

Principles of Giving

by William MacDonald

Giving is returning what belongs to God, and it should be done regularly, systematically, proportionately, sacrificially, generously, voluntarily, honestly, and with consecration.

Duration: 43:22

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 29:14, Acts 17:24-25, 2 Corinthians 8:9-12

Topics: "Giving"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being led by the Lord to give the right amount at the right time. He shares a story of a man in San Luis Obispo who was prompted by the Spirit of God to give money to a young brother in Iowa. The preacher highlights the significance of giving out of love for Jesus and not for the praise of men, referencing Matthew 6:2-4. He also discusses the test of life mentioned in 1 John, stating that if someone has worldly possessions and sees a brother in need but does not help, it questions the presence of God's love in their heart. The preacher concludes by emphasizing that giving to the Lord's work is equivalent to giving to Jesus himself, referencing Matthew 25:40.

Transcript

Grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. A lot of people in the service of the Lord are very hesitant to speak about this subject.

They're afraid that they might be misunderstood. They're afraid that people might think, well, he's just dropping subtle hints that he needs some money, you know. So I want to start my little talk today with a disclaimer.

I don't need any money. And there are no gentle hints in this message. And when you go away, there'll be as much in your wallet and pocketbook as when you came.

I have everything I want as far as material things in life. And if that doesn't make it clear, come up afterwards and I'll emphasize it for you. The basic premise in this whole subject is that everything belongs to God.

Everything we have is the Lord. We really, in a sense, we don't have anything that is our own. Turn to 1 Chronicles 29.14. 29.14, 1 Chronicles.

We might look up quite a few verses today, but they'll be mostly in the New Testament. 1 Chronicles 29.14. It says, it's the last part of the verse, But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from you, and of your own we have given you. Well, it's good to remember that on Lord's Day evening when we come together for the breaking of bread and the collection is passed, we're only giving the Lord back what's His own, aren't we? Is that what it says? It says, all things come from you, and of your own we have given you.

And of course, it says the same thing in Acts chapter 17, different words, but Acts chapter 17, verses 24 and 25. I'll just read them to you. Acts 17.24. God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

So, that's a good place to start, isn't it? When we think of the subject, everything belongs to the Lord, what are we going to do with it? Who should give? Everyone should give. Everyone should give. It says in Acts chapter 11, as long as you're there in Acts chapter 11, each one gave.

11.29. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. Each gave according to his ability. And if you turn to 1 Corinthians 16, where Paul gave instructions about a collection for the poor, he says in verse 2, this is 1 Corinthians chapter 16, verse 2, On the first day of the week, let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

So, that's the general principle. Everybody should give, but there are exceptions to that. Having stated the general rule, I'll state a couple of exceptions.

First of all, the unsaved shouldn't give to the work of the Lord. That's why we don't have a collection when there may be strangers in here. That has been traditional among the assemblies, not to take a collection, because we don't want people who don't know the Lord to be giving to the Lord and thinking, well, my money's good enough for the Lord, why am I not good enough for the Lord? You know, it goes back to the old thing of salvation by work.

People trying to pay their way to heaven. It's an easy thing to give money. It's another thing to confess your sins, to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, as far as unbelievers are concerned, no, there's no scriptural precedence for that, I don't think, for giving to the work of the Lord. And we traditionally don't want that, because we don't want people to heaven. Any idea that by giving to Christian work that they might help in their salvation? Somebody asked, what about Christians? Are there any Christians who shouldn't give? Yes, there are.

I would say a Christian who is hopelessly in debt. Hopelessly in debt. When giving would really worsen his testimony, I don't think he should give.

What do you think about that? Maybe you can talk about that at the dinner table. After all, our testimony counts for something, doesn't it? And I think it would be more honoring to the Lord to get out of a debt like that than to give and worsen your situation and have people speak reproachfully about the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, what should we give? Well, to name a few things, we should give for the local assembly.

Anybody in fellowship in a local assembly, a local church, anybody in fellowship has a certain responsibility. A certain responsibility to, hey, there are all these expenses in connection with a fellowship.

It's a privilege to have a fellowship like this.

It's also a responsibility. Privilege brings responsibility. Say, for what? Well, the simple thing here of rent.

