

SUNDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 2018
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THEME; BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT GIVING.

- a) **What does the bible say about giving?**
- b) **What are the types of giving the bible and church preachers spoke about?**
- c) **What Jesus and his ministry taught about giving?**

SCRIPTURES; OT; Genesis 14:19-20, “and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Please note here: *Abram gives Melchizedek a tenth of his spoils, but there is no command to do so. It’s motivated by Abram’s love for God and his conviction that Melchizedek is God’s special servant.*)

Genesis 28:20-22 “made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the LORD will be my God 22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”
(Ex. 25:2). (Ex. 35:5, Ex. 36:5-7) (Leviticus 27:30-34), (Numbers 18:21-26),

Deuteronomy 12:5-6 “But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; 6 there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.

Nehemiah 10:35-37 “We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the first fruits of our crops and of every fruit tree. 36 “As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there. 37 “Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and olive oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work.

2Chronicles 31:4-5 He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. 5 As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the first fruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.

(Malachi 3:8-12), “8 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty”.

NT Scriptures; Matthew 23:23: Mark 4:8, Luke 11:42. 2 Cor. 9:6-12. Acts 2:44-47, Heb. 7:12, 2 Cor. 8:1-12 and more.

INTRODUCTION; The question about giving to the church has raised a lot of concerns all over the world today. Many Pastors and church leaders have used and are still using their places of worship as a money-making machine living the congregation wondering why the same God has not opened the flood gate and windows of heaven to pour them their own blessings. In my quest to answers the questions above, I realized that these questions are pretty open-ended questions, that could easily go in any number of directions. So, I want to focus on the issue of

motivation. Why do we give? What is the purpose of giving? It should be no surprise that the answer is wonderfully simple and unimaginably complex, all at the same time.

I want to also endeavour to answer some of these questions (a)What does the bible say about giving? (b)What types of giving does the bible recognizes? And finally, What Jesus and his ministry taught about the willingness to give believers and faithful givers an opportunity to further understand the reasons why they should or should not give. For many of us, particularly those of us in the Compassion world, it's really tempting to point and look at the needs of the world and say, "That's why we give. We're giving so we can bless others." and this is a good motivation, but biblically it's not the starting place for God's people. We also have to remember that generosity is about so much more than money; it's about our entire lives giving of our time, talent and treasures.

THE MESSAGE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

What does the bible say about giving?

The bible tells us that giving shows he is Lord of our lives. First and foremost, God wants us to give because it shows that we recognize he is truly the Lord of our lives. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17, [NIV](#)). Everything we own and everything we have comes from God. So, when we give, we simply offer him a small portion of the abundance he has already given to us.

Giving is an expression of our thankfulness and praise to God. It comes from a heart of worship that recognizes everything we have and give already belongs to the Lord. God instructed Old Testament believers to give a tithe, or a tenth because this ten percent represented the first, most important portion of all they had. The New Testament does not suggest a certain percentage for giving, but simply says for each to give "in keeping with his income." The New Testament never gives a certain percentage point as an obligatory and required standard for our giving. Instead, the Scriptures declare, "Let each one does just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

The Old Testament tithe was required by law. The Jews were under compulsion to give it. The New Testament teaching on giving focuses on its voluntary character. "For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord" (2 Cor. 8:3). This voluntary giving is exactly what Abraham and Jacob were doing before the institution of the Law and is what all Christians are to be doing today. Believers today are free to give the amount they choose to give. If they want to give ten per cent as Abraham and Jacob did, they are perfectly free to do so. However, if they decide to give 9 per cent or 11 per cent, or 20 per cent or 50 per cent, then they may do that as well. Their standard of giving is not a fixed percentage point, but the example of their wonderful Saviour "For 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" (2 Cor. 8:9)

b) What are the types of giving the bible and church preachers spoke about?

What's fascinating is that this is the pattern throughout the Bible: God's grace motivates generosity in His people for the purpose of glorifying God. The Bible distinguishes between 4 different kinds of giving, each with a different purpose, motivation and different rewards for you to expect back. It is vitally important for you to understand the difference between them,

before you start giving, because a full understanding and an application of the 4 different types will help you get your whole financial life under control.

