



GIVING





How not to Give

1

Do not separate life from giving.

2

Do not earn by ungodly means.

3

Do not cheat the Government.

4

Do not make cheap offering.

5

Do not yield to pressures.

6

Do not support questionable ministers.

7

Do not give to influence preachers.

8

Do not neglect the poor.

9

Do not publicize your giving.

10

Do not give just to receive.



How not to Give

Introduction

- Of all the spiritual disciplines which Jesus dealt with in the Sermon on the Mount, the first one was GIVING! (Mt 6:1-4)
Only after this He taught about Prayer and Fasting (vv 5-15, 16-18)
- Today there is a revival of giving. Just like “grains” and “tares” grow fast in rains, wrong doctrines also sprout out strongly during times of spiritual awakening.
Unless our “giving” is proper and acceptable to God, our loss will be dual —
 We lose our money here!
 We lose our reward there!
- Our God is a Giver:
 The Father gave away His Son.
 The Son gave away Himself.
 The Holy Spirit gives gifts.
Someone said:
 Giving is not God’s way of raising money;
 it’s God’s way of raising us into the likeness of His Son.
Max Lucado:
 Having pressed the grapes of service,
 we drink life’s sweetest wine — the wine of giving.
 We are at our best when we are giving!

How not to Give

1. Do not separate life from giving.

- Because ministers and ministries are anxious to raise as much money as possible, givers are not sufficiently warned against unholy living—

“Fear of offending the givers”

Jesus never had this apprehension while teaching truths —

eg) *Rich man and Camel* (Mt 19:24)

The Bible repeatedly teaches that “holy living” and “acceptable giving” are inseparable—

Jer 6:19,20 ... costly gifts but no obedience

“Your sweetcane is not sweet to Me!”

Life divorced from giving.

If we “reject” God’s Word,

God “rejects” our **offerings!**

Similar to, If we stop our ears from God’s Word,

even our **prayers** are an abomination to Him (Prov 28:9).

- We all have a tendency to **appease** God thro’ gifts & offerings, especially when we disobey God!

eg) King Saul: God’s order: 1 Sam 15:3

Saul’s disobedience: v9

Saul’s excuse: v21

God’s rebuke: v22

“To obey is better” — than offerings!

- What is sweetsmelling offering to God? —
 Eph 5:1,2 ... *Chirst ... sacrifice ... sweet-smelling*
 :3 ... *fornication ... covetousness*
- Here lies a great responsibility on the preachers—
 eg) Paul: 2 Cor 12:14 ... *I seek **not** yours but **you!***
 What a challenge!

Because of this teaching,

the believers set their **priorities** right!

- eg) 2 Cor 8:5 (Macedonian Christians)
 “as we hoped” = expected/wanted
 “but” — *“first to the Lord”* — the priority
 *“and **then** to us”* — that too *by the “will of God”* —
 i.e. not according to their whims and fancies!
 — not sentimentally!

- Just like we “examine” ourselves
 before partaking of bread and wine,
 we must “examine” ourselves
 before offering anything to God —
 Mal 3:3 ... *purify ... purge ... offer*
- We must not only get right with God,
 but also with men —
 Mt 5:23,24 ... *altar ... offer ... first reconcile*

Who must take the initiative?

In Mt 5:23,24 — You are the offender

In Mt 18:15 — You are the offended

In both these instances,

“**YOU**” must go to reconcile!

i.e. The one who desires to offer something to God!

If only this truth is restored,
we will have more “righteousness”
than “riches” in our Churches!
eg) 1 Tim 6:10 — *love of money*
:11 — *but you, ... righteousness*

- There might arise a question —

Does God then accept offerings
only from perfect people?
There’s no one who is perfect!

The Answer: Confess all known sins to God.
Be cleansed by Christ’s blood.
Make reconciliation and restitution
wherever necessary and possible.

This way we can walk in **fellowship** with God.
Then, our offerings will not only be accepted
but also appreciated.

