



World Christian Fellowship

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How Not to give?

Matthew 6:1-4

There are two ways that giving is to go in terms of Christian giving.

One is systematic, structured, regular giving to the church.

We know the Bible teaches that.

1 Corinthians 16 tells us that we are the first day of the week to lay by and store as God has prospered us.

The believing people are to weekly, every week, not just now and then or periodically or semi-annually or whatever, when you think about it, but we are every week to face the reality of the stewardship of money.

That is why God wants us to do it every week, so that every week we again take stock of the level of stewardship as it relates to our funds.

1 Corinthians 16:2, *On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.*

That is systematic, structured as you purpose in your heart.

The second kind of giving is to the poor and needy. Unstructured, unspecified, and spontaneous and it is over and above the giving to the church.

Throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament, you have that kind of giving where the needy person crosses your path, and you are to reach out your heart to that individual.

Beyond those two things, to the church and to poor the Bible knows nothing about giving.

Matthew 6:1-4, *“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

Matthew 6:1-18 Jesus deals with the theme about Hypocrisy.

Matthew 6:1-4, deals about Hypocrisy on giving.

Matthew 6:5-15, deals with Hypocrisy in prayer.

Matthew 6:16-18, deals with Hypocrisy in fasting.

Believers Must Guard Against Wrong Motives in Their Giving.

Christ warns his disciples to not practice their righteous deeds in front of others to be seen by them.

In the rest of Matthew 6, he focuses not only on giving but praying and fasting, two other works God expects believers to practice.

The phrase “be careful” has the sense of “being on guard.”

There is a danger that comes along with all ministries. It is hard not to perform them without concerns about what people think about us or how they perceive our ministry. This is a virtual stronghold for many who serve in public ministry.

It can cause great discouragement or great pride.

Both are problems, as they are symptoms that prove our ministry is not being done for God alone. Christ warns us of this reality, and we must heed it well.

Seeking the praise of others instead of God was the primary sin of the Pharisees and scribes.

John 12:43, *for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

Christ called them “hypocrites.”

The word literally means “to wear a mask” and was used of an actor.

An actor takes on a false identity and puts on a theatrical performance in order to receive applause. Sadly, that is how a lot of Christian works are done preaching, teaching, praying, and as mentioned in this passage, giving.

Christ describes how the hypocrites would sound the trumpet so that all would know they are giving to the poor.

In considering the trumpets, we don’t know if Christ was being literal or metaphorical. Either way, his point was that these people wanted everybody to hear and see. They essentially cried out: “Look at how much I am giving! Look at how sacrificial and holy I am!”

We must be very careful of this in our ministries. It is sad that something so good as giving to the poor can be turned into a PR stunt that is all for our benefit.

However, this is natural to our sin nature, it is consumed with self-glory.

How can we know if we are doing our giving and other good works to be seen by others instead of for God?

We can tell by asking ourselves some pointed questions:

Is it important for others to see or hear about our good works and accomplishments?

Do we always have to tell others about our successes?

If so, maybe the pride of the Pharisees is in our hearts.

How do we respond when others praise us?

Are we overly excited?

If so, maybe it reveals a desire for self-glory.

How do we respond when people criticize us or don't recognize our accomplishments?

Does this overly discourage us or even make us upset?

If so, our focus might not primarily be on serving God and blessing others.

Certainly, all of us have experienced these negative tendencies in some way. It is a reminder that we are sinners, and that we must always guard our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23, *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*

God's honour and pleasure must always be our primary pursuit, even before the benefit of others.

How should believers guard their hearts from wrong motives in their giving and other good works according to Matthew 6:2-4?

1. Secrecy

To guard our hearts from wrong motives in our good works, we must practice secrecy when performing them.

Christ said to not announce them with trumpets.

We must aim to practice our good works and giving in secret. Now it is not a sin for others to see, many times, we cannot avoid being seen.

Christ said a city on a hill cannot be hidden, in referring to believers being the light of the world.

Matthew 5:14-16, *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to*

all who are in the house.¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The problem is our hearts are prone to being consumed with the thoughts and approval of others instead of the Lord's.

So as much as possible, we should practice secrecy in our giving and other good deeds. With our giving, we should try not to tell others—God's knowledge of our works is enough.

With other ministry successes, we should also keep those a secret, unless we deem it more beneficial for others to know.

