

Biblical View on Giving

Bible of the NT church was the OT, II Tim 3 – all scripture is the OT.
The early church was of course influenced by giving as done in the OT. It was the only Bible they had in the beginning. I Cor. 10:1-11; v. 6, 11. Paul will use examples of gathering manna as an example of the spirit of giving from the OT: of not muzzling the ox, and other passages to address giving.

Giving in the OT.

Pre-Law

Gen. 4:3-5

There is no command, but it seems to be even in creation a natural response to gratitude to God, our creator, for what He has given.

The offering was to the Lord.

Gen. 14:17-20

Melchizedek – priest of the most High God.

Again, in the NT, it takes the OT examples. Heb. 5:6ff, 7:1ff –whole chapter, v. 1-3.

Jacob – dream, stairway to heaven, wakes up, Gen. 28:20-22,

*"And this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a **tenth**."*

With the coming of the Law given through Moses, giving was spelled out.

No longer just spontaneous, but now organized. Lev. 27:30-33

"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock-- every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod-- will be holy to the LORD. He must not pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If he does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed." These are the commands the LORD gave Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

Dt. 12:1-19

There were 12 tribes, but one tribe, the Levites, would be funded by the other 11 tribes so they could serve in the Tabernacle, Temple, etc.

The tithe – used only 13xs in the OT, was giving a tenth for this purpose.

There was still room for spontaneous giving, called Thanksgiving offerings, free will offerings, etc.

Giving to the poor in OT was also instructed in various ways as what you did extra.

Harvesting your field – tithe on that.

But were told: Lev. 19:9-10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the **poor** and the alien. I am the LORD your God.

Lev. 23:22 “ ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the **poor** and the alien. I am the LORD your God.’ ”

Deut. 15:4 However, there should be no **poor** among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you.

Israel – was meant to be a light to the world as they testified about the True God. And the truth of God was reflected in their land where everyone was taken care of, even the poor and anyone who would move in as well, aliens, that God is true and in His family everyone takes care of one another. Deut. 4:6-8, 28:1 – set high above like a city on a hill to be seen by all. It is the same principle that Jesus said in John 13:34-35. By our love for one another they will know we are Christians.

This is a principle that the apostle Paul will pick up on in II Cor. 8-9, and the whole collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, the members of the church there, will be a testimony that what God planned in the OT, is being fulfilled in the New Testament. II Cor. 9:13 - *Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, **men** will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.*

But there is a change in the NT that is so radical that things like tithing and keeping the Sabbath that don't fit.

OT

Holy Places

Holy People, Levi, and Aaron

NT

Worship God anywhere, John 4

Priesthood of believers, I Pet. 2

Holy Days, Sabbath, Festivals Everyday is Holy, Sunday is not the new Holy Day, no command to meet on Su.
Tithing - 1/10 Luke 9:23 – cross daily, Hbs. 4
NT- all God's 100%

In the Law, there were 10 commandments and commentary on those ten commandments that make up the Old Covenant. Do these things and you will live. Fail to do these things, and you will die.

With this arrangement there was much effort given to make sure you compiled exactly as the Law commanded.

Pharisees –

Luke 11:42 *“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a **tenth** of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.*

So careful to give exactly, but not more.

You have the Pharisee at the temple praying, proudly what he had done and about his own righteousness.

Luke 18:12 *I fast twice a week and give a **tenth** of all I get.*

That is what he did, but no more. Yet he is so far from God.

It is the nature of law that you give what is required, but there is no motivation to give more. Like taxes, who would say "Let me pay more than is my due."

Marriage – imagine having a prenuptial agreement.

I will love you if... and then proceed to list your ten requirements to keep the marriage intact.

What will you do? Just what is required.

What if your marriage is based on love and gratitude? Because she loves me as I am, what else can I do in gratitude not to earn and keep her love, but because she loves me.

So with the Gospel.

Grace – II Cor. 5, 8:7-8;

II Cor. 6:1 – not to receive God's grace in vain...

One can see the difference of grace as the motivation with Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:8 *But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."*

Half my possessions? There is no command to do that.

If we acknowledged that we had cheated someone in the Law, you were required to pay back what was cheated plus twenty per cent. Here he offers four hundred per cent.

A proper response to God's grace, is not to give a tenth, but something far more than that.

It is ironic that some who say, I am not legalistic, I don't have to give a tithe, a tenth, in fact, in the name of grace, give far less than a tenth.

How can that be? Surely one does not understand God's grace, or one is responding in an abusive way to God's grace to actually be less motivated by grace than if they were under the Law. There is self-deceit involved.

If Moses gave us the two tablets of stone, and they responded legalistically with a tithe, how much more should we respond when God gives us his flesh in His Son? How can I respond to that except with my whole life?