How not to Give

2. Do not earn by ungodly means.

- We live in a corrupt society.
 - Corruption in the Govt. and Non-governmental Institutions
 - Corruption in the World as well as in the Church
 - Corruption in Evangelistic Agencies & Relief Organisations

There are crocodiles in religious circles
longing for another Tsunami!

But, God's people must take a clear stand
against the trend of the world.

eg) False balance and diverse weights —

Prov 11:1 ... *false balance ... abomination*

- Don't cheat customers/clients.
- False information & impression about your products.
- We must excel Indian Standards (ISI).
 - We go for Kingdom Standards!
- Be satisfied with a decent margin.
- Do not hoard essential grains/commodities.

Prov 11:26 ... *curse ... hoard ... blessing ... sell*

- A clear stand against bribery.

eg) David

Psa 26:10,11 ... *But as for me ... integrity ...*

Bribery puts the poor and underprivileged
under disadvantage —

God of the poor displeased.

John the Baptist to Tax Collectors —

Lk 3:12,13

Question: “*What shall we do?*”

Answer: “*Do **not** collect more than what’s due*”

Perhaps it was from his audience,
a notorious Tax-Collector got converted —

Zacchaeus: “*I will return fourfold!*”

Salvation today! (Lk 19:8,9)

Preachers often tell people the promise —

“*From today I’ll bless you!*”

Does it have any reference to godly living?

- Partnership with corrupt men.

Prov 1:10,14,15,19 ... *one purse ... greedy for gain*

Your testimony is more important than money.

- Delayed payment of wages

Dt 24:14,15 ... *each day ... give wages ...*

Do not deprive them of their fringe benefits.

Hire! Tire! Fire! — This attitude is wrong before God.

The *Lord of **Hosts*** shall fight against you

if you delay payment or defraud the workers —

Js 5:4 How serious! ... “*cries of the reapers*”

- Questionable businesses —

Lotteries, liquor, etc.

Dt 23:17,18 ... *harlot ... dog ... abomination ...*

Where do you invest your savings?

- Overwork

Too busy to find time for God (devotion + ministry) & family—

Prov 23:4,5 ... *Do not overwork to be rich ...*

- In our Church Services and Meetings,
we pray for the offerings.
This prayer cannot **sanctify** any money
earned by ungodly means!

The money must be clean **before** it comes
to the collection bag or box or plate!

- Suppose you have already acquired
and amassed wealth by ungodly means,
what to do with that money?
 - Set matters right wherever possible.
Ezek 33:15,16,17 ... restore ... stolen ... lawful ... right
 - Distribute the money to the poor,
the needy and the destitutes.
eg) Zacchaeus
Lk 19:8 ... half to the poor ... return fourfold ...
Jesus did not tell him that all that was not necessary!

How not to Give

3. Do not cheat the Government.

- The Roman culture and the Hebrew customs **differed** very much from each other —

At many points they acutely **contradicted** each other —

Obviously there were many conflicts:

Pagan vs. Christian

- But Paul urged the “*saints*” in Rome (Rom 1:7) to implicitly obey the Government—

Rom 13:1 ... *every ... no authority except from God*
:2 ... *whoever resists the authority ...*

Logic: not consequences but “*conscience!*” (v5)

Practical application: taxes + customs (vv 6,7)

- Similarly Peter wrote to those in
“*Asia ... Bithinia ... Pontus ... Galatia ... Cappadocia*”
(1 Pet 1:1)
1 Pet 2:13,14 ... “*submit to every ordinance of man*”

If Peter were to write today for us, he would say ...

“To those in Asia, Australia, Africa, America, etc.”

Especially in India,

Christians are not only persecuted,
but also “*spoken against*”—

Similar to Peter’s audience (v12)

That means,

no Christian should even dream of evading tax!

- Where did Peter and Paul learn this from?

— from their Master: Jesus!

eg) Mt 17:24-27... This was actually regarding Temple tax.

Do not spiritualise offences —

“sons ... strangers ... free ... offence”

Even though the Temple was the House of His Father!

— *“first” fish ...*

An exactly similar emphasis —

Mt 22:16-21 ... *render to Caesar ... and to God*

First to Caesar!