I don't know exactly what we pay for rent, but I have good reason to believe it's over \$1,300 a month. If every man, woman, boy, and girl gave a dollar a week, I'm not going to finish that the way you think. That wouldn't do it.

In other words, if every man, woman, boy, and girl here gave a dollar every week, it would be a drop in the bucket. That's all it would be. \$1,300 is a lot of money.

And if I come here and this place provides a place for, I should feel a responsibility to help in that expense. And, of course, there's more than that. There are a lot of other expenses connected with maintaining a Christian fellowship.

Then we have commended workers. We have workers that have gone out to the mission field who look to the Lord alone for the supply of their needs. And I think that's a tremendous thing.

I think it's first of all a tremendous thing that we, a young assembly, should have two families commended to the work of the Lord overseas. The Shorkins and the Peaslands. And I feel a responsibility, too, for the Knotts as well, although they were commended from Lubbock, Texas.

Well, it's good to think about them, you know. Our prices in this country are very reasonable compared to prices in some other countries. And oftentimes we don't realize that.

We don't realize about inflation in a country like Brazil. In fact, you find that expression in secular writing. It says inflation of Brazilian proportions.

They use the inflation in Brazil as an example of how terrible inflation can be. It's good to think of that. We go down and we buy gasoline at the ARCO station for \$1.07 a gallon.

You go to Europe and you'll pay \$3.00 and \$4.00 a gallon for it. Most countries in Europe you'd pay up to \$4.00 a gallon for gasoline. So, our missionaries oftentimes, I don't know how it is in Mexico.

Howard could tell us about that in Mexico with the Peaslands, but it's certainly expensive in most countries. We should feel an obligation toward our commended workers to see that their needs are met. And the Bible teaches that we should feel an obligation toward widows.

They're mentioned, Paul writing to Timothy. Especially widows who don't have family members to care for them. Generally, the responsibility for the care of widows falls on their relatives.

And if their relatives don't do it, it falls on the church. Then the poor. The Bible has an awful lot of good things to say about the poor.

I often think of that. God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to them that love him. The common people heard him gladly.

And so, we have an obligation, actually, in any genuine cases of need. Any genuine cases of need. In my giving to the work of the Lord, I try to remember workers who look to the Lord alone for the supply of their needs.

Who don't beg and who don't make their needs known. I have a special obligation to them. And I have a special obligation to those who are building along New Testament lines.

Who are planting and establishing New Testament assemblies. I really do. We'll talk about that more as time goes on.

How should we give? Well, there are several ways in which we should give. First of all, we should give regularly or systematically. Regularly or systematically.

Actually, giving can become a good habit. And I think that's what Paul had in mind when he said in 1 Corinthians 16, on the first day of the week. We should be regular.

And we should train ourselves, I think, to think in those terms. Then it should be determinedly, determinedly, 1 Corinthians 16, 2, it says, Let each one of you lay by, lay something aside, storing as he may prosper, that there may be no collections when I come. In other words, you determine to do this.

It's purposeful on your part. And then my giving should be proportionate. That's the same verse.

It says, as he may prosper, as he may prosper. Supposing my income is X this week and next week it turns Y, more. Well, then my giving should be more.

It should be proportionate to, if I gave 10% this week, I should give 10% next week of the raise as well. If I got a raise in salary. Proportionately.

And then it should be sacrificial. Sacrificial, 2 Corinthians 8, verses 2 and 3. 2 Corinthians 8, verses 2 and 3. And this is interesting to me. It says, let me begin at verse 1, if your Bible is open.

2 Corinthians 8, 1. 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. That was sacrificial giving for them. A lot of us might say, well, I'll give when my ship comes in.

I'll give when the recession is over. You know, something like that. When times get better.

They gave when times were worse, didn't they? In a great, what does it say? In a great trial of affliction. They were going through hard times. And actually, times of persecution.

They didn't let that stop them. I think that's beautiful. The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty.

Get that. Abounded in the riches of their liberality. I tell you, that's sacrificial giving.

And, of course, the Lord tells the story about the widow who gave. She cast her might into the coffers. It said she gave all she had.

All she had. It said all her living she gave. And what did the Lord say? That she gave more than all of them.