Not how much do I have to give, but how much can I give!

II Cor. 9:12 - *This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also **overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.***

Principles

1. Do I give to God first? II Cor. 8:1-5 is an example of the difference between law and grace. Or do I give God the left-overs? Mal. 1:8. I Cor. 16:1-2 – in keeping to your income, not in keeping with your spending.
2. Do I really understand and appreciate what God has done for me in Christ? Luke 7:40ff. Do I love much or love little, v. 47.
3. Paul re-affirms the OT teaching that we cannot out give God. That as we are generous, God is generous. Not "prosperity Gospel," but the biblical truth that is re-taught by Paul in II Cor. 9:6-8 - *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously... And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.* The principle comes from Haggai 1:5-11, Malachi 3:8-12. Does my financial situation keep me from giving, or is it the reason I have nothing to

give! I can't get out of my financial mess because I have not been giving and not responding to God's grace.

4. Do I give to God, or do I see it as my money? If it is not spent the way I think it should be spent, do I withhold my giving? There are always two points. I give to God. That is settled. It is a common tendency to give something but still seek to control that gift. I give something to someone, and they in turn give it to someone else. That can bother me. Why? I thought I gave it. Did I really? What happens to the money we give, and how it is spent is another question. I do not vote with my pocket book. It is fine to raise questions of how the money is spent in general. But that doesn't stop my giving. As Malachi 1:8 says, trying doing that with the government. I don't like what you are doing with my money I give to the government, so I am not giving anymore. If I have been holding back, have I made that up or have I deceived myself about my giving? Widow, Mark 12:38ff – Jesus talks about those who are abusing widows who are sponsored by the offerings, and the widow who is commended for her giving. Malachi 1 and 2 challenges the priests for their poor leadership and service, and Malachi 3:8ff challenges the people for not giving the offering that supports those same priests. "I give to what I want to give to," is the same spirit that Jesus challenged in Mark 7 concerning Corban.
5. Jesus commends sacrifice, as with the poor widow; how am I doing on that count? David when he had to stop the plague because he was counting his fighting men, wants to buy Araunah's threshing floor. Araunah offers to donate it to David. David replies II Sam 24:24: *But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."*
6. If the "love of money" is the root of all evil, I Tim. 6:9-10, this is an incredible dangerous area. How could it have been stated more strongly? If so, who have I opened my heart with about my attitudes to money and my giving? This is not about being "spiritual policemen," but about being open about serious spiritual issues. We have all seen people running after money to their spiritual destruction. They take a job to advance their careers but that takes them away from the fellowship. It is a spiritual issue, and it is Jesus who talks about it more than anyone else. If the heart is deceitful above all things, being self-deceived about money is a given. II Cor. 8: 8 Paul tests their sincerity of love by comparing it with the earnestness of

others. Why? Because we can be easily self-deceived. I hate to be compared to others, but that is exactly what Jesus and Paul do. Eph. 5:5 -*For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* Eph. 5:6 *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.* It was an area of discipline in I Cor. 5:11.

Never seen it, but that is hardly a positive statement. If the love of money is the root of all evil, and if greed is like idolatry, I better be talking to someone about this area of my heart. If I can be more open about my lust than I can about my giving, what does it say about my heart? I am ashamed of my lust, but I have become hardened about my greed.

7. God wants our giving done with a great heart, freely and happily. II Cor. 9:7 -*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* If your heart is not there, don't give. If there is no appreciation for what Christ has done for you on the cross, or you don't want to express that, God doesn't want you to give. Now at the same time you must ask yourself how am I doing spiritually and why is my gratitude so weak and my trust and faith so weak? If they are, there are some serious issues one must consider about your spiritual condition.
8. Use our resources to help people understand God, to make friends who will greet you when you go to heaven. Luke 16:9 - *I tell you, use world wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into your heavenly dwellings.*
9. OT set up the tithe to fund the services of priests and Levites who served at the places of sacrifice and worship. Nehemiah restores it when he rebuilds the wall. But he leaves and returns in Neh. 13:10ff – he returns to find it has broken down and Levites had returned to their fields and temple neglected. He fixes that again. It is on the same theme and same principle that Paul addresses in I Cor. 9:1-18 - 13 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. Philippian church funded Paul's work in Corinth, Phil. 4:15, Acts 18:5. Paul also taught the same in I Timothy 5:17-18.

10. Have a plan, be orderly, and keep your pledges. I Co. 16:1-2, was a plan. Paul has a very developed plan to meet the needs of those in Jerusalem. He has a delegation prepared to present it. II Cor. 8:10-12, 9:5 – urged to bring to completion their pledge for helping the saints in Jerusalem. It is very biblical to plan. Repentance always involves a plan, of our convictions taking form in our actions.