We teach so much about “tithes;”

but what about “taxes”?

Jesus and the Apostles never once taught
about tithing in the NT;

but that’s the favourite subject of many Pastors & Preachers.
This is how we have lost the sense of priority in Christianity.

We strain the mosquito,

but swallow the camel!

Jesus calls such Preachers, *“Blind Guides!”*

(Mt 23:24)

We forget the first things

but make the last things first!

- **Black** money does not become **white**
just because you drop it into the offering box;
rather it becomes “wasted” money—
God does not credit it to His account —

Church Register vs. God’s Record

God knows that tax money has to go to the Govt.;
the devil also knows it!
The devil will accuse God if He accepts it!

- Can we ask the tax and customs officials for favours?

Yes, if there is no bribery involved.
“Favour of men” is not anti-Biblical.

Even for the sake of “ministry,”
we must not evade tax or bribe the officials.

The non-Christian officials expect
a higher standard from Christians & Preachers—

- My wife and I, from our first overseas trip,
brought in so many dutiable goods like cameras
and projectors. We were put to shame when the
Customs officer said:
“As a Preacher, you ought to be more careful!”
- When a missionary applied for opening a Bank account
in North India, the officer wrote in the Passbook, “Saint”
against the profession!

Yes, we are to be the “salt” and “light”

Don’t lose your saltiness and brightness!

“Let your light so shine ... glorify the Father...” (Mt 5:13-16)

How not to Give

4. Do not make cheap offering.

- When we give,
we must concentrate on “TO WHOM” we give,
rather than “WHAT” we give;
only then we will give our best to God —

Mal 1:14 ... *“I’m a great King!”*

eg) When the Queen of England visited Kanchipuram in India,
the City of Silks, in 1997, every other weaver was interested
to present her with superfine silk sarees —

Would she ever wear them?

No, but they wanted to give something special to the “Queen!”

God challenges,

Will an ordinary “governor” accept cheap things? (v8)

- Examples —

- Gen 4:3,4

Abel ... *the BEST of his flock ...*

Cain ... *SOME from his field ...*

- David: When he numbered the people,
the Prophet instructed him to build an altar
to stop the plague.
The offer from Araunah (2 Sam 24:20-23)
The answer of David (v24)

— No offering from what *costs me nothing!*

This threshing floor is the same place as Moriah,
where Abraham made the greatest sacrifice, and

where the Temple was built later by Solomon.

See how God honours sacrificial giving!

□ Macedonian Christians:

2 Cor 8:1-3

... deep poverty ... abounding liberality ... beyond ability ...

We remember that poor widow now —

Mk 12:41-44 ... *Jesus watching*

how people were giving...

The world applauds

“How much we GIVE”

God looks at

“How much we KEEP”

In other words, God looks at the proportion.

If the rich also give only a tithe like the poor,
it's a cheap offering.

Rich must be *rich in giving* too (1 Tim 6:17-19)

— Tithing may be alright as a standard for the poor —

i.e. those who don't even have 3 meals a day.

- These are people who have much less than most of us,
but give much more than most of us!
- In a mission station, a poor tribal woman
brought her “healthy” goat as an offering,
keeping the sick one for her.
The two goats were her only belongings.
- The missionary history of the Church abounds
with examples of sacrificial giving —

eg) C.T. Studd (1862-1931)

Gave away everything he had inherited from his very rich father including what he had kept for his bride.

He said,

“If Christ had died for me,
no sacrifice I make is too great!”

- Have you ever felt the pinch
because you gave liberally and lavishly?

When did you make a sacrificial offering last time?

- Oh for a **Revival** of giving!

eg) Ex 35:4,5 ... *The call ... whoever is willing ...*

:21,22 ... The Response

“everyone” (vv 21,22,23,24,25,26, etc.)

Should we not excel the OT people of God?

Decide today to give to God

something that’s precious to you—

A jewel/A Fixed Deposit/A property

HE IS WORTHY!