Each type of giving should be practiced with the right motivation and correct understanding of the reward. Your hearts attitude is what matters here. In the Old and New Testaments, the bible and prosperity gospel preachers distinguish the following kinds of giving;

1. TITHING (10%) – Malachi 3,8-11 *Here the motivation is simply obedience and the reward is the blessing. Therefore, it is my conviction that the blessings and cursing spoken of in Malachi 3:8-12 refer to the material blessings God promised to Israel if she would obey His commandments and statutes. Tithing was one such commandment.*

What can we conclude, therefore, about tithing under the Mosaic Law? I think we can safely conclude that tithing had nothing to do with the regular giving of money on a weekly or monthly basis, but rather had to do with the ordained worship of God in the Old Covenant age. The command to tithe, like the command not to eat shrimp or oysters, has been made obsolete and set aside by the inauguration of the New Covenant in the death of Christ. The tithe was God's ordained tax under the Old Testament theocratic system. In Matthew 23:23: Jesus said "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."

In this passage in Matthew, which is also repeated in similar fashion in Luke 11:42. It is important to notice that the tithe had to do with garden herbs (the product of the field) rather than with money. Additionally, Jesus spoke these words to very religious, law-keeping Pharisees while the Mosaic Law was still in force. To say that since Jesus told these Pharisees it was right for them to tithe, and thus it is right for us to tithe as well, misses the fact that these Pharisees lived under a different covenant with different laws than the New Testament believer does. By Christ's death He inaugurated the New Covenant, thereby bringing about a change in the law (Lk. 22:20; Heb. 7:12). Finally, notice that the tithe mentioned here was not voluntary in any sense of the word. Jesus tells them that they **"ought" to have tithed. (Past tense)** It was obligatory on all Jews, and thus binding. And if that's the case, our giving has to be motivated by something far greater than need.

2. THE SEED; Mark 4; 2-8

The phrase "sowing seeds" is use often in the church, especially among Prosperity Gospel and Word of Faith preachers. When they use the phrase, they are referring to you giving them money to their ministry. When they talk about tithing, they are also referring to you giving them money to their ministry. What does the Bible say about sowing seeds and tithing? Are they the same? Are preachers in error when they tell you to sow seeds? Is sowing seeds replacing the practice to so-called tithing? Why is there so much emphasis placed on sowing seeds (i.e., giving your money to a preacher, church or ministry)?

Let's talk about what the church doesn't want you to talk about. In today's church, tithing and sowing seeds both refer to money. However, the Bible does not equate tithing and sowing seeds with money. According to the Bible, tithing, sowing seeds and money are not the same.

The Tithe is explained above. The biblical tithe refers to 10 percent of agricultural produce and livestock grown in the land of ancient Israel. When preachers tell you that tithing means you should give money, they are incorrect.

Sowing Seeds; The word "seed" and "sowing seeds" are often used to refer to money, especially in the Prosperity Gospel and Word of Faith movements. This was a topic I dealt with

some time ago on our WhatsApp forum making things very clear that Prosperity gospel preachers and the word of faith movements are bent on milking you dry whilst they are flying jets and driving expensive car at your own expense. The Bible speaks of seeds or sowing seeds in two ways. First, the word “seed” or phrase “sowing seeds” is a reference to farming or agriculture. Specifically, planting seeds in the ground for the purpose growing food, plants, trees, flowers, etc. (Genesis 1:11). Second, the phrase “sowing seeds” is used as a metaphor. A metaphor is a figure of speech used to compare two unlike things that actually have something in common. Examples of metaphors: Life is like a box of chocolates, Skin like silk

Jesus uses “seed” and “sowing seeds” as a metaphor in his Seed Parable (Matt. 13:1-58, Mark 4:2-41). Is Jesus talking about money? Absolutely not. See Luke 8:11. Seed is a metaphor for the Word of God. Sow is a metaphor for sharing, speaking and/or teaching the Word of God. **Ground/soil is a metaphor for the heart;** Jesus never uses the words “sowing seeds” as a metaphor for giving money. For a detailed teaching on the Seed Parable, please read Exposing the Seed Faith Doctrine written by R. Renee and Cynthia Harper. It’s on Amazon

