

He wants us to give like Him

The next step forward in your journey of spiritual growth looks at the discipline of giving to your church a portion of your income in support of God’s work on earth.

Perhaps nothing else in life makes us more uncomfortable than the matter of giving money. Why?

Because of our sinful nature, selfishness makes us reluctant and hesitant to give in ways that are right and pleasing to God. Whenever this happens, selfishness robs us from experiencing one of life’s most wonderful and satisfying joys and prevents God from blessing others through our lives. We lose – everyone loses!

God’s nature is quite different. He is a giver and He loves to give.

God loves to give good things to those who belong to Him – those who purposefully live in ways that are pleasing to Him.

To grow-up into the likeness of Jesus Christ requires that you take this next step forward in the matter of giving in a manner that pleases God.

God wants you to *be* like Him – and therefore He wants you to *give* like Him.

The following five aspects of giving are necessary to your understanding before your giving can be pleasing to the Lord:

- Authority
- Amount
- Attitude
- Purpose; and
- Promises.

Authority

The practice of giving a portion of one’s income to support God’s work on earth is an ancient practice found in the Old Testament.

Write down what God instructs the Nation of Israel to do about giving.

Deuteronomy 14:22 _____

Giving to God is based on the belief that we are stewards of His property. Everything we have, including our lives, comes from the hand of God. Money and material possessions that we gain are not ours. They belong to God. They are given to us in trust as His stewards and we are responsible for the way they are used (invested).

God is our authority for giving.

Amount

The Old Testament is the only place in the Bible that actually specifies an *amount* concerning giving from our income.

What amount did Jacob and Abraham pledge to God?

Genesis 28:22 _____

Hebrews 7:2, 4 _____

What amount did God expect from His people?

Malachi 3:10 _____

Tithe means the giving of 10% of one's income.

What was God's accusation against those who refused to tithe?

Malachi 3:8 _____

Today we live in the New Testament age of *grace* and therefore are not bound by the Old Testament *law* of tithing. Although we don't have to give 10% of our income, as stewards of all that God has entrusted into our care we still have an obligation to give.

Many Christians today use the principle of tithing as a good starting point for how much to give to God's work on earth.

The amount you decide to give to God is always a personal matter.

A good principle to live by is ... *Give in proportion to what the Lord is giving to you.*

Attitude

The giving that pleases God must also result from a right attitude.

Read the following verses and identify the attitudes that should be present in your giving.

1 Chronicles 29:17b _____

Ezra 2:68 _____

Matthew 6:4 _____

2 Corinthians 9:7b _____

When you give *willingly, generously, discreetly* and *cheerfully* your giving will be pleasing to God.

Remember: With God, *attitude* is always more important than *amount*.

Purpose

Psalms 50:10-12 makes it very clear that God is the owner of everyone and everything. The purpose of your giving, therefore, cannot be because God has a need for your money.

We learn from God's Word that the purpose of our giving is to teach us to have a right view of money, material things, and of God.

Having a right view of things and of God will give you the right focus you need in life.

What does Jesus say is the right priority of focus in life – and what does He promise you when you live with this right focus?

Matthew 6:33 _____

You are to pursue God, not things.

The main purpose of your giving is to grow your faith and dependence on God's promises to meet **all** your "needs". When you trust God in your giving, your faith will grow in other areas of your life. Each time you give to God you practise your trust in Him.

Another important purpose of your financial giving is to enable the planned ministries of your church to be accomplished.

God has given you gifts of time, talent and treasure and has placed you in His church to help meet its needs according to His leading and purposes.

In 1 Chronicles 29:3 and Nehemiah 10:38-39, the people of God were directed to give directly to the House of God.

According to the following reference what is the House of God?

1 Timothy 3:15 _____

The financial support of your church is the responsibility of every believer. God has entrusted into your management His resources for the life, ministry and mission of His church. Your church cannot grow and function as it should without your faithful giving. You cannot grow without giving what God has/will entrust into your care and management.

Promises

When believers give in ways that please God they can expect tremendous promises from Him.

What promises are contained in the following references?

Luke 6:38 _____

Acts 20:35 _____

2 Corinthians 9:6 _____

What general challenge does God extend to you in the matter of giving?

Malachi 3:10 _____

Summary

God has entrusted everything in life into our care. As God's stewards, we are to manage (use, not store away) His things correctly. If we want much out of the Christian life we must learn to give much, but remember: our giving must always be in ways that are pleasing to God – always according to His:

- Authority
- Amount
- Attitude
- Purpose; and
- Promises.

Where to now?

The fourteen steps you have taken through these topical studies represent the *foundation* phase of your spiritual growth journey. Remember: You haven't arrived, but you have made a great start.

Beware of the temptation to stop at this stage of your journey. There is much more of this new life waiting ahead for you to experience and enjoy.

Remember that your goal in life is to grow-up fully, spiritually mature, so that your life may become more and more an "imitation" of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is God's ultimate plan for you. Remember what the Lord says in Romans 8:29 ...

"For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son ..."

Progress in your spiritual growth is dependent upon your commitment to remain enthusiastic, ready and willing to take the next step forward in your faith journey. This journey is life-long!

Additional growing steps for your consideration:

- Discover and develop your spiritual gifts through service in the life of your church
- Learn how to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in a simple, clear and friendly manner
- Maintain healthy connections with your unchurched friends
- Deepen your spiritual walk through good devotional studies
- Join a purposeful small group in your church
- Undergo training to be a facilitator of a small group in your church.

As you journey in your faith, be sure to keep hold of God's promise ...

"The steps of the godly are directed by the Lord, He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will not fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand" (Psalm 37:23-24).

Growing-up into the likeness of Jesus Christ will take place as you continue following in His footsteps.

I wish you well in this most satisfying and rewarding life-transforming journey.

Bill Joukhadar
Founding Director
Cells-*church* Consultants International (CCI)

Additional Resources

By Bill Joukhadar

Small Groups Development

The 7 session Small Groups Development course is a proven strategy; inspiring, equipping and empowering ordinary believers in churches around the world to come together, embracing a simple to understand Bible-based plan to build authentic community, lay-leaders and the Kingdom of God through expanding networks of Spirit-filled small groups in their churches.

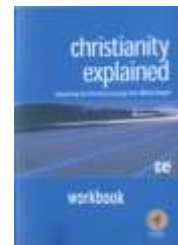


Cost: \$14.95 (plus postage)

by Michael Bennett

Christianity Explained – workbook

This workbook is an ideal, practical tool for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with an unchurched friend in a simple, clear and unrushed manner ... helping the hearer to make an intelligent decision concerning Christ. This workbook is designed to be used in conjunction with the main textbook "Christianity Explained".



Cost: \$A6 (plus postage)

by Joel Comiskey

- **Home Cell Group Explosion ...**
How your small group can grow and multiply
 - **The Relational Disciple ...**
How God uses community to shape followers of Jesus
 - **The Spirit-filled Small Group ...**
Leading your group to experience the spiritual gifts
 - **Discover ...**
Use your gifts and help others find theirs
 - **Coach ...**
Empower others to effectively lead a small group
-

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Prayer Guide

*“Always be joyful. **Keep on praying.** No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus”
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Promise: “The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results” (James 5:16).