How not to Give

5. Do not yield to pressures.

- Christians are pressurised from all sides
by appeals for funds from preachers and ministries.

You must give out of
an “inner burden” and not “external pressure.”

We yield to pressures easily,
especially when we go thro’ problems and crises —

eg) A dying woman and two preachers—
“I feel as if I’m crucified between two thieves! ”

Do not allow anyone to manipulate you!

Common practice in Jesus’ day —
Scribes ... widows ... Mk 12:40
Very next passage (vv 41-44) ... *poor widow!*

- Beware of sympathy appeals!
Preachers telling people:
“I’m running into debts!”
“I may have to stop this Programme
if you don’t send money now!”

Preachers must aim at implanting a “burden”
in the hearts of people, rather than creating “sympathy!”

Paul never made sympathy appeals —

Phil 4:10-13 ... *hunger ... suffer ... distress ...*
i.e.) If I don’t have money for **travel**,
I will shut myself in my room & travail in prayer!

If I don't have food, I won't be starving;
rather I will take it as an opportunity for fasting!

Preachers talk about faith to the people for people's
financial needs —

Why don't they apply this faith for themselves?

They shout, "Give ... Windows will open!"

Let preachers do the same thing!

A simple presentation of the needs is alright—

eg) Moses presented the needs for the Tabernacle (Ex 35)

eg) Paul presented the needs for the saints in Jerusalem.

He didn't even want collection in his presence!

1 Cor 16:1,2

(It's not a must to give it in the Preacher's hand!)

■ Preachers must not **beg** people to **give**—

People must **compel** preachers to **receive** —

2 Cor 8:3,4 ... *imploring us with much urgency ...*

Preachers should be able to say —

"Stop! Enough!" (Ex 36:5-7)

I'm surprised why we don't come across
such announcement in our Church and Mission bulletins!

It's always, Give ... Give! Never, Stop ... Stop!

One reason:

Preachers are more anxious about **raising** money
for their projects rather than **teaching** God's people on Giving.

— Personal testimony: During my 33 years of leadership
(1971-2003) as the Chief Executive of the Blessing Youth
Mission, I spent more time on teaching about "Giving"
rather than appealing for money.

We never lacked anything.

We have even said: “Stop! Enough!”

- Our giving must not be by the **pressures** of preachers;
at the same time, it must not be
by the **demands** of any law!

Tithing: An Old Testament Law

In none of their Epistles,

the Apostles have taught about tithing —

In the NT ... “*not by compulsion or demand*

or calculation, but *cheerfully.*”

2 Cor 9:5b ... “*generosity, not obligation*”

:7 ... “*cheerfully, not necessity*”

The law is for the lawless.

It’s for beginners.

It’s just a *tutor to bring us to Christ* (Gal 3:24-26)

Now we are “*sons*” (v26)

Between a father and children,

it’s not a matter of law but love!

Tithing may be a place to start — not to stay!

We must grow from “*tithe*” to “*total!*”

Otherwise our singing of —

“*All to Jesus I surrender*” becomes meaningless!

How not to Give

6. Do not support questionable ministers.

- Once the cine world was the most profitable business;
next, it was Politics;
now, it's Religion!

1 Tim 6:5 ... *godliness as a means of gain ...
from such WITHDRAW yourself!*

- **Who** are questionable ministers?

Basically 4 Categories—

a) Material-minded Preachers

Whether in pulpit or in print,
they would use all opportunities to raise money —

They mind “earthly” things ...

Their belly” is their god! (Phil 3:17-19).

Enemies — not of Christ but of the Cross of Christ.

There can be many “evils” in the ministry;

but the “root” is *the love of money* —

“Men of God” (= Servants of God) must flee from it—
(1 Tim 6:10,11)

Paul gave this warning to Timothy
who was a preacher in the making.

God's Servants: “You cannot **serve** God and Money!” (Lk 16:13)

This does not mean a Christian Preacher

must not have money —

The apostles received a lot!

But the money was *at their feet*, not fist! (Acts 4:34-37)

Peter was able to say,

“Silver and gold I have none!” (Acts 3:6)

Billy Graham:

If a person gets his attitude towards money straight,
it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life!

b) Ministers with no accountability

“I am alright before God; why should I bother?”