That is proportionately. It was only a might, but as far as the reckoning of the Lord, it was more than all of them had put in. What do we know? David said, I will not offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing.

Good thing that the sacrificial givers. And then, of course, we should be generous givers. Generous givers.

2 Corinthians 8-9. Well-known verse, and it deserves to be known. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that you, through his poverty, might become rich.

When I read this verse, I always substitute the word generosity for grace, because that's really what it means. Grace, I don't know any word in the New Testament that has so many shades of meaning as the word grace. And here it means generosity.

You know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ. How generous was he? He had been fabulously wealthy with God the Father in a bygone eternity, and he just divested himself of all. And it wasn't just his poverty in Bethlehem born in a cattle shed.

It just wasn't his poverty as a man walking here on earth, of whom it is never recorded that he had any money in his person. I think it's his poverty at the cross, don't you? When he gave his life, he really did become poor at Calvary. Why? Because you, through his poverty, might become rich.

His impoverishment has made those of us who are believers fabulously wealthy. And that is given in 2 Corinthians 8 as an example for us. How easy it is for us to read a verse of Scripture like that, and, oh yes, it's a beautiful verse, it's lovely literature, and it really doesn't get home to us, the shocking thing that it's saying.

Really tremendous. We should give generously. Then we should give voluntarily.

Voluntarily. 2 Corinthians 8, 10 to 12. And in this I give my advice.

It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began, and were desiring to do a year ago, but now you also must complete the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion of what you have. For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. These dear saints at Corinth had heard about the need of the saints in Jerusalem, and they heard about how the Macedonians had really given a tremendous example of generosity.

They said, yeah, well, we aim to do it too, and that was a year ago they aimed to do it. They aimed, but they never fired, and Paul said, now get going. He says, if there first is a willing mind, it's accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.

Maybe they were waiting until they could give more. Well, you give what you have. That's the way it's accepted with God.

But be willing. Make it a willing offering to the Lord, as well as to those saints in Jerusalem. Voluntarily.

Chapter 9, verse 7. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. It makes me think I've been in many church services when the collection was passed, and a tremendous psychological pressure that's put on people to give, you know. It's really shameful.

And sometimes if they don't get enough the first offering, they'll take another offering, you know. That's not giving in the New Testament sense. And the New Testament sense, it really comes out of a heart of love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when you think of what he did for you. Then our giving should be not to be seen of men. Matthew 6, verses 2 through 4. And this is familiar, I know, to all of us, but it's good to be reminded of it.

Matthew 6, 2 to 4. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. When you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret, and your father, who sees in secret, will himself reward you openly.

Now, when it says, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, don't carry that too far. I mean, it's impossible to completely have things in today's society secret. The income tax and all the rest, claiming deductions for income tax.

The idea is a motive. You don't give with that motive of being Stephen Innes. I remember when I was at Emea's Bible School, we wanted to put an addition on a building.

And a Christian came along, he had a lot of money, and he offered to help finance it if we would put a bronze plaque on the building saying that he had helped finance it. I think that's the type of thing that, and it's tough for a Christian organization to refuse something like that, isn't it? Say, no thanks, we bother not. And he's waving a check for thousands of dollars in front of your eyes.

But that's what this passage of Scripture is against. That gift wouldn't mean much to the Lord if the man has to blow his trumpet, or in this case it wouldn't be a brass trumpet, but it would be a bronze plaque. When you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Our giving should be not to be seen of men. Then, of course, joyfully or cheerfully, 2 Corinthians 9, 7, and I've already read it. God loves a cheerful giver.

Not something that's extracted from you. You're grudging every cent of it. Joy.

I've often mentioned a dear sister in Bethany years ago, and she said to me, Brother, I wouldn't exchange my mail for anybody in the world. What she meant was that she gave joyfully to the work of the Lord, and she got letters back, and those letters just filled her heart with joy when she heard of what was being accomplished for the Lord. And she was a partner in it, too.

She was a partner in it. That really is a tremendous joy to realize that you're being an agent with God in the salvation of souls and in the building up of His people. Joyfully or cheerfully.

Purposefully. Purposefully. Let each one give as he purposes in his heart.

