

## Does My Giving Really Matter to God?

### Introduction:

1. As a pastor, I regularly get questions from people about the subject of giving. It is a subject that has been very misused and abused by religious leaders. People are confused.
2. I'm sure all of you have channel-surfed, and have seen religious TV programming, and have witnessed the different methods employed in an effort to extract money from listeners.
3. Many people have been guilt-tripped into giving, some have been scared into giving, and others have been tricked into giving by being given big promises if they give.
4. This is all very sad and disillusioning to many people. It really is a shame, because giving should be one of the supreme delights of a child of God. Giving is a way for you to express your love for your Savior, your God.
5. It shouldn't be viewed as drudgery, or a duty, or a down payment to earn God's blessings. It should be viewed as a delight. Example: 1 Chronicles 29:9
6. Is giving to God something that is normal for a believer? As we study the Word of God, do you know what we find? Giving is the natural and normal response of a person that loves God.
7. This is why our giving **does** matter to God. It isn't because God is dependent on our resources. It is because our giving reflects the love in our heart for God, and that is very special to God. God desires to have us truly love Him.  
2 Corinthians 8:7-8
  - Our giving matters to God because we matter to God. He cares about our relationship with Him.
8. This is true throughout God's Word, as we will learn this morning.

### Giving before the Law of Moses

1. We know that during the time of Israel's law, giving was actually written into the law, and mandated. But, what about before God's written law?
2. Turn to Genesis 8:20-21. The first thing Noah did after he left the ark was to build an altar, and he made an offering unto the Lord. Of course, there was no money at that time, so this was Noah's way of giving to the Lord. Instead of keeping all the animals for himself and for his family for food, He gave to God, and trusted God.
  - Did Noah's giving matter to God? Was it any big deal to God? Look at verse 21. It so moved the heart of God, that God made a promise to never send a catastrophic judgment like the flood ever again.
3. Turn to Genesis 14:17-20. Abraham came against some wicked kings who had taken captive some of Abraham's family. When Abraham returned from war, he was met by the kingly priest Melchizedek (God's representative on earth), and notice that Abraham gave him a tithe from all his spoils of war. "Tithe" simply means "a tenth."

- Did God notice Abraham's giving? It is noted and remembered thousands of years later by God in the New Testament in Hebrews 7.
- Even before there was any written Word, there was something in the heart of believers - like Noah and Abraham - that knew and wanted to give to God. Their giving mattered to God. God didn't take it lightly.

### Giving during the Law of Moses

1. The first Scripture from God ever to be written down was called the Law of Moses. This was a covenant between God and His people, Israel. It consisted of numerous laws and regulations, many of which dealt with the area of giving.
  - Deuteronomy 14:22 – annually, 10% of all their income produced went to God (tithe).
  - Deuteronomy 14:27 – another 10% went to the Levites for their livelihood, and to keep and maintain the temple.
  - Deuteronomy 14:28 – every third year, another 10% went towards a type of social welfare program for the poor and afflicted.
2. Again, we ask, did Israel's giving matter to God? Did He care if they did it or didn't do it? Let's read Malachi 3:7-9. Would you say it mattered to God? God knew they loved their possessions more than they loved Him, and it bothered God, otherwise He wouldn't have said anything.

### Giving during Christ's earthly ministry

1. Jesus came to the lost sheep of Israel. He came to call them to repentance for their cold and callous hearts, that we saw evidenced through their lack of giving in Malachi.
2. Jesus knew that the people were materialistic, and in love with earthly treasure. Thus, He charged them in Matthew 6:19-21 to lay aside their materialistic attitudes and turn their hearts to God. He said, "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*"
3. Peter was a small-business owner who ran a commercial fishing business. When Christ called him, he shut it down, left his nets and equipment, and followed Christ. He gave all to the Lord! Did his giving matter to Christ? Read Luke 18:28-30
4. Turn to Mark 12:41-44. Did this poor widow's giving matter to Christ? It truly touched His heart because she **sacrificed** in order to give to God.

### Giving in the dispensation of grace

1. Today, we are not living under the Old Testament law system. Romans 6:14 declares, "*...for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*" We are not under a law-based, performance system. We are saved by grace, kept by grace, and live by grace.
2. So how should God's grace cause a believer today to respond to His Lord and Savior?

3. Giving is the natural and normal response of a person that has experienced God's amazing grace. Like Noah and Abraham - before there ever was a written law - we give because we are so thankful for what God has done in our lives.
4. Does our giving matter to God today? Is God deeply interested in our giving? Does He notice when we make sacrifices and give? Let's read Philippians 4:15-16, 18.
  - Here, we read that their giving was like a sweet smell to God, and Paul says that their giving was "...*wellpleasing to God.*"
  - Again, their giving caused God to give them a promise. vs. 19
5. Did you notice some common denominators in each time period we looked at?
  - True believers have always had a desire to give to God.
  - Their giving was noticed by God, and either brought commendation or rebuke.
6. Today we sought to answer the question, "Does my giving really matter to God?" What do you think is the biblical answer? Absolutely, it matters! Why? It matters because it reveals our heart to God. It demonstrates how much we truly love the Lord.