

Lesson 5 - Money and the Local Church

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Introduction: The Lord has provided the local church for the growth of every Christian.

- A. Elders over local churches are to *carefully feed the flock*. **(Acts 20:26-28, 32)**
 - 1. A local church is a place to grow and face the challenges of life.
 - 2. The ultimate goal is to make each one of us more like Christ. **(Rom 8:29)**
- B. The use of our possessions, money and time is a reflection of our hearts.
 - 1. We can mark spiritual growth several ways. The use of our possessions can tell us some *unpleasant truths about ourselves*. **(James 2:18)**
 - 2. We have already seen how we can be *willingly deceived* concerning our perceptions over how we spend money! We need to see our own hearts.

I. Developing a heart and a life of giving

- A. What changes are produced in us because of our conversion?
 - 1. When we live a life of repentance then a process takes place where we move from *an "old man" to a "new man."* **(Rom 6:6-7; Eph 4:22-25, 28)**
 - 2. The "old man" represents the flesh and the thoughts and actions of putting yourself first. "Self-interest" has always been a powerful motivator.
 - 3. One of the greatest marks of spiritual growth is *how we learn to give*. Why? Consider the example of Timothy. **(Phil 2:4, 19-21)**
- B. Our everyday thought process should push us towards giving.
 - 1. The "new man" must be renewed daily as we constantly look at the image of Christ. It will direct us towards how we view our brethren. **(Col 3:9-10, 14-15)**
 - 2. Peace of mind comes when we are imitating the image of Christ. **(Acts 20:35)**
 - 3. Giving people are the happiest most contented people. We are made to serve!
- C. We must be careful about giving from *false motives*.
 - 1. We can give to those whom we expect to give back to us. Some keep score! **(Mt 5:46-47; 6:1-4)**
 - 2. We give *because someone is in need*. Even if someone will not become a Christian, we still should be giving towards them. **(Lk 14:12-14)**
 - 3. What does the mirror of Christ show us about our thoughts and actions?

II. Understanding the various ways of giving

- A. We should seek to have a heart that seeks to give. We *can give in many ways!*
 - 1. We can give in a contribution in the assembly. This involves money.
 - 2. Consider the ways we can give our time; prayers, visits, cards and calls, meals and other acts of service. When you give of your time *you give of your life*.
 - 3. It is a shame that brethren tried to explain "visit" by substituting a contribution to an institution. **(James 1:26-27)**
- B. The *most personal way* is the best way.
 - 1. We can "shut up our heart" and still make a contribution. God wants our hearts. **(Deut 15:7-8; 1 Jn 3:15-17)**

2. Note how personal attention and effort will be mentioned by the Lord in the day of judgement. **(Matt 25:35-36)**

III. How much should I give in the local contribution?

- A. Do you know how much you give? Jesus does! **(Mk 12:41-44)**
 1. How much have you purposed to give? How have you determined that? **(2 Cor 9:6-7)**
 2. God promises blessing to us because of our giving. **(Lk 6:38; Mt 6:19-21)**
 3. What should a budget reveal about our giving? How may we be surprised?
- B. Every Christian is to give on the first day of the week. **(1 Cor 16:2)**
 1. Some may say because they have given elsewhere that they do not need to give. The Pharisees were good at such reasoning. **(Mt 15:4-6)**
 2. We should cheerfully give because we know the Lord commands us but also because we know what the money is used for. We have fellowship in the work! **(Phil 4:16-17; 2 Cor 8:4)**
 3. When we love the Lord and His work then we will give freely.

IV. Challenges the local church faces in the collection and spending of money

- A. Seek to give full accounting of all the handling of money. **(2 Cor 8:18-21)**
 1. There are few things that can provoke brethren as money matters. The world will be quick to run with false rumors and accusations. Some brethren will too.
 2. Many churches have lost enormous sums because of a lack of common sense controls. This protects those who handle and spend the money.
- B. A spiritual leadership will set spiritual priorities for how the money is used.
 1. In weak churches, the issue of money is a common cause of dispute.
 2. What does the Lord want? What priorities does Jesus have in light of His sacrifice?
- C. How the treasury is used affects every member. This is a fellowship! **(2 Cor 8:4)**
 1. I cannot be brought into fellowship with what is sinful.
 2. I should forbear in areas of judgment.
- D. The local church is to decide and oversee the spending of the money. **(1 Pt 5:2)**
 1. Some colleges have tried to supplant the church in its work.
 2. Institutionalism has often plagued God's people.

Questions

- 1. How does conversion affect our giving over time?**
- 2. How does Jesus teach us by example? Show by both His teach and example.**
- 3. How can we give by false motives?**
- 4. What is the best way to give?**
- 5. How much should I give in the contribution?**
- 6. How does the spending of money affect the unity of a local church?**
- 7. Why does the spending of money from the contribution affect every member?**