



THE 3 TYPES OF GIVING IN THE BIBLE

Generosity comes from the very heart of God and upon experiencing it, God's people become generous people too. So it makes sense that one of the ways God directs his people in the scriptures is to guide them on how they can be generous with their finances and their hearts to further his generous disposition towards humanity. God is the giver of all things and he shows his people how to give in 3 primary ways. How can we give in each of these ways each month?

1. ALMS

Alms is anything given to relieve the poor which ranges from money, food, clothing, shelter etc. And God calls his people to provide for the poor throughout the scriptures as it captures his heart for the oppressed and downtrodden.

In fact, when God shows up in the person of Jesus Christ, we find that he doesn't just love the poor and oppressed, he identifies with them. Not only does he identify with the poor in his ministry (Matthew 8:20: "The son of man doesn't have a place to lay his head.") and his death (Isaiah 53), but in a continual ongoing sense Christ is represented by the poor, Jesus put it like this:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or without clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?'

"And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

"Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger and you didn't take me in; I was naked and you didn't clothe me, sick and in prison and you didn't take care of me.'

"Then they too will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help you?'

"Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

"And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Matthew 25:31-46 CSB

2. THE TITHE

"Tithe" just means "tenth" and it has come to represent a portion of one's income that is given to God. We see instances of individuals giving a tithe before God formally commands by way of the law at Sinai,



but the tithe is understood to be that which the people of God give generously to preserve a priestly class of people that will mediate God's word and worship for the rest of his people.

Interestingly, God in challenging the Israelites to give 10% of their income also extended a promise of blessing along with a clarification of what failing to meet the tithe actually is: Stealing from him! We must remember that Jesus came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17) and so when it comes to the Tithe we must ask, what would Jesus call his followers to?

"I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty.

"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'

"In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing

me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.

Malachi 3:6-12 NIV

3. OFFERINGS

An offering is anything given over and above the Tithe. If you don't Tithe then it becomes very difficult to give an offering! Until you have given 10% of your income, every gift you bring is part of your Tithe. Throughout the scriptures from Israel to the early church we see these additional offerings take place in beautiful ways:

Then the entire Israelite community left Moses's presence. Everyone whose heart was moved and whose spirit prompted him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its services, and for the holy garments. Both men and women came; all who had willing hearts brought brooches, earrings, rings, necklaces, and all kinds of gold jewelry—everyone who presented a presentation offering of gold to the Lord. Everyone who possessed blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, fine linen or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or fine leather, brought them. Everyone making an offering of silver or bronze brought it as a contribution to the Lord. Everyone who possessed acacia wood useful for

any task in the work brought it. Every skilled woman spun yarn with her hands and brought it: blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and fine linen. And all the women whose hearts were moved spun the goat hair by virtue of their skill. The leaders brought onyx and gemstones to mount on the ephod and breast piece, as well as the spice and oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. So the Israelites brought a freewill offering to the Lord, all the men and women whose hearts prompted them to bring something for all the work that the Lord, through Moses, had commanded to be done.

Exodus 35:20-29 CSB

CONCLUSION

When it comes to the subject of giving it's tempting to Bible with a stingy attitude that asks, "What's the least I can do that satisfies God's giving requirements?" But the scriptures point us to something else,



New Testament teaching on giving calls for gifts that are drenched in our grace and joy because they are motivated by true and real encounters with God's gifts towards us.

The point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work. As it is written:

*He distributed freely;
he gave to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever. (Psalm 112:9)*

Now the one who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will also provide and multiply your

seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the proof provided by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone. And as they pray on your behalf, they will have deep affection for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

1 Corinthians 9:6-15 CSB