. Jesus endorses "left-handed giving". Giving so secretive; so quietly humble, that even your right hand is unaware so to speak, that your left hand is giving and giving and giving some more. Procrastination, greed, and pride are three enemies of the grace of giving. They will steal from you unawares and rob you of the true riches that could be yours in eternity.

Whew! That's the end of our study on giving. Let's say together, "Amen, it's over!" Is it? Now we can all go home and make a few remarks about how glad we are that's over; or a few sarcastic jokes about giving away that extra garbage can that got run over by the garbage truck in order to be rich in heaven, and spend the rest of our lives living and giving the way the mainstream of the Christian community lives and gives.

Buying whatever we want, keeping whatever we get, and giving away what is convenient, when it's convenient, making sure all the while we're noticed as we do. Or we can go home, and as a family, restudy the Biblical principles on giving, and try to determine just who we are living for and what kind of treasures we are laying up, and begin to set some specific goals concerning to whom and how we are going to give what we have away.

We may decide to sell some things and give the proceeds away. We may just decide to postpone some things we thought we HAD to have to give to someone who has nothing or to a work that is multiplying the message of the Good News. We may decide to re-budget our lives by redefining the word "need". We may decide to skip one meal a week as a family, and take the cost of that meal and send it to a special missionary that God has laid on our hearts, both to minister to them, and to teach our children the joy of giving—(most of us have taught them the joy of receiving). We may decide to increase what we're giving and then do without whatever we have to do without to make it happen. We may decide on some ways to give to meet real needs without those to whom we give even knowing who we are, left-handed giving, if you will. We may, or we may just go home and having seen ourselves in God's mirror walk away and forget what we saw. Jesus is saying, "Dear Christian, about that offering." I think He wants us to answer, "Dear Lord, here it is!"

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ABOUT YOUR OFFERING

You say, Dear Lord, here's my offering...
Here, I give of what is left...
When we give that kind of offering
Is that not, in essence, theft?
Are we not our Savior robbing,
When from what remains we bring?
Since He's purchased us at Calvary
Does He not own everything?
Since He gave without withholding
Any good thing from our store?
Would He not have us, His children,
Give, and give, and give the more?
Would He not have us (if need be)
Sell the things we do not use
Giving then, with joy, the proceeds
To the work He'd have us choose?
Would He not say, Child, awaken
If you'd live as I would live
Look at Calvary and remember
What it costs to really give
When you're flooded with my spirit
You won't murmur or complain
When you see a need, you'll meet it
Giving gladly in My Name
Oh, beloved, Jesus beckons,
Let me show you what to bring
My, Dear Christian, here's MY offering
Then He gives us... everything!
So, dear Christian, where's your offering?
If you'd live the Master's way
All of life will be an offering
For you'll give yourself...away!

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