This is not Scriptural.

— The apostolic example (2 Cor 8:20,21)

*... honourable things not only in the sight of the Lord,
but also in the sight of men*

— Jesus did not keep the money with Him;
it was with Judas! (Jn 13:29).

Our excuse: “We don’t have a reliable person!”

Anyone can run away with your money,
but he cannot ruin your ministry;
he will only ruin himself!

c) Ministers with doctrinal deviation

Do not say, “I’m not responsible for my offering
after I’ve given it away!”

2 Jn 9-11... *does not bring this doctrine ...
do not receive him*

You are supposed to discern —

God has entrusted you with money
expecting that you would **sensibly** use it

— that’s good stewardship.

Some questions on doctrinal deviation —

- Does he preach salvation by faith
on the finished work of Christ,
or by works?
- Does he really exalt Christ in his message,
or boast of self?
- Does he teach the Bible,
or extra-Biblical revelations, sensational experiences?

d) Ministers who build their own empires,

rather than the Kingdom of God

eg) Status symbol—Size of the building, huge projects—
not led by the Holy Spirit

“Do you seek great things for yourself? Seek not!” (Jer 45:5a)
Accumulation of wealth for generations.

John Wesley (1703-1791): “If I leave more than 10 pounds,
you and all mankind bear witness that I lived
and died a thief and a robber!”

■ Safe giving:

a) To the local Churches

b) To para-Church ministries

Better distribute than give everything
to one preacher or ministry —
Similar to depositing in various Banks!

i.e. Give to Paul who plants (Missionaries)
Give to Apollos who waters (Pastors)
Give to Peter who goes to the circumcized
(i.e. nominal Christians) (Revivalists) etc.

Do not spoil any preacher by your lack of wisdom in giving.

How not to Give

7. Do not give to influence preachers.

- Religion is highly commercialised these days.
Bribery is there not only in the secular world,
but also very much in spiritual circles.

Jesus foresaw such a situation and so He said,
while sending the twelve,

Mt 10:7,8 ... *preach ... heal ... freely give*

Charismatic preachers must be more careful here
than their non-charismatic counterparts!

- Beware of preachers who offer “special” prayers
for “special” offerings!

The desperate and the helpless fall into this trap—

Mt 23:14

“long” (=special) *prayers*

after emptying their purses.

God does not give us anything according to our merit;
rather according to His riches and our need.

He has not even spared us His Son!

*Shall He not with Him also **freely** give us all things?*

(Rom 8:32)

A Tamil Proverb:

God gives gifts freely; but the priest demands something.

சாமி வரம் கொடுத்தாலும் பூசாரி மாட்டேங்கிறானே!

- Trying to influence preachers
 - thro' offerings is a sin against God.
 - eg) Acts 8:17-24 *Simon ... Sorcerer... Peter*
 - *"Your money perish with you!"*
 - *"Your heart is not right!"*
 - *"Your wickedness!"*
 - *"Poisoned by bitterness!"*
 - *"Bound by iniquity!"*
 - *"Your money perish with you!"*
 - This is referring to the one who **gives**.
 - God is angry with the one who **receives** also.
 - eg) 2 Ki 5:25-27
 - Elisha ... refuses gifts from Namaan...
 - but Gehazi ... *same leprosy ... for generations*
- Does it mean we cannot give offerings to the servants of God who pray for us?
 - No, but what is our motive?
 - eg) King Nebuchadnezzar gave gifts to Daniel **after** revealing the dream (Dan 2:47,48) — ACCEPTED
 - His son, Belshazzar, offered gifts to Daniel **in order to** influence him to interpret the handwriting on the wall (Dan 5:16,17) — REFUSED
- This practice is mainly because of a **doctrinal** error—
 - "Pray for one another"* — wrongly understood
 - Preachers to pray for people ...
 - and people to pray for preachers!

