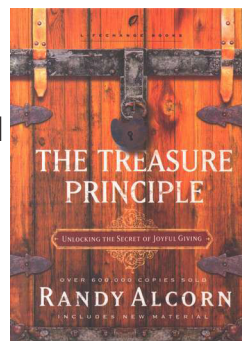


- ii) Give yourself to God first (8:5). Until a person responds to Christ, He is still under condemnation (the Law, John 16:9).
- iii) Give out of love for Jesus, as a response to His love for you (2nd Corinthians 8:7-9, cf. 9:7).
- iv) Give sincerely, there is no command (8:8).
- v) Give in faith, even beyond what you think you can (8:3), according to your means (8:12).
- vi) Give to the poor, provide for the needs of people which God reveals to you in the church (8:13-15).
- vii) Give in order to spread the Gospel of Christ (8:18-19).
- viii) Give wisely, to those who show accountability (8:20-21).
- ix) Give joyfully, without compulsion (9:7).
- x) Give to grow in the grace of Christ, and to multiply in your ability and practice of giving (9:8-11).

B) Paul ends his call to the Corinthians with a charge to always give 'according to the vision' (9:12-15). Be a visionary giver, one who is responsive to the teaching of the Word, and one who is investing in the spreading of the Word.

Another Great Resource

One of the great books (only 93 short pages) which I have enjoyed on giving is "The Treasure Principle" by Randy Alcorn. It is a quick read, but a transforming view of "discovering the secret of joyful giving." You will not regret picking it up and reading it! Author & Pastor John Piper comments, "Supercharged with stunning, divine truth! Lightning struck over and over as I read it!"



Faithful Investment

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 10th, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

DO NOT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES ON EARTH, WHERE MOTH AND RUST DESTROY, AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL. BUT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DESTROYS, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK IN OR STEAL; FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.

~MATTHEW 6:19-21 (NASB)

1) Discerning Between Wackos & The Word

- A) As was mentioned last week, personal finances and giving are almost universally avoided in the pew and the pulpit out of sensitivity toward being associated with false teachers.
- B) This tension must be submitted to God's Word, which has a great deal to say about how we worship with our finances, the most personal area of our stewardship.
- C) Keep in mind, this is a study of God's Word -- not a fundraising campaign. We desire to honor God with our hearts, which includes our "treasure" (Matthew 6:21).

2) Doesn't The Bible Teach A 10% Offering?

- A) In the Older Testament, Israel was commanded to provide "tithes" (a "tithe" is a "tenth of the whole," or 10% -- cf. Genesis 14:20).
- B) We must remember, though, that tithes were to be given as a way of supporting the nation of Israel as a theocratic (God as ruler) government. In other words, the tithe system was much like our modern governmental system of taxation.
- C) In fact, beyond the tithes of the people, there were many other offerings and opportunities to give (cf. Deuteronomy 12:6-7) including "freewill offerings."
- D) The Older Testament does teach that a "tithe" is 10%, but it also teaches that there were three tithes, not just one!
 - i) The first tithe was to be given each year to the Levites (Levitical Tithe) since they did not receive any land inheritance in the "Promised Land" (Numbers 18:20-21).
 - ii) The second tithe was to be given each year in Jerusalem for the festivals (Festival Tithe) which provided the food for the numerous national gatherings (Deuteronomy 12:1-19, 14:22-26).
 - iii) The third tithe was to be given every three years within your own town or city for benevolence (Poor Tithe) to assist those with special needs (Deuteronomy 14:28-29, 26:12-13).
- E) Thus, the average Israelite who raised crops tithed 23 1/3% of their yearly income, in addition to their "first fruit" and "freewill" offerings! If you were to "tithe" according to Scripture, it would mean giving at least 23 1/3%!

- F) However, in the Newer Testament, the requirements of the Law are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, resulting in a completion of the Law and a "better hope" of grace (Hebrews 7:18-19).

3) Since The Requirements Of The Older Testament Tithe Are Set Aside, Do I Have To Give Anything?

- A) When Jesus Christ sacrificed His life, it fulfilled the requirements of the Law (including the payment for sin, cf. Hebrews 10:1-10). Since the Law is fulfilled in Christ, its requirements are no longer practiced (Hebrews 10:11-18).
- B) This new "age of grace" (cf. Romans 5:20-21) produced a more intimate and close relationship with God (Hebrews 10:19-21).
- C) This new relationship is characterized as **MORE** intimate, **MORE** pure, **MORE** faithful, **MORE** devoted, and **MORE** committed (Hebrews 10:22-25).
- D) There is **NEVER** an instance of **LESS** in this "age of grace." Rather, the picture is one of greater maturity, a shifting from the academic world (school), to the real world (maturity) (Galatians 3:23-26).

4) The Great Example Of Grace Giving

- A) The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church (a church with lots of stuff) to provide them with some guidelines and goals for "grace giving" in 2nd Corinthians 8-9. He taught...
 - i) Giving comes by grace, or our relationship with Christ (8:1-4). Don't give according to a rule, give according to your relationship with Jesus Christ.