Preachers and Sowing Seeds; Many preachers commonly use “sowing seeds” as a metaphor for money. They are not wrong to use it as metaphor for money. Sowing seeds may be used as a metaphor for anything. For example, a seed can be wisdom, encouragement, gratitude, or a compliment. In other words, you can sow a seed of wisdom, encouragement, gratitude into someone’s life. The problem with preachers constantly associating sowing seeds with money is that it leads you to believe the Bible is always referring money when you see the word “seed” or “sowing seeds” in the scriptures. Generally speaking, the Bible does not use seed or sowing seeds as a metaphor for money.

3. THE FIRST FRUITS GIVING; First fruits giving was a Jewish feast held in the early spring at the beginning of the grain harvest. It was observed on Nissan 16, which was the third day after Passover and the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. First fruits giving was a time of thanksgiving for God’s provision. The Levites instituted first fruits offering in Leviticus 23:9-14. The people were to bring a sheaf of grain to the priest, who would wave it before the Lord. A burnt offering, a meal offering, and a drink offering were also required at that time. Deuteronomy 26:1-10 gives even more detail on the procedure of first fruits.

No grain was to be harvested at all until the first fruits offering was brought to the Lord (Leviticus 23:14). The offering was made in remembrance of Israel’s sojourn in Egypt, the Lord’s deliverance from slavery, and their possession of “a land that floweth with milk and honey.” The day of the first fruits offering was also used to calculate the proper time of the Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:15-16).

In the New Testament, the first fruits offering is mentioned seven times, which is always symbolical. Paul calls Epaenetus and the household of Stephanas “the first fruits of Achaia” (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:15). His meaning is that, just as the first fruits offering was the first portion of a larger harvest, these individuals were the first of many converts in that region. James calls believers “a kind of first fruits of His creatures” (James 1:18). Just like the sheaf of grain was set apart for the Lord, so are believers set apart for God’s glory.

The first fruits offering found its fulfillment in Jesus. “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1Corinthians15:20). Jesus’ resurrection has paved the way for our resurrection. Significantly, if Jesus was killed at Passover, then His resurrection on the third day would have fallen on Nissan 16 the Feast of First fruits. The first fruits offering is never directly applied to Christian giving in the New Testament. However, Paul taught the Corinthian believers to set aside a collection “on the first

day of the week” (1 Corinthians 16:2). **And, just as the offering of first fruits was an occasion of thanksgiving, so the Christian is to give with gladness.**

In summary, first fruits symbolizes God’s harvest of souls, it illustrates giving to God from a grateful heart, and it sets a pattern of giving back to Him the first (and the best) of what He has given us. Not being under the Old Testament Law, the Christian is under no further obligation than to give cheerfully and liberally (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

4. ALMS GIVING; Alms are money or goods given to those in need as an act of charity. The word alms are used many times in the King James Version of the Bible. It comes from the Old English word *ælmesse* and ultimately from a Greek word meaning “pity, mercy.” In its original sense, when you give alms, you are dispensing mercy. Almsgiving is a long-standing practice within the Judeo-Christian tradition. “Whoever is kind to the needy honours God” (Proverbs 14:31; see also Proverbs 19:17; 21:13; 22:9; and 29:7). Jesus and His disciples gave money to the poor (John 12:6), and believers are to “remember the poor” (Galatians 2:10). The godly Tabitha was praised as one who was continually “helping the poor” (Acts 9:36).

The word alms are used nine times in five chapters of the King James Version of the New Testament. Matthew 6:1-4 contains four occurrences: “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”

Here, Jesus taught that almsgiving is for God to see, not to show off before others. Those giving out of their love for God are not to announce their giving or draw attention to it. In Luke 11:40-42, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for giving alms but “neglecting justice and the love of God.” In other words, these religious leaders gave to charity, yet they did not have true charity in their hearts. Giving to the needy does not necessarily prove a right relationship with God.