Paul didn't share many of his visions and spiritual experiences until it was absolutely necessary and beneficial for others to hear.

2 Corinthians 12.

He didn't want them to think too highly of him.

2 Corinthians 12:6, *For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.*

2. Forget what have done.

To guard our hearts from wrong motives in our good works, we must practice immediately forgetting what we've done by not self-consciously dwelling on them.

When Christ says to not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, since most people are right-handed, he assumes most will give with their right hands.

While giving, one should make sure the left hand is unaware of what the right hand is doing. He uses this metaphor to say that we should even hide our good works from ourselves. The point is that even though others might be unaware of our good works, many times we are still self-conscious of them.

We continually replay our giving, teaching, serving, and other good works over and over in our head—leading either to pride or insecurity.

We either puff ourselves up thinking how great we are, or we get really discouraged because we think we failed.

Both of these thought processes reflect that our primary goal in serving is not honouring the Lord and bringing him glory. It is too easy for ourselves and our own approval to become the

focus of our good deeds, instead of God. This was exactly how the Pharisees and scribes did their good works.

A Pharisee, who was praying, continually boasted before the Lord.

Luke 18:11-12, *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'*

Though his works weren't currently in front of others, they gave him great pride, as he boasted before the Lord about them.

When practicing our good works, we must be careful of being self-conscious.

Prepare, do your best to honour the Lord and help others, but entrust the results and glory to God.

Certainly, there is a place for constructive reflection and evaluation, so we can improve in order to better honour God and bless others. But after doing that briefly, we should forget our works.

Philippians 3:13, *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,*

Lest they turn into a boast or an insecurity, which are both rooted in pride.

Christ said those who do their works for others to see have received their reward.

V 2, *Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

It meant that they would receive nothing else.

Their reward is the congratulations of others or their self-congratulations, but they will receive nothing from God.

In performing good deeds, including our giving, we must be satisfied with God being our only witness and having only His approval.

Why is seeking the approval of others such a danger for those serving in ministry?

How can we guard ourselves against the tendencies of seeking the approval of others or our own approval in ministry?

Principles in Giving?

1. Giving is investing with God.

It puts you in the cycle of blessing.

Luke 6:38, *“Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over.”*

When God gives you can shake His box and it’s still running over. You don’t ever get cheated when you give to God because He returns the blessing multiplied.

Whatever measure you measure it shall be measured to you again. So, whatever you invest with God that’s what you get a return on. Giving is investing with God.

2 Corinthians 9:6, *“If you sow sparingly, you reap sparingly. If you sow bountifully, you reap bountifully.”*

God does not need your money.

But you need to invest with Him to get into the flow of His blessedness.

2. Giving is to be sacrificial.

If there isn't a sacrifice involved it's questioned whether you are even giving at all unless there's some sacrifice.

2 Samuel 24:24, *Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.*

It is when you give God that which you do feel you need that you have made a sacrifice.

3. Giving is not quantitative.

It is not how much you have.

People say, "If I had more, I would give more. It won't make any difference.

Luke 16:10, *He that is faithful in little will be faithful in much. And He that is unjust in little will be unjust in much.*

It isn't going to change your character to have more. You must learn when you have a little.

That's one of the things we try to teach our children. If they don't learn now when they have little to be faithful over little, they will never learn it when they have much.

Giving is not a matter of how much have, it's a matter of where your heart is and what your commitment is.

4. Giving correlates with spiritual riches.

If you are not faithful in what you do with money, God's not about to give you the true riches.

Luke 16:11-12, *Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?*

What are true riches?

Souls, people, ministry.

God is not about to give a strategic ministry to somebody who can't handle money. There are many men who never made it through seminary because they couldn't handle money and the Lord didn't want them in His ministry.

There are many people who have dropped out of the ministry because of their inability to deal properly with money and God wasn't about to give them souls.

There are some men who have stayed in the ministry, but their ministry has been small and insignificant because God would never commit to them the eternal soul of a person when they couldn't take care of the temporal characteristics of money.

So, your spiritual effectiveness, the dimensions of your spiritual influence will have a lot to do with how you handle your money.

5. Giving personally determined.

2 Corinthians 9:7, So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

The Macedonians gave abundantly out of their deep poverty. The Philippians gave because they chose to give out of their heart of love.

