

Does the Place of My Giving Matter to God?

Introduction:

1. Last week, we answered the question, “Does my giving really matter to God?” We looked throughout different time periods in God’s Word, and we discovered that all throughout history God noticed people’s giving, and it truly mattered to God.
2. Why would God care about this? It is because our giving reflects the love that we have for God in our heart. **Illustration:** If a husband says that he loves his wife but never gives of himself to her, his actions speak louder than his words and reveal his heart.
3. We saw last week that God notices our giving, and it truly touches His heart. God’s Word said that the Philippians’ giving was like a sweet smell to God, “*wellpleasing.*”
 - Giving is the natural and normal response of a person that loves God.
4. But today, let’s consider this question: “Does the **place** of my giving matter to God?”
 - **Illustration:** Back to the husband and wife – What if the husband is confronted about his lack of giving towards his wife? He responds, “But I’m giving of myself to the guys on the ball-team, the people at church, I’m helping my neighbor’s wife with odd jobs around their house, etc.” Will this be acceptable to his wife? Is it acceptable to God?
 - The place of our giving truly matters, doesn’t it? It matters in the same way in our giving to God.
5. All throughout history, God has had a plan and purpose that He is seeking to fulfill on earth. God has desired that His people give to help **that** plan advance and move forward. The place that God’s people give matters to God.

God’s place of giving in the Old Testament

1. God had a plan to reach the world with His truth in the Old Testament. God would raise up a nation of people that would be a light to all the other nations – the nation of Israel.
2. God would give them a religious law, a religious order, and a religious center of worship called the temple. As Israel obeyed God’s law and God’s instructions, God would mightily bless them and their land. They would testify to the fact that their God was the true and living God.
3. In order to achieve God’s purpose and plan, God mandated that a believer in the Old Testament give a certain amount, and give it to a certain place. Nehemiah 10:34-39
 - The tithe required that the Israelites give 10% of all their income.
 - The tithe was to go to the Levites, who had the responsibility of carrying on the priestly functions of the temple, which was the center of God’s plan in the Old Testament.

- God had ordained that these priests would have their needs provided for by the tithes of God's people. This is how God would fund and advance His work on earth.
4. Jews couldn't just give anywhere they wanted to. God had a specific place.

God's place of giving in His kingdom program

1. Christ came to announce His coming kingdom to Israel. In light of the coming kingdom, Israel was to give. But how, and where?
2. They were to divest themselves of all assets and give willingly and freely of all that they had to those who had need. Luke 12:32-33
3. Right before Christ returns and establishes His kingdom, Satan's evil plans will be at full throttle, and the believing flock will be persecuted, jailed, beaten, and chased from their homes. There will be so many that are poor and needy.
4. This is the place where God will desire that His people give – to those in need. Matthew 25:34-40, 10:40-42; cf. Acts 2:45
5. People today read all the kingdom passages about giving to the poor and needy, and they think that if they are involved in benevolent causes, then they have given as God would have them to give. But we must rightly divide God's Word.

God's place of giving in the time of grace

1. Today, we live a time called the dispensation of grace. God's kingdom program was suspended temporarily with Israel's rejection of Christ. The law has also been done away with.
2. We live in a time that was not prophesied. It was a mystery, hidden in God – a time of grace in which God is offering peace to every individual in the world through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
3. God's plan and purpose for this time period is that all people have the opportunity to hear God's truth so that they can be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4
4. What is God's method today for getting out His truth to people? 1 Timothy 3:15
 - It is the church that supports, proclaims, and holds up the truth of God for others to see it and believe in it. **Example:** 1 Thessalonians 1:8
 - God is working through the church today. He is working through local bodies of believers who unite together in order to study God's truth and proclaim it to the world. This is what God is doing today.
5. But, as always, God's plan must be funded by God's people. The ministry of your local church should be the primary place of your giving in this time period today. 1 Corinthians 9:9-11
6. If a man or ministry is feeding you spiritual food, then that is where you have an obligation to meet carnal, physical needs, so the ministry of the Word can continue.
7. We saw that the Old Testament temple and the Levitical priests were to be supported through a system of tithes and offerings that God's people gave on a regular basis.

8. We are taught that, likewise, those who are teaching the Word of God - ministries who are plowing and planting God's Word in people's hearts - are to be supported through its own people. 1 Corinthians 9:13-14
 - Giving to our local church is required giving because this is where we receive our spiritual nourishment. No kind of giving is to be substituted for this.
9. This is the way God set it up and how it is supposed to function. We don't give out of law, but out of love. We are thankful for the truth of God that is being planted in our hearts, and we want others to hear that truth too. We give so our local church can continue.
10. Unfortunately, many believers today in this time of grace are less committed to God's work through the local church than an Old Testament Jew who gave to the temple.
11. God knew that if each Israelite gave just 10% of their increase to the temple (a dime of each dollar that God blessed them with), that His work would be satisfactorily funded.
 - Do you think this would still hold true today? The work of God through this local would flourish like never before.
12. Today, we have many advantages that they didn't have – we have God's completed Word, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the completed work of Jesus Christ, etc. Yet, why do so few Christians give even the equivalent of an Old Testament Jew?
13. It is very simple. We in America are simply caught up in the affairs of this world. The grip of materialism has us tightly bound, and we don't see clearly what really matters.
14. I believe we cannot please the Lord until we overcome our tendency to be covetous, and we learn the joy of becoming cheerful, bountiful grace givers. 2 Timothy 2:4; 2 Corinthians 9:7
15. Our first priority, above all else, is to our local assembly – to meet the needs of that local church so the truth of God can continue. Does the place of our giving matter to God? Absolutely! In each dispensation, God has a plan and purpose, and God desires that we understand that plan and purpose, and give accordingly.