

Christian Giving and Soul Winning

by John R. Rice

God wants Christians to give generously and trust Him to provide for their needs, leading to spiritual and material blessings.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:9, Luke 6:38, Acts 2:44, 2 Corinthians 9:6, 2 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Christian Stewardship", "Soul Winning"

Description

John R. Rice emphasizes the importance of growing in grace and knowledge as a Christian, highlighting the need for continuous learning and spiritual growth after salvation. He delves into the significance of giving and soul-winning, drawing examples from Acts 2 where early Christians shared everything they had and gave generously to support those in need. Rice discusses the story of Ananias and Sapphira, cautioning against hypocrisy in giving and emphasizing the importance of cheerful and sincere generosity. He also shares a missionary's testimony about the blessings and faithfulness of God when one commits to tithing and giving from the heart, illustrating the joy and prosperity that come from honoring God with one's substance.

Transcript

Are you learning to be a good Christian? The Scripture says we should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Scripture says, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." When you get saved. You are a baby Christian and you need to learn, you need to grow. Since you are not a graduate of a theological seminary when you get saved, you need to learn. And I want to help you about that.

I have discussed about how to be a good Christian; now I come to your giving and your soul winning.

In Acts, chapter 2, we learn about those young Christians, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." Then what? "... and fellowship ... and in prayers." And now you see in Acts 2:44-47:

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

These New Converts Set Out to Give

There was a time of persecution and trouble. People lost their jobs. These people got saved and now they are under persecution, and somebody has to help them, They brought their goods and sold what they had and put it at the apostles' feet. They gave all they had to the Lord and to His work.

There was an emergency. This was not commanded. And later they gave up that plan when it was no longer necessary and when other people sent money in to take care of these poor saints in trouble at Jerusalem. So this is not like communism where there is a dictator and where the people are forced. But they felt like giving everything they had to Jesus and to His work. Isn't that wonderful? They didn't count what they had their own; it belonged to God.

Years ago in Texas, Dr. J. B. Gambrell had an article in The Baptist Standard, titled "Who Owns the Wool?" (He was talking about the sheep.) The normal and proper answer was, "The man who owns the sheep owns the wool also."

Well, the God who owns the Christian owns his money and his possessions. Actually, all we have belongs to the Lord. We are not our own. We are bought with a price. So God wants us to give.

You know, the God who made the world doesn't need our money. But we need to give it. The cattle on a thousand hills are God's, and the silver and gold are His. But it is part of the loving kindness of God that He lets us share with Him. The Bible says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That is a saying the Lord Jesus gave but it was not recorded in Matthew. Mark, Luke and John but recorded later as they passed it among the people (Acts 20:35). So it is more blessed to give than to receive; and God lets us have a sweet part in His work.

I feel so glad and so blessed when I think about this giving and what God has done and what part He lets us have in giving to His cause. These people in Jerusalem were happy. Everything they had they gave to the Lord and divided with other people. That is a wonderful thing about giving - God's way in giving.

These people here gladly gave everything. Later we learn one of the men was Joses who had some land out on the island of Cyprus. He went and sold that and brought the money and gave it to the apostles and said, "Use this for the poor folks." And they did. The apostles gave him another name - Barnabas, the "son of consolation." He became an apostle and went with Paul on his missionary journeys.

That was an example of the kind of Christianity they had in those days.

But some Christians were not very good Christians then. Ananias and Sapphira said, "Listen to these apostles bragging on Barnabas!" They said, "Now, we will sell some land, too, and we will bring part of the money and we will pretend that is all of it, so we will get credit, too." Now that was selfish on their part, but you are still a human being when you get saved and you still have temptations. So Ananias and Sapphira sold some property and brought part of the money, and Peter said, "Now you didn't have to sell it."

"I know."

"You don't have to give it."

"I know, but this is all of it."

Peter said, "You lied to God, and men are here ready to wrap you up and take you out and bury you." So Ananias fell dead.

Then Sapphire came in and Peter asked her, "Did you sell the land for so much?" "Yes, Sir, and we gave every penny of it."

Then Peter said, "The boys are just getting back from burying your husband and they are ready to wrap you up and take you out." She fell over dead and they carried her out and buried her, not because she was supposed to give all but because she lied about it, pretending to be better than she was. God hates hypocrisy. But what God wants is loving gifts given willingly.

