

Jesus' Teaching on Giving

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

In Luke 6 Jesus said: "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." (Luke 6:38). Jesus exhorted us to give, and He said that with the same measure we use to give to others, we will receive back in return. This is the promise of the Son of God, whose entire life was an example of giving of Himself for the benefit of others.

Jesus also taught us that our giving should be done in secret, and not publicly that we might receive praise and recognition for our generosity. In Matthew 6 we read:

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

"So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:1-4)

Jesus exhorted us to give quietly, not announcing it publicly to receive the praise of men, but in secret to please God our Father. God will see to it that we are rewarded when we obey Him by giving in this way.

There is also something else that we should consider in our giving. Just as Jesus promised that with the same measure we use to give to others we will receive back in return for ourselves, He also taught that the reward for our giving will not always be realized during our lives here on earth. He gave us this teaching in the Gospel of Luke:

“When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for ***you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.***” (Luke 14:12-14, emphasis added).

When we give to the poor and the afflicted, they will likely never be able to repay us. Jesus taught us in this passage that we should not give with the expectation that we will always receive material recompense during our lifetime here on earth in return for our giving. There are times when our acts of kindness and sacrifice are building up for us treasure in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-20). There are times when our giving will not be paid back in this life, but as Jesus has promised, we will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

Many times, when the subject of Christian giving is discussed in church congregations, the subject of tithing is also discussed. While tithing was a command for Israel in the Old Testament, we should understand that Jesus never commanded or even encouraged His disciples to tithe their incomes.

Some would disagree that believers are no longer required to tithe. As justification they will reference a verse from the Gospel of Luke which reads: “But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.” (Luke 11:42).

As with interpreting any Scripture, we must consider who is being addressed in the passage under consideration, and we must also consider the context of the passage from which the Scripture is taken. In Luke 11:42, ***Jesus is addressing Pharisees***, who considered themselves to be justified in the sight of God by carefully observing certain provisions of the Law, but at the same time their lives were filled with hypocrisy and wickedness, and they neglected the weightier

provisions of the Law such as justice and the love of God. (Consider Matthew 23:23, James 2:10).

It is important for us to understand that ***Jesus is not addressing His disciples in Luke 11:42***. In fact, in the context of this entire passage of Luke 11:37-54, Jesus addressed the Pharisees and experts in the Law of His day. He sternly rebuked them for their hypocrisy on several points, including their belief that they would be justified before God by their strict observance of commands given in the Law such as tithing, while at the same time they disregarded justice and the love of God (1 John 4:8). However, it is clear from New Testament teaching that no one will be justified by observing the law (Romans 3:19-20, Galatians 2:16, 3:11). ***As we can see from the context of this passage, Luke 11:42 is not a command directed to New Testament believers that we are to tithe. Rather, it is one point in a rebuke that Jesus directed to hypocritical Pharisees.***

Nowhere in Jesus' teachings, nor anywhere else in the New Testament, are believers commanded to tithe. On the contrary, we are told that we are not to give "under compulsion", with the belief that we are compelled or obliged to give some certain amount, as can be seen from 2 Corinthians 9:7. Instead, we are told to give as we have decided in our own hearts that we should give.

In Jesus' teaching about giving, and elsewhere in the New Testament, we as God's people have been given new directives regarding our giving. We have also been given new promises of God's blessing in return for our giving.

There is nothing wrong with our local church asking us to tithe our income, and we are certainly free to do so if we want. However, with the New Testament directives that we have regarding our giving, let us resolve to let no one impose upon us a legalistic requirement that we must give a tithe, or a tenth, of what God has given to us in order to be obedient to Him.

Instead, let us give as we decide in our own hearts, with the understanding that if we give bountifully, then we will receive back for ourselves in the same measure, bountifully. However, if we give sparingly, then we will again receive back for ourselves in the same measure, sparingly. As believers in Christ, this is our instruction for giving as taught by Jesus in Luke 6:38, and by Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:6-9.