I think that expression, purposes in his heart, has the idea that I just don't do it casually. I just don't reach in my pocket and pull out a bill and put it in. But really, I'm exercised before the Lord about this.

And we should be exercised about the Lord before. A lot of Christians are giving to works that they really shouldn't be giving to. And I'll talk about that in just a minute, too.

And then, of course, our giving should be honest. And, of course, the classic illustration of dishonest giving is in Acts 5, verses 1-4. The story of Ananias and Sapphira.

Let's just turn back to that. Acts 5, verses 1-4. It's interesting to me that one of the first problems that arose in the primitive church, in the early church, was over money.

That's pathetic, isn't it? Really pathetic. Now, as they spoke in Acts 5, verses 1-4, a certain man named Ananias with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession. He kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, brought a certain part and laid it at the Apostle's feet.

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? Keep back part of the price of the land for yourself. While it remained, was it not your own? After it was sold, was it not your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God. Of course, the story is that Ananias and Sapphira had sold this piece of land and they pretended to give the whole proceeds to the Lord.

But they slipped back and didn't give all. They lied to the Holy Spirit. Lying to the Holy Spirit.

They were lying to God. And that our giving should be accompanied by a consecrated life. 2 Corinthians 8-5.

You'll see that we're in 2 Corinthians a lot because that's the key section. 2 Corinthians 8-5. This they did, not as we had hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by the will of God.

They're speaking about the Macedonians here. And he said, it wasn't just a question that they reached in and got the money and gave it to me, but it was a real spiritual exercise on their part where they actually first gave themselves to the Lord and said, here we are, Lord, how would you like to use us? The Lord said, well, you might think of those saints down in Jerusalem. And they responded.

They responded. I think that's lovely. How much should we give? Well, the Bible doesn't answer that question in so many words.

That's how we have to be before the Lord. In the Old Testament, the Jews were commanded to give a tithe, which was a pence, plus sacrifices and offerings. Plus sacrifices.

Tithe wasn't the whole thing. And, of course, the argument is, and a good argument, that if a Jew under the law gave a tithe and an offering, plus sacrifices and offerings, what should a Christian under grace give? Have to stop and think about that one. What the Bible says, this is grace.

Not you must give a tithe, but has God had prosperity? We've already had that, haven't we, in 1 Corinthians 16? As he has prospered. And then, of course, it says in 2 Corinthians 9, 6, Bountifully. This I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

It's the law of the harvest, isn't it? I often think of that when I see an ear of corn. You see all those separate parts of corn on it. If you sow all of that, if it's good to seed and you sow it all, you get a lot more in proportion than you sow.

And God promises those who sow bountifully will also reap bountifully. It's a promise from the God who cannot learn. To whom should we not give? Well, this is a matter of personal exercise with me.

I feel a prior responsibility to those who don't publicize their needs. Who don't beg for money. Who don't spend a lot of money on magazine advertising.

Who don't spend a lot of money on glossy brochures. When I say glossy brochures, I mean expensive print jobs begging for money. To those who don't spend most of my gift in overhead.

You know, there are a lot of Christian organizations, you give a dollar and eighty-five cents of it will go for overhead for maintaining the office and paying the salaries of the men in charge. I'm not going to give to them. I want my money to get out.

And praise the Lord for an organization like Christian Missions in many lands where if you send a hundred dollars to a missionary in Honduras, he gets a hundred dollars. Nothing is deducted for expenses. I think that's wonderful.

And oftentimes missionaries from other agencies, they just can't believe anything like that. But it's true. It's absolutely true.

Any money you send through CMML, if you designate it, the missionary gets every cent of it. Even if you don't designate it, it will all go to missionaries. Nothing will be deducted for postage or anything else.

So, I feel a definite obligation to that. There's a missionary organization, Professions to be Connected with the Assemblies in Illinois, and they beg, beg, beg for money, and they have a reserve of four million dollars on their balance sheet. And I think that's sin.

I think that's sin. To tell people that they need money, and they're sitting on four million dollars, and if the Lord came today, the devil would get every cent of it. And that's true of a lot of the big Christian organizations.

And I wouldn't be surprised if some of our dear Christians support them heavily. But really, if you knew what some of us know, you wouldn't be so tempted to support them. Not that they're not good works, but it's just terrible the way they beg for money, beg for money, beg for money, and they really have all kinds of money.

