

Christian Discipleship Guide



“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

10. Giving to the Lord

A somewhat difficult principle for new Christians to understand and accept is that there are a number of responsibilities that come along with the promises and privileges that are ours. Giving is one of the most misunderstood subjects in Christianity, but it involves the Christian's responsibility in stewardship of his life as well as his resources. Before we can properly understand giving, we need to understand that God does not need our money, for "the earth is the LORD's ..." (*Psalm 24:1*). But God does want us to have a loving, generous, and giving heart; and to be partakers in investments that have eternal rewards. The more we invest in the Lord's work here on earth, the greater will be our return, both here and in heaven (*2 Corinthians 9:6*).

A Christian's responsibilities regarding giving are based on the concept of gratefulness to Christ for what He has done for us. Jesus wants to be more than our Savior, He wants to be the Lord and Master of our lives. As such, we should be wise stewards of everything the Lord entrusts to us. We should give to the Lord to honor God through obedience (*Proverbs 3:5-10*), to demonstrate thankfulness for what He has first done for us by giving us eternal life (*2 Corinthians 9:15*), to acknowledge His ownership of all things (*Psalm 50:10-12; Psalm 104:24; Psalm 115:15-16; Job 41:11*), to prove our love for God (*2 Corinthians 8:8*), to develop in us godly attributes of giving (*John 3:16; 1 John 4:9*) and grace (*2 Corinthians 8:6-7; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 1 Peter 4:10*), to make eternal investments (*Philippians 4:17; Matthew 6:19-21; Revelation 3:18*), and to procure God's blessings on our personal finances (*Luke 6:38; Malachi 3:10*). God's overriding principle for any investment (whether it be family or finances, whether it be soul-winning or service) is that the more I invest, the greater will be my return (*2 Corinthians 9:6*).

Faithful giving of our resources to the Lord through a local church supports a number of vital ministries. Giving supports missionaries, for not everyone can go to the missions, but all can send (*Philippians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:9*). Giving supports those within the church body who are unable to support themselves, that is, those who are faithful to the church (*Acts 6:1*) as well as those who do not have anyone else to help them, such as widows and orphans (*1 Timothy 5:16*). Giving also supports the leaders of the local church (*1 Timothy 5:17-18*) and the on-going operations of church facilities that are used to further God's kingdom (*2 Corinthians 8:4*).

We should have confidence in the way our church leaders handle God's money. Although not necessary, an annual financial report and an "open door" financial policy, where any church member could address a question to an administrative manager or deacon, would certainly build member confidence. If we are curious or have good reason to believe that the church's resources are not being used scripturally, then we should speak to the individuals who have the financial responsibility and accountability (*2 Corinthians 8:20-21*).

We need to remember that we ourselves have been purchased by God with Christ's blood and we belong to Him (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*), so there are several things we should be prepared to give unto the Lord. We should give ourselves completely to the things of God (*1 Timothy 4:15; 2 Corinthians 8:3-12; Romans 12:1*); read, study, and meditate on God's Word (*1 Timothy 4:13*); heed what we have heard (*Hebrews 2:1*); give ourselves to prayer (*Acts 6:4*); give thanks for everything (*1 Thessalonians 5:18*); and cheerfully give voluntarily of our time, talent, and possessions.

The Lord specified a minimum that we should give to the work of the church. It is called a "tithe" or one-tenth of our income (*Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1-7; Malachi 3:10-12; Luke 6:38; Leviticus 27:30; Proverbs 11:24; Proverbs 13:7; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 23:23*). God promised that, if we are faithful in giving the tithe, He will pour out abundant blessings on us,

and no one can “out give” God. Any offerings given to missions or other worthy causes should not be deducted from the tithe. Offerings are above and beyond the tithe (*Philippians 4:13-19; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2*). Realizing that the tithe goes to further the kingdom of God on earth, we should give liberally and sacrificially (*2 Corinthians 8:1-2; Mark 12:41-44*), faithfully (*1 Corinthians 16:2*), cheerfully (*2 Corinthians 9:7*), willingly (*2 Corinthians 8:3-12*), and individually (*1 Corinthians 16:2*).

Questions:

1. What are the four primary reasons for giving?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

2. What can we learn about man and money from *1 Timothy 6:10*?

3. What attitude should we have concerning wealth that we can emulate from *Job 1:21-22*?

Additional Scripture Verses:

Exodus 36:2-7; Exodus 38:21-31; Mark 12:41-44; John 10:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2; Ephesians 3:20.