In Luke 12:32, Jesus tells a rich young ruler to sell all he had, give alms to the poor, and follow Him. Jesus’ challenge was meant to reveal where the young man’s devotion lay: did he love money more than the Lord? The man turned and walked away from Jesus, unwilling to part with his fortune. Doing so showed that he was not ready to become a disciple.

In Acts 3, a crippled man asks Peter and John for money. The apostles explain that they had no money, and they heal him instead. This miracle was much greater than any alms they could have given! Biblically, giving financially to those in need is an important expression of the Christian faith. However, we should make sure our giving is done out of a true love for God, without drawing attention to ourselves. When we invest what God has given us to impact the lives of others, we can trust that the results will make a difference both now and for eternity.

Giving is meant to be a joyful expression of thanks to God from the heart, not a legalistic obligation. The value of our offering is not determined by *how much* we give, but *how* we give. Before I conclude, I should also throw light on the difference between faith offering and free will offering. As I mentioned earlier giving should be a joyful expression of our thanks to God not someone coming to tell us what to give and how to give.

"What is a freewill offering?"

The free will (or freewill) offering was a sacrifice regulated by God's standards in the Mosaic Law, but it was completely voluntary (Leviticus 23:38). In the Law, the free will offering was to be of a male bull, sheep, or goat with no physical deformities or blemishes, and it was not to have been purchased from a foreigner (Leviticus 22:17–25). The offering was to include flour mixed with oil and wine; the amounts varied on whether the sacrifice was a lamb, bull, or ram (Numbers 15:1–10). As with all sacrifices, the free will offering was to be made in a place of God's choosing, not in an area formerly used by other religions or at home (Deuteronomy 12). Although it was appropriate to give the sacrifice during formal feast-days, it could be given any time (Deuteronomy 16:10). Unlike other offerings governed by stricter rules, the priests could eat the free will offering on the day it was sacrificed or the day after (Leviticus 7:16–18).

Free will offerings did not always have to be animals or grain or drink offerings. The first time a free will offering is mentioned in the Bible is in Exodus 35:10–29. God had given instructions on how to build the tabernacle, and Moses relayed what supplies were needed for its construction. The people responded as their hearts stirred them, bringing jewelry, fine yarn, tanned skins, silver, bronze, acacia wood, onyx stones, spices, and oil. These items were all donated "as a freewill offering to the Lord" (Exodus 35:29). Centuries later, the people made similar offerings for David to pass on to Solomon to build the temple (1 Chronicles 9:1–9). In the book of Ezra, the people gave traditional animal offerings (Ezra 3:5) as well as supplies to rebuild the temple after the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 2:68; 7:16; 8:28). The people also made animal offerings in 2 Chronicles 31 when King Hezekiah, one of Judah's best kings, led the nation in returning to God and reinstating His ceremonies. In Ezekiel 46:12, free will offerings are mentioned as being offered in the millennial kingdom. This form of giving is instructive and requires perfection.

FAITH GIVING in the other hand is motivated by conviction and led by the Holy Spirit through compassion. It does not break you but stretches you to the limit. I once shared with you a story of how I attended a school of intercessors and we were asked to do a faith offering. As a pastor, I thought giving at least one third of what I had would have been sufficient but alas, as I was coming back from putting what I thought was my faith offering, a small voice came into my ears saying, "go back and put everything or every penny you have in your wallet" Wow!!! This was now a conviction by the Lord that I should be obedient. Faith giving is to be totally available and radically obedient. The bible says, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7. Whenever we show our generosity through faith giving, we will absolutely prosper. Proverbs 11:25 says; "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

Paul said that "For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have". 2 Corinthians 8:12. So let us take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4.

If this message has blessed you with knowledge and understanding of how to give, put God first place in you heart and bless somebody either financially, morally, spiritually and physically. GOD BLESS you for being a blessing to our Ministry. Please do not hesitate to call us on +614 0512 5759 or email us your questions, concerns and prayer request on graceministries2017@gmail.com GOD BLESS YOU.