Anyone can pray for another person;
but no one can become a mediator (1 Tim 2:5)
“Therefore” ... men (all men) pray everywhere (v8)

In the OT, Priests praying to God for men.

In the NT, Ambassadors pleading to men for God (2 Cor 5:20)

All become new! Old gone! (v17)

How not to Give

8. Do not neglect the poor.

- We normally think that giving to God's work
is superior to giving to the **poor** —

But the Bible teaches otherwise —

Mt 23:23 ... *"weightier" matters of the Law*
justice ... mercy ... faithfulness
i.e. charity > tithing!

This was Isaiah's charge also —

Isa 1:15 ... *prayers ... hide My face*
:16,17 ... Why?
No concern for the *fatherless ... poor ...*

That's the main sin: v18 ... *sins ... scarlet ...*

Jesus taught about "almsgiving"

before "praying" and "fasting" —

Mt 6:2 ... *almsgiving*
:5 ... *praying*
:16 ... *fasting*

I will say,

Almsgiving is superior to tithing!

Because,

"tithing" means "giving" to God;

"almsgiving" means "lending" to God! (Prov 19:17)

- One of the Names of the Jehovah God —
"God of the Poor"

Psa 10:14b ... *Helper of the fatherless*
68:5 ... *Father of the fatherless ...*
Defender of widows

Giving to the poor is not optional, but obligatory,
for Christians—

Not giving is “*SIN*” (Dt 15:7,8,9)
“*Open your hand WIDELY*”

This is what is called “cheerful” giving —
2 Cor 9:7 ... *God loves a cheerful giver ...*

But we use this text for the Church projects
which do not benefit the poor —

Context: vv 1,9,12 ... *help for poor saints ...*

- The teaching of Jesus on this subject has been quite specific—
 - “*Seek the Kingdom ... sell ... treasure in Heaven*”
Lk 12:31,33,34
(A Sermon similar to the Sermon on the Mount)
 - The same teaching to a Rich young ruler —
Mt 19:16-22
“*If you want to be perfect ... sell ... give to poor*”
 - “*Arrange dinners for the poor*” —
Lk 14:12-14
 - Rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31)
His only sin: a sin of omission —
failure to care for Lazarus
- How much to give to the Poor —
Ask John the Baptist:
He would say, 50% (Lk 3:10,11)

Failure is serious in the sight of God —
Ezek 22:29 ... *mistreated the poor*
:30 ... *I sought for a man ... destroy!*

— That's why Zacchaeus reacted like that
when Jesus came to his doorstep ...
"I'll give half to the poor!" (Lk 19:1-10)
He remembered the preaching of John the Baptist!

Why not another Tithes?
Give to Relief Agencies & Charity Organisations.

Those days, the Church was taking care of the
widows and orphans, etc.
eg) *Greek widows* (Acts 6)

But now, most of these relief projects are handled by
para-Church organisations. Support them.

But don't forget Lazarus **at your doorstep**.

■ What is *pure religion*?

Js 1:27 ... *visit orphans ... keep unspotted*

In this Epistle —

"Faith without works is dead!" (2:17)

i.e. Spiritual activities without
charitable deeds represent a dead religion!

(Read my article, *"Christianity is Charity!"*
in my website: stanleyonbible.com)

(See also Pages 34-37, 248-250, 560-562, 571-610)

How not to Give

9. Do not publicize your giving.

- The very first teaching of Jesus on giving was this:

Don't publicize it!

Mt 6:2-4

Three don't's —

- a) Don't publicize it in the Church: "*in the synagogues*" (v2)
- b) Don't publicize it in the Society: "*in the streets*" (v2)
- c) Don't be puffed up within yourself: "*right hand ...
left hand*" (v3)

Writing the names of the donors on chairs, tables, fans, and other furniture in the Church buildings is abominable in the sight of God!

Even on tubelights! — obstructing the very light!

We do not read of such a practice in the construction of the Tabernacle or the Temple!

Even under the Old Covenant they didn't do it!

How can we ever imagine such a thing in the NT?