It is to be a spontaneous act of the heart. There's not any prescription. It's personally determined.

6. Giving demonstrates love not law.

You are not under any law to give.

There is no New Testament law to give in a sense of an amount of a fixed sum.

We are not giving to please some legal system. It is an act of love that we give. That's why it's to be cheerful, not grudging and not of necessity.

It's not a law.

It's an act of love.

7. Giving is to be generous.

The generosity with which you give will be determined by all these other factors.

How much do you want to invest with God?

How much are you willing to sacrifice for Him who sacrificed all for you?

How much of the spiritual riches do you really want to be worthy of?

How much love are you trying to demonstrate?

God is not saying give because I need your money. He's saying give because it's a spiritual exercise that brings into your life the true blessing of God.

Now, those principles cover our giving to the church and our giving to the needy, but let's go to the giving to the needy because that's the text we are studying.

Giving to the poor.

The Old Testament made it abundantly clear that the people of God were to give to the poor.

Leviticus 25:35, *'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you.*

Deuteronomy 15:7-8, *"If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother,^a but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.*

Make sure all the necessities of his life are cared for, because that is how people are to act when they name the name of God.

Bible says when you give to the poor, you give to the Lord.

Why?

Because all giving is stepping into the cycle of blessing.

All giving is investing with God.

Our Lord approaches this matter of giving because, obviously, the scribes and the Pharisees and the people following them were not living according to these kinds of principles.

They weren't giving to get into the cycle of God's blessing.

They weren't giving selflessly.

They weren't giving magnanimously out of a pure heart.

They were giving to put on a show of religious.

God was saying I have a standard for the practice of righteousness, and you do not do it before men.

Once a person has become a Christian, one thing that Satan loves to do is to shove them into the category of hypocrisy so that they really negate the validity of their witness, and they lose their reward.

There are two ways to approach this.

- a) The hypocrite can be one who's not really a Christian, but pretends to be, and the hypocrite can be one who is a Christian but is operating within the framework of his Christianity hypocritically.
- b) You can be a phony by being a non-Christian pretending to be a Christian and you can be a phony by being a Christian who's carnal but pretends to be spiritual.

Both are really covered in the principles He gives here.

Even though the first group is perhaps the scribes and the Pharisees who were the hypocrites, it is also possible that the disciples just as well could have manifested hypocrisy in their lifestyle even though they believed. So, the message is for all of us.

The word charitable deeds/alms have to do with being charitable. Whatever funds you receive are for the giving to those in need, and so that's where that word comes from.

Jesus is saying when you do it, this is not the way to do it.

Not if, but when.

Why?

It is assumed that you would do this. Giving to people in need is an assumption.

How could we possibly say we are Christians and not do that. Then your claim is questionable.

James 2:14-17, *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which*

are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

It says “when” because it is assumed that one with the heart of God dwelling within him is going to reach out to one in need for the heart is God is toward the poor and the needy.

The Bible tells us God is great in mercy.

Ephesians 2:4, *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*

If God is great in mercy, we who name the name of God would be merciful to others as well.

Micah 7:18, *Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.*

Jesus and the disciples carried around with them a little bag.

What did Jesus His money?

John 13:29, *For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy those things we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.*

That was the heart of Jesus because that was the heart of God.

Now the Pharisees were used to doing this, the Scribes the Jews, this was a long part of their heritage.

They had always done this from the time they were in the land.

They had always cared for the poor.

They had always extended themselves to the needy.

The Jews actually taught that they would purge away their sins by giving money to the needy. That's how far they have gone.

They believed you could get perfectly righteous by giving your money. This is the reason the Jews believed that the richer you were, the easier it was to get in the kingdom, because you bought your way in.

So, when Jesus said it's harder than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to get into heaven. Because they thought the rich could buy their way in easy because purging of sin came from giving away money.

The attitude is everything.

What's your attitude?

Just examine your own heart the way I examine mine.

Those Pharisees, can you imagine them going around blowing a trumpet?

Disgusting.

They had a little silver trumpet and he used to go in the streets and the synagogues, not the temple, because this was not the temple giving. But this was giving to the needy at the synagogue, and the streets.

They would blow a little silver trumpet. All the poor come, and your great benefactor has arrived. All the poor would come at the blowing of the little trumpet and the guy would start doling out the money.