The truth, the truth. It might be a good thing sometime if you're concerned about something like that to check with your elders or any of us for that matter. We might be able to tell you some true things that would guide you in your giving.

I like to give to works or workers where something is happening for God. How do you know? Well, I know that's a problem. It is a problem.

I don't try to make it too little, but I can tell sometimes by reading missions magazines. There's one missionary couple, and every time I read about them, they've just come back from a vacation. And it almost seems as if missionary life for them is one extended vacation.

I don't feel a deep burden. If I thought they were working so hard that they really needed that periodic rest, I'm afraid that isn't the case. I read other letters from missionaries, and I read of people getting saved, and I read of people getting baptized.

I read of the work going, and I read about a thriving correspondence course. I'd like to have a part in it where something is happening for the Lord. Okay, let me just close with some general principles on this whole subject of giving.

This might come as a surprise to you. If a person really wants to be a giver, they'll never lack the opportunity. You know, we excuse ourselves.

We say, well, I don't have it. But 2 Corinthians 9.8, look at that with me for a minute. I know it looks confusing when you read it.

When I read it to you now, you'll say, well, what in the world does that mean? Well, let me explain to you what it means. God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work. Okay, let me go back over it carefully.

God is able to make all grace abound towards you. Grace there in the sense of ability, undeserved ability. You say, I'd like to be a giver.

I don't feel I have the ability. God's able to give you the ability. And He's able to make it abound towards you.

He won't give it to you sparingly, in a small amount. He can give it a lot to you. That you, always having all sufficiency in all things.

God's able to do that. Seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Have an abundance for every good work.

And I interpret that to mean that, number two, the more we give, the more we get. The more we give, the more we get. And I can prove it to you by several poems.

Nobody laughs. Let me read you some poems, but they're truly just the same, although they're not verses. We must share, if we would keep that good thing from above.

Ceasing to give, we cease to have, such is the law of love. It's good. Ceasing to give, we cease to have, such is the law of love.

Number two. For the heart grows rich in giving, all its wealth is living gain. Seeds which mildew in the garner, that is, seeds which rot there in the barn, when they're scattered, fill with gold the plain.

You take those seeds and sow them, and pretty soon you have a golden harvest there on the field. Let me read it again. For the heart grows rich in giving, all its wealth is living gain.

Seeds which mildew in the garner, scattered, fill with gold the plain. It's true. Christopher Wordsworth wrote, We lose what on ourselves we spend.

We have as treasures without end whatever Lord to thee we lend who'll give us all. Whatever Lord we lend to thee, repaid a thousandfold will be. Then gladly will we give to thee who'll give us all.

And then a nice quote from A.T. Pearson. Increase comes by imparting, that is, by giving, and decrease by withholding. If you want to get, give.

And if you want to lose, keep. Even mental riches come by constant spending of intellectual capital. It works even in the mind.

Even mental riches come by constant spending of intellectual capital. A thought or a fact is a seed to be sown if you want a crop. No man learns so fast as he who teaches.

Acquisition comes from imparting. There is gain in grain only as it is sown in the soil. Sowing in the field is better than sowing in a napkin.

Sowing is spelt two different ways in that sentence. Sowing in the field, S-O-W-I-N-G. Sowing in the field is better than sowing, S-E-W-I-N-G, in a napkin.

All gifts are for trading. Coin is for currency. The more we give, the more we get.

You say, well, the more we give, the more spiritual riches we get. Well, that's true too, but it's more than that. It's more than that.

Number three, when we give to the Lord's work, it is exactly the same as if we were giving to the Lord Jesus personally. Is that true? Yes, it's true. Where do you find that in the Bible? Matthew chapter 25.

It says, inasmuch as you've done it unto one of the least of my brethren, you've done it unto me. Whatever we give, I think that would be good for us to remember too, when we remember the Lord at night here, the breaking of bread and taking of the cup, and then the collection is passed. So we just drop it in, you know, routine.

Think of it as the Lord is there. Receiving what you give. Four, our gifts ascend to heaven like a sweet-smelling fragrance.

We don't often think of that, do we? Philippians chapter 4. Everybody should turn to this. Philippians chapter 4, verse 18. Philippians 4.18. Paul had just received a gift from the Philippians.