- The Preachers and Pastors are more responsible than the People for such unscriptural practices—

When Preachers launch out huge building projects, they promise large donors that they would engrave their names on the rooms!

Is it Biblical? —

Suppose a rich man gives Rs. 1,00,000/-

— This may be just a pittance from his possession.

But what the “*poor widow*” gives is 100% of her possessions!

Whose name gets engraved?

Whom does God appreciate?

Such promises from Preachers & Pastors

is just to entice donors!

Beware! Don’t contribute to any preacher

who makes such promises.

He is an outright businessman.

- Do not cherish any secret desire to have your giving publicized.

Let people appreciate if they know of it;

but you take special efforts to stay hidden and humble.

eg) The centurion (Lk 7:1-7)

People said he was worthy;

but the centurion said,

“I’m not worthy even to come to You!”

- Ananias and Sappira wanted to **impress** others
as if they had given so much!

Otherwise they need not have brought anything.

There was after all no explicit command!

The result? (Acts 5:1-11) ... instant death

- There are still people who donate so much but hide themselves —

eg) The one who made major contributions to the construction of the Blessing Centre (1979) and the Blessing Annexe (1983) buildings and several Missionary Rest Houses for BYM wouldn’t even allow his photograph to be displayed.

As a principle, in all the major buildings of the BYM, neither the name of the donor nor the one who opened the building would be there.

How are such people able to do this?

They believe the promise of Hebrews 6:10 —

“God is not unjust to forget your work of love”

What more do we want?

- It’s natural that we desire to give our fat offering in the hands of a popular preacher!

See how Paul avoided it—

1 Cor 16:1,2 ... *no collections when I come ...*

- Why do we lust for publicity?

Because, we think we have given so much of “OUR” money—

Wrong!

1 Chr 29:13,14,15 ... *All things from You ...*

out of Your own we have given...

We cannot outgive God!

God is no man’s debtor!

How not to Give

10. Do not give just to receive.

- Strictly speaking,
God does not NEED anything from us —
OT: Psa 50:10-13 ... A Psalm of Asaph
“The world is Mine, and all its fullness”
NT: Acts 17:24,25 ... Paul in Athens
“He does not need anything ... since He gives all things”
- Giving must be an act of WORSHIP
and CELEBRATION of God’s goodness:
— Dt 16:16,17 ... *Feast ... Feast ... Feast ... give ...*
— Look at v12 of Psa 50 where God was speaking
of His absolute ownership of everything in the Universe!
... Call ... glorify Me ... (v15)
— Phil 4:18 ... *“Your offering an aroma ...”*

This was the attitude of Mary
who poured out the perfume on Jesus—
Mk 14:6,8... *a good work ...*
*... anoint My body **for** burial*
The other ladies came late — **after** burial
Mary did it *“beforehand!”*
Don’t postpone what you can give to God now!

- Old Testament vs. New Testament
The Jews in the OT were frequently oscillating in their faith—
Jehovah vs. idols
Even if there was a delay for Moses coming down
from the Mount, they would make a golden calf and say —

*“This is your god, O Israel,
that brought you out of the land of Egypt”* (Ex 32:4b)

Unimaginable!

God had to promise so many blessings
for this kind of people to keep them in true faith.

One such promise was —

Mal 3:8-10

The condition that prevailed then —

“The whole NATION has cheated God” (v9)

“Abomination in Israel” (2:11)

□ Even the blessings were essentially material (Mal 3:10b)

In the NT, it's essentially *“spiritual” blessings* —

2 Cor 9:10 ... *righteousness*

:11 *thanksgiving* = worship

:12 *thanksgiving* = worship

:13 *“glorify God”*

We don't give in order **to receive**;

but because we have **already received**

the greatest Gift (v15) ... *“unspeakable gift!”*

■ This does not mean that God would not bless us materially—

We **can** expect God to meet our basic needs;

but **eternity**-consciousness

must stand above earthly-mindedness —

□ Treasures *“in Heaven”* (Mt 6:19-21)

□ *“Everlasting”* habitations (Lk 16:9)

□ *“Riches in glory”* (Phil 4:19)

