



BE THE BODY

FINANCIAL GENEROSITY

Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Resource the body of Christ by giving tithes and offerings.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

There is a significant misunderstanding about Scripture and money. In short, when it comes to money, common perception is that Scripture only teaches us to give it away. This perception is a misperception for multiple reasons. For starters, Scripture addresses money holistically. There is instruction on making money, saving money, spending money, and yes, giving money. A careful reading of Scripture, though, shows that there is not only misperception about Scriptures' holistic teaching on money, but also about Scriptures' teaching on giving.

Consider carefully Jesus' words: *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."* (Matthew 6:19-20). This teaching on giving, when read carefully, is not a teaching on giving in the sense that we give it away and it's lost. It's actually a teaching on investing. Jesus does not want us to waste our money. We waste our money when we invest it in things that will only wither away. Scripture teaches there are investments we can make with our money that will reap weighty and lasting dividends.

"It is possible to give without loving, but it is impossible to love without giving."
-- Richard Braunstein

When we generously resource the body of Christ, we are resourcing a movement whose impact is eternal. For this reason, when writing to the church in Corinth, Paul reminded them that *"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."* (2 Corinthians 9:6). He follows this with an exhortation toward cheerful giving: *"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). Cheerful giving is not possible if we are wasting our money by giving it away. Such cheerfulness would be a denial of reality. A person is cheerful in their giving, though, because they recognize they are making a wise investment. Their generous "sowing" will result in a generous "reaping." This is an especially cheerful reality when we compare this use of our money to the the many necessary things we must do with our money to make it through this life. We use our money to eat, to clothe ourselves, to provide shelter, and enjoyment. These are all good and healthy ways to spend money. But they come and go. When we come to understand Scriptures' teaching, that available to us is a use of our money that is not here today and gone tomorrow, we are inspired to sow generously toward the greatest of goods.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Wise stewardship of one's resources, living within one's means
- Simplicity in one's purchases; enjoyment of material things without materialism
- Commitment to invest at least 10% of one's income in the body of Christ through their local church
- The presence of joy and cheerfulness in one's giving rather than duty and obligation

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

1 Kings 17:8-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: The world's model of giving is to give out of our abundance. Scripture's model is to give out of our trust in God's provision. How does this stretch you? How does this inspire you?



1 Chronicles 29:14-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: David acknowledges the resources he gives come from God in the first place. To what extent do you share this perspective? Why or why not?

Proverbs 3:9-10, 11:24-25, 22:9, 28:22, 28:27

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are you currently generous? What motivates your generosity? What de-motivates your generosity?



Haggai 1:2-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How committed and passionate are you about building God's house? How does this compare to your commitment and passion for personal comfort?

Malachi 3:7-12

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your perspective on giving? When you give, are you giving to God what is rightfully his? Or, are you giving to God what is rightfully yours? When you withhold your giving, are you withholding what is rightfully his? Or, when you withhold your giving, are you withholding what is rightfully yours?



Matthew 6:19-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you give, does it feel like an investment, or does it feel like you're losing money? Why?

Matthew 6:25-34

Observations:

Discernment Question: On a scale of 1 to 10, to what degree are you worrying about money in this current season of life (1 being not at all, 10 being a great deal)? What would move you closer to 10?



Matthew 23:23-24

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you think about tithing, to what extent do you view it as a 'tax,' or instead, as an opportunity to make a difference?

Mark 12:41-44

Observations:

Discernment Question: Compared to this widow, how significant is your giving?



Romans 12:13

Observations:

Discernment Question: How intentional are you at looking for needs you could meet with other followers of Christ?

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: What inspires your giving? What inhibits your giving? How similar or dissimilar is your giving to the Macedonian church?



2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you have joy when you give? Why or why not?

1 Timothy 6:6-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent has money drawn you away from God? To what extent has money drawn you toward God?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on financial generosity? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

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Scripture Memory:

1 Chronicles 29:14 NLT

But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!

Matthew 6:19-21 NLT

"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be."

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