It Pays to Tithe and More From the Heart

"Dr. Rice, do you believe in tithing?" people ask. Yes, but I believe in a great deal more than that.

"But Brother Rice, tithing, that is in the Old Testament, isn't it?" It is in the Old Testament, but do you not think God wants a Christian under grace to be just as generous-hearted, just as loving as a Christian under the law, as a Jew under the law? Don't we owe God as much as some Jew with ceremonies? The emphasis in the Old Testament is they brought the tithes in and some offerings; but in the New Testament it is not only that one-tenth belongs to God but that all belongs to God. Whatsoever you do, whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God, the Scripture says. All belongs to Him.

I promise you two things: One, tithing is the way of great happiness. And it is the way of prosperity and blessing, too.

First, how many promises there are that it pays to give! Someone says, "It looks like it would pay one to save up and keep all he can." But that is not the way to have more. The way to have more is to give more. Jesus, speaking in Luke 6:38, said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." That comes up again and again in the Bible.

We read back in Proverbs 3:9,10, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Isn't that wonderful?

You give in a way to honor God, and God will see that you have better crops. You give thus, and God will see that you get a better salary. You give, and God will see that you don't have as many accidents, as many doctor bills, as much extra expense. He promises, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

Here it is again in Proverbs 11:25, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" - fat spiritually, and fat in material blessings, too.

Years ago a good woman, Mrs. Widner, was teaching a big Bible class in Dallas, Texas. She said, "Don't talk about what you get out of it. You ought to give to God because you love Him. You ought not be talking about the rewards you will get."

One woman said to Mrs. Widner, "Dr. John Rice says that if God says He is going to reward you, it is all right to tell what God said He is going to do, isn't it?" She laughed and said, "That is right."

And God did say He is going to reward those who give - "Give, and it shall be given unto you." And, "The liberal soul shall be made fat."

Over in II Corinthians 9 we read, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly. and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." The Lord sure likes it when you enjoy giving.

I have found such joy in giving. I used to keep very careful account. When Mrs. Rice and I married, we had a little book where we listed everything that came in. We didn't get much: we lived mighty cheaply. We spent \$5.00 to \$8.00 a month on groceries. We bought a pint of milk every two days. We kept very close account. On one page - I got today, \$11. Over here I would put down \$1.10 - 10% for the Lord, The next time I got \$2.30 - put down 23 cents over here.

I came in one day and I said to my wife, "I don't like that way of doing. It looks like I am afraid God will get more than His share. I don't feel that way."

She said, "I don't either."

I said, "Let's just start out giving 20% to foreign mission causes and what we want to to local expenses and other things." That is the way we did it. So it has been through these years - always 20% and sometimes 50% or 60% and 70% of our income.

My how God has cared for us so wonderfully! It sure pays to seek first the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."

Blessed is the Christian who delights to give. He prays so he can have money he can give. God loves a cheerful giver. So you and the Lord will get along fine if you will set out to seek His face, then to please Him with your giving. How happy that way is.

A Missionary's Testimony

Years ago I was in a revival campaign in a country community in West Texas. In a daytime service I set out to teach people gathered under a brush arbor that God demanded first place in everything, that He wanted tithes and offerings from the loving and believing hearts of His people. Present in the service that day was a dear country preacher, Brother Kuykendal. He was then, and had been for years, county missionary in Palo Pinto County, preaching in churchless communities, building up weak churches, selling and giving away gospel literature as a rural missionary. He asked if he might tell how God had dealt with him about tithing. I gladly asked him to proceed. He arose and told his story about like this.

"Some years ago when I was county missionary of this county the famous Baptist businessman, H. Z. Duke, who founded the Duke and Ayers Nickel Stores over a wide area, came to this county and, speaking as a Christian layman, urged the men and women everywhere to try God and see if He would not make good His promises to bless them in material things when they gave tithes and offerings to His cause. After Mr. Duke had spoken in one community, I took him in my buggy to another community. Mr.

Duke said to me, 'Brother Kuykendal. do you believe in tithing?'

"I certainly do,' I said. 'I believe in tithing and I preach it myself.'