Indeed, I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Baphoditus the things which were sent from you. Notice.

A sweet-smelling aroma. An acceptable sacrifice. Well-pleasing God.

Do you know what that says? It says when we give Sunday night here, or any time during the week. I shouldn't limit it just to Sunday night, but just use that as an illustration. When you give on Sunday night to the Lord, the fragrance of that ascends right to God himself.

Is that what it says? Am I reading it into it? That's what it says, isn't it? It says, which was sent for you. A sweet-smelling aroma. An acceptable sacrifice.

Well-pleasing. And if that doesn't blow you away, just remember those words and turn to Ephesians chapter 5. And the very same words that are used to describe that gift that you made to the Lord are used to describe the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary's cross. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 2, I believe it is.

It says, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us. Notice. An offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

You think giving isn't important to God? It's very important to God. When the Holy Spirit of God would use the same words that are used to describe a local kindness by the Philippians to the Apostle Paul, he uses the same words to describe the fragrance that ascended to God the Father from Calvary. Really tremendous.

5. There's joy in being led of the Lord to give the right amount at exactly the right time. And this happens. And there are people, men and women here, who could tell you marvelous instances.

When I was preparing to speak on this subject this week, I had a letter from a worker in Iowa. Dear young brother, I met him back at the conference in Cincinnati. You know, some time ago, a man down in San Luis Obispo, the Spirit of God said to this man down in San Luis Obispo, why don't you give some money to this young brother back in Iowa? Now, that's a wonderful thing.

I think it's a wonderful thing to be in a position where the Spirit of God can say something to you and where you respond. I'll read you the letter. God has in a very special way for our family used, and then he names the man, to provide our needs.

And the day after Joanna was born was a check from them to exactly pay the hospital bill. Isn't that lovely? And when I was pondering one morning about going door to door, there in the mail was an ultimate question book from them with their desire to send us some. And over here, they're planning to do a neighborhood outreach, and this couple down in San Luis Obispo sent them a copy of the ultimate question, said we'd like to supply you.

It's what they needed, the door to door work. He adds, it's a solemn thing to receive from the Lord through faithfulness. The other day, Friday, I went with Carl to the airport.

And he had a lot of baggage. He had a lot of baggage. More than he came with.

And he knew he was going to have to pay. And his mother knew he would have to pay extra. And his mother sent a gift of money to Carl.

And as we walked away from the ticket counter, I said to Carl, they charge you for overweight? He said, oh yeah. I said, how much? He said, exactly what my mother sent. That's good, isn't it? Exactly what my mother sent.

I don't think this is not what my mother sent. Although it's all recorded. Number six.

What? This is interesting to me. This really struck me. Really hit me hard.

And what I do with that is one of the tests of life in 1 John. Wow. I never saw that in 1 John.

Well, look at 1 John 3. You know that 1 John gives the test of life, doesn't he? If you're really born again, these things should characterize you. That's what he says. And you know love is a test of life, and righteousness is a test of life, and obedience is a test of life.

All these things. Listen. Whosoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? That's very searching.

It searches my heart. Whoever has this world's goods, sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? Two more, and then I'm just going to read them. Three more, and then quit.

We are stewards, and it is required in a steward that a man be found faithful. We don't own it. It belongs to the Lord.

We're stewards. Eight. Giving to God is a spiritual sacrifice, an act of worship.

Hebrews 13, 16. Giving to God is a spiritual act of worship, not just a routine collection. And finally, there's no precedent in Scripture for making my needs known, but there's a lot of precedent in Scripture for making others' needs known.

We shouldn't hesitate to do it. I know of a genuine case of need. I was out in Korea once, and there was a dear couple serving the Lord out there, and they were largely forgotten.

There was an Army officer there, and if he didn't supply them with things from the commissary, they would have starved that winter. Well, I came back, and I made that need known in Chicago, and I don't think they ever had any lack after that. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your Word, for the teaching it gives us. We thank you that this is not law. This is grace.

It's not what we must do, but it's what we should do, what we ought to do, as those redeemed by blood. Bless the Word through our hearts, and may we translate it into living. In Jesus' name, amen.

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