Our Lord pictures a pompous, self-righteous Pharisee on his way to put money into the hands of the poor.

We all have our own little silver trumpets.

Have you noticed?

We shoot the whole thing.

We have our own little trumpets.

We want to let people know we gave.

There are churches announce whatever money you give today this rich man will double it!

There are churches have got brass name boards.

Also helping the poor and beggars we need to be discerning.

2 Thessalonians 3:10, *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

Don't support somebody who can.
If he doesn't work, he doesn't eat!

You can support the poor by giving them work.
You can support the poor by giving them some self-respect, by giving them something to do.

Now, there are some who are so destitute and so infirm or whatever, they can't work. That's fine. Those need to be cared for. But be careful you make a distinction.

The promise of reward.

How you do this area of giving is going to result in how you are rewarded?

Some people get all hung up on rewards, they think that's kind of a crass motive. It doesn't have to be. God has established this and God is an absolutely holy God, and He must have a holy reason for it. There are some things that deserve a reward and that's in God's mind true and that's the way He set it up, and so that's fine.

If you read the Bible properly, you are going to take any reward that you would ever get and you will cast it at His feet in adoration and praise.

Who did you want it from?

For men? You get your reward. They saw it, that's it.

The key is your Father who's in heaven.

You get an earthly reward, not a heavenly one.

You get something from men and nothing from God.

V 3, *But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,*

Some believe it was a Proverb of the time for doing things so spontaneously that you didn't really think about them.

You are walking along the street and here is somebody with a need. Without a long process of calculation, without a lot of thought and analysis and checking out your bank book or whatever. Here's a need and you just reach in, and you slip it over there. Your left hand which is down here by your left hip doesn't even know what's happening. That's the idea.

The right hand meets the need, and your left hand never even knows what's going on.

It's very hard to clap with one hand.

The left hand isn't going to say a thing.

The idea is the freedom and the spontaneity without calculating it. Just give it.

When not only don't people know, but the other side of you doesn't also even know?

It's kind of like give and forget.

Some people give to the needy and then they wait to see if the needy are grateful.

If the needy aren't grateful, they will never do that again!

If you give and somebody's ingratitude bothers you, you gave for the wrong reason.

V 4, *that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

Not even your left hand knows.

Not only do not people know, but there's a part of you that doesn't even know. It shouldn't be a settled account in your subconscious.

It ought to be forgotten. You ought not to even be able to remember the last time you did that for someone. You shouldn't even remember it.

Give it and forget it.

Because we remember our good deeds.

We should forget.

You do it and forget it, and God will remember it and reward it!

You do it and remember it and God will forget it!

There will be no reward.

Choose!!

You want it here and now or you want it forever.

You want the blessing of God or the applause of men?

Don't keep mental books on your giving.

The temple had a special place where the shy benefactors could come. They wanted to give to the poor, but they were bashful.

So, they would just come, and they would put money there. Then there were the shy poor, who didn't want to ask would come in in another place and they would take what they needed.

The name of the place was Silence.

Nothing to be said, just needs to be met.

The spirit of the humble heart.

Believers must pursue God's Reward!

Matthew 6:4, *that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

Christ encourages His listeners to practice secrecy in their giving because it will be rewarded by God. This is taught throughout the entire Bible, as giving is part of the Lord's cycle of blessing.

Proverbs 11:25, *"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."*

God promises refreshment to those who refresh others by their generosity. When they open their homes for others, or give sacrificially, the same will happen to them.

Psalms 41:1, *"How blessed is the one who treats the poor properly! When trouble comes, the Lord delivers him."*

Those who care for the poor and struggling, God will deliver in times of trouble. What they do for others, God will do for them.

The word "openly" isn't in the manuscripts there because the contrast isn't between secretly and openly.

It's between the reward from men and the reward from God.

God sees your heart. He will reward you.

Hebrews 4:13, *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

He sees everything.

He knows.

He knows your heart.

He knows if your religion is real or false.

Psalms 139:7-9, *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ^aIf I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in ^bhell, behold, You are there. ^aIf I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,*

He sees your heart.

You live your Christian life, make sure you are real.

As you give, give God's way.

Give to those in need and give without a thought or a remembrance.

Don't be a hypocrite.

1 Samuel 16:7, *"God looks upon the heart."*