"But, Brother Kuykenda1, do you practice tithing?'

"Sadly I had to answer, 'No, I do not. I believe in tithing, but I cannot practice it. You see, I have thirteen children at home. Every meal fifteen of us sit down at the table. I receive only \$125 a month, \$1500 a year as salary. I have to maintain my own horse and buggy for constant traveling. It is just impossible to take care of all the needs of a family of fifteen out of \$125 a month and have money left to tithe. So I believe in tithing. and I preach it. but I cannot practice it.'

"Mr. Duke was a very kindly man. He said, 'Brother Kuykendal, would you like to tithe? Would you tithe if I would back you up financially so you could be sure you would not lose by it?'

"Nothing would please me more,' I said.

"So Mr. Duke made me the following proposition:

"I want you to set out to give God at least \$12.50 every month as soon as you get your salary. Then as you feel led, you may give more. I promise you that if you need help, I will give it. Simply write me a letter and say, "Brother Duke. I am giving a tithe, but I miss the money. I need it for my family. I have given this year so much." I promise you that I will send you a check by return mail. Are you willing to try tithing on that basis?

"I hesitated a moment, moved with emotion, and Brother Duke said, 'I have thirty-two stores. I have plenty of money to make good my promise. I will be glad to do it. Will you risk me and start tithing on my simple promise that I will make good any amount you have given, any time that you find you miss it and need it? Will you trust me about it?'

"I gladly accepted his offer. I said, 'Yes, Brother Duke, I have long wanted to tithe, but I felt I simply could not do it. Now, thank God, I can tithe and I will be glad to. And I will not feel like a hypocrite when I tell others they ought to tithe.'

"So I started tithing for the first time in my life. Every month I took out first of all one-tenth of my salary and gave it to the Lord's cause; then, as I felt led, I gave more. In the back of my mind I always had this thought, 'Mr. Duke promised me that he would make it up any time I need it. He will send me the money if I simply ask him for it.'

"But a strange thing happened. It seemed our money went farther than before. I would preach in some country community and somebody would tie a crate of chickens on the back of my buggy. Somebody would put a ham under the seat. Or a godly woman would put some home-canned fruit in my buggy.

"A neighbor farmer said, 'Brother Kuykendal, God has blessed me so that I cannot get all my corn in the crib this year. I have a big wagon load extra that I cannot keep. May I put it in your crib for your buggy horse?'

"Another neighbor drove over with a great hay wagon full of hay for the cow.

"It was very strange, but that year we had no doctor bills. The children's clothes seemed not to wear out so badly. It was a happy, happy time. I never did have to call on Mr. H. Z. Duke to make up the money I had given to the Lord in tithes.

"Then one day when the year was about gone and the test was about over, I suddenly realized with shame that I had believed what H. Z. Duke said. He promised to make good anything I lacked because of tithing, and I believed him. But my Heavenly Father had made the same promise, and I had not believed Him! I had taken the word of a man when I did not take the promise of God! Now I had proven God's promises and found that He took care of me and my big family on a small salary. I found that \$112.50 per month took care of our family better, with God's blessing, than \$125 did without being under the blessed covenant which He has made with those who seek first the kingdom of God and who tithe."

That godly country preacher stood there before the congregation weeping. With the deepest emotion he said,

"Now I have tithed for many years. My salary has been increased year after year. We have always had enough. We have never been shamed. The greatest spiritual blessing of my life, aside from my salvation, has been in learning to trust God about daily needs for my home and a big family."

Will You Now Begin Tithes and Offerings?

Somebody says, "I can't afford to tithe." You can't afford not to. You may starve to death if you don't. So, young Christians, set out to tithe and then set out to win souls.

I don't have time to go into that now, but a Christian can be a happy, giving Christian, and then set out to win souls day by day and God will help you in that. You can. You know, that is what those Christians did. That is the Great Commission get them saved, then get them baptized, and setting out to winning others and then teaching them to do exactly what I told you to do - get them saved and get them baptized.

Oh, what a happy life for a Christian, with the Bible day by day and following the Lord and reading and praying and giving and winning souls. You can be a happy Christian.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-r-rice/christian-giving-and-soul-winning/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net