

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 3

2024

HOW MUCH TO GIVE

How much shall I give? It would be easier if God sent bills! Careful evaluation determines the amount — but amount is not even the first thought.

First, man must want to give. "... they were willing of themselves ... as there was a readiness to will ... if there be first a willing mind ... not grudgingly or of necessity' (2 Cor. 8:3, 11,12, 9:7). No gift without a willing heart is enough.

First, man must give himself to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5). - God's interest is man - not money. The greater gift given, the lesser gift (money) is not hard. And a man who gives himself is not likely to be stingy with money.

First, man must love. The Corinthian's gift was proof of their love (2 Cor. 8:24). If people love souls, giving to preach is easy. If men love the brethren, giving to feed them is natural. We invariably put our money where our heart is.

First, man must recognize that he is a steward. God just entrusts man with these material goods. They still belong to him, and man must give an account for all he has. Jerusalem saints understood this--"neither said any of them that ought of the things that he possessed was his own" (Act. 4:32). That makes giving easy.

Now to the amount of giving - the amount depends on income. God puts us on our honor -give as we see God giving to us. "...let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. 16:2). The more our salary is, the more we give. The amount of giving depends upon what we have - "...it is accepted according to that a man hath..." (2 Cor. 8:12). We must not think we have paid "our weekly tax" on our income and no other claim can be made on us. Just as surely as we have resources, we have responsibilities.

The amount of giving depends upon the need. When crisis threatened the Jerusalem church, that special need compelled special giving. Brethren sold their houses and land to be able to give (Act. 4:32-35). They did not ordinarily give this way, but saints were hungry. Extraordinary need could compel us to give all we have.

The amount of giving is established by priority. How does my giving compare with my spending for other things? Do I spend more on movies or golf or fishing or hairdressers than God's work? If my spending for the Lord's kingdom is way down from the top of the list of my expenditures, something is seriously wrong. People who seek first the kingdom of God, use their money accordingly.

The amount of giving reflects my thankfulness. God ministers bread for food and multiplies our seed sown (2 Cor. 9:10). How much do I appreciate God's generosity? As Christians, we have all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) - chosen by God, redeemed, forgiven, an inheritance. How much does all this mean to me? Paul's last argument to the Corinthians was brief but profound. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

✍ Robert F. Turner

The Lord's Supper

“This do in Remembrance of Me.” On the same night of His betrayal, Jesus, while eating the Passover with His chosen disciples, instituted the Lord's Supper when He took the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, gave thanks for them, gave to His disciples, and said, “this do in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

Friend, eating the Lord's Supper is not for the remission of sins, and it is not the most important part of worship. For, all worship Divinely authorized is equally important, and the eating of the Lord's Supper is in order to remember the death of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 11:24-25, Paul quotes Jesus, saying, “Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.” Likewise, “This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Before eating the Lord's Supper, each one should examine himself, and having done so, eat and drink (1 Cor. 11:28). How wonderful it is that the Lord established this memorial for the benefit of His saints, and in eating and drinking of it, we show His death till He comes (1 Cor. 11:26).

Here are seven things to remember during the Lord's Supper from these gospel accounts (Matt. 27:32-44; Mark 15:23-32; Luke 23:33-43; John 19:17-30). One Lord, two thieves, three crosses, four soldiers divide the garments of Christ, five wounds of Christ (i.e. head, back, hands, feet, side), darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour, and the seven sayings of Christ on the cross (i.e. Father forgive them for they know not what they do; today you will be with Me in paradise; woman behold your son and behold your mother; My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me; I thirst; It is finished; Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit).

Keep these things in mind, till He comes (1 Cor. 11:26).

✍ Thornton Thomas

It Needs No Change

The men who wrote the Constitution of the United States have long been praised for their wisdom and foresight. The words they penned have served as the basis for the laws of this land for almost 250 years and have needed relatively few changes or additions. This is indeed remarkable when we view the governments and laws of most other nations in a constant state of change.

Far more amazing than this, is the law of Christ. Written nearly 2000 years ago, it continues today to provide us with "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). It is a "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). No change has ever been, or ever will be needed in it. Its own pages contain warnings to those who would attempt to alter its commands (Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9,10; Revelation 22:18,19). Let us learn to appreciate the beauty and perfection of God's word and strive to live and worship according to its precepts.

✍ Greg Gwin

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.