

Book Study – Matthew 19:13 – 20:16

Little Children and Jesus, Parable...The Rich Young Man, Vineyard Workers



Before We Begin Our Journey...

1. What would you do differently if you could live your childhood over again?
2. What would you do (buy, spend, give, save) if you suddenly received a million dollars?
3. Who is the best employer you ever had? Why?



Do Some Digging and Pre-planning...

4. Why were children being brought to Jesus? ([19:13](#))
5. How did Jesus correct the disciples? ([19:14](#)) What did Jesus do for the little children? ([19:15](#))
6. What amazing statement did Jesus make to His disciples about riches and the kingdom of God? ([19:23-24](#))
7. How did the disciples respond when they heard how hard it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven? ([19:25](#)) What did Jesus promise the twelve disciples? ([19:28-29](#))
8. What did the landowner pay to the men who worked all day? ([20:10](#))
9. How did the workers respond to the landowner's system of payment? ([20:11-12](#))
10. What rationale did the landowner give for his actions? ([20:13-15](#))



Sort, Organize, Gain Understanding...

11. Why do you think the disciples got irritated about the children being brought to Jesus?
12. What did Jesus mean by saying that "the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"?
13. Why is it that we often do not become more generous as our wealth increases? **Write down some thoughts...**
14. If we truly believe that God will one day reward his children in heaven, why are we reluctant to make sacrifices for God?
15. What would happen if God gave each of us what we deserve?
16. How can focusing on God's grace in our lives keep us from becoming jealous of others?



Direction Finder...

"Rich" thoughts...



Application for the Journey...

17. How can you become more childlike in your faith over the next month?
18. What sacrifice are you willing to make for Christ this week, in the knowledge that you will be rewarded in heaven?
19. In what way can you say thank you to God every day this week for his amazing grace in your life?

A prayer for your journey... "Lord Jesus, as I walk through this coming week, help me prepare for my journey by reading my Bible more regularly, seeking help as I need it from my Christian friends and focusing on the needs of others instead of myself. Help me to demonstrate my faith by stepping into the unknown, untried, and untested areas of my life." -Amen

STEWARDSHIP – GIVING – TITHING

Maybe you believe the tithe was an Old Testament standard, and we're no longer under the law but under grace, so tithing isn't a requirement for us. Okay. Let's say you're right. Now, do you really think God doesn't have a will for New Testament Christians when it comes to giving, or that he has lowered the bar of what he expects of us? Since studies show the average Christian gives just over 2% of his income to the Lord, does that mean that grace is only a fifth as effective as the law? Or is something fundamentally wrong with our approach to giving? Are we failing to learn what real grace giving means because we children of grace are failing to start at the minimum level God started his children under the Old Covenant?

I view the tithe of 10% as I view a child's first steps. His first steps are not his last, neither are they his best, but they are a fine beginning. So is the tithe. Tithing is for many the first toddler's step of stewardship. It is the training wheels on the bicycle of true giving. It may not be a home run, but it gets you on base - which is a lot further than the majority of church members ever get.

Two reasons commonly given for not tithing are: "I can see it's right to tithe, but I must pay off my debts first." Why am I in debt in the first place? Is God responsible for my unwise or self-serving decisions that may have put me there? "I can't afford to tithe." Of course I can. What if my salary was reduced by 10%? Would I die?

And if tithing is God's will and He promises to provide for those who trust and obey Him, won't He allow me to get by on 90% rather than 100%? In fact, am I not a lot safer living on less inside the will of God than living on more outside it?

Never put off obedience. The moment of conviction and enlightenment is the moment to act. To procrastinate is to disobey. **Trust Him enough to begin this life-changing, eternity-impacting adventure of giving.** Scripture makes clear that in many cases God blesses us financially when we generously give ([Proverbs 11:24-25](#); [Luke 6:38](#)). "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" ([2 Corinthians 9:6](#)).

When God prospers us in this way it is not merely to give us new toys and more beautiful homes but to allow us to give still more: "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion" ([2 Corinthians 9:11](#)). God's extra provision is usually not intended to raise our standard of living, but to raise our standard of giving.

R. G. LeTourneau was an example of a man who understood God's purpose for blessing him financially. An inventor of earthmoving machines, LeTourneau reached the point of giving 90 percent of his income to the Lord. As he put it, "I shovel out the money, and God shovels it back to me - but God has a bigger shovel."

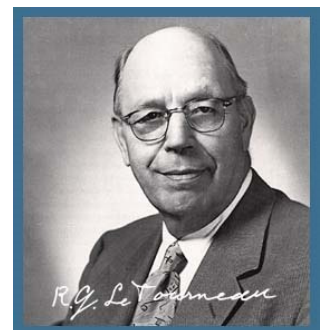
As we learn to give, we draw closer to God. But no matter how far we progress in the grace of giving, Jesus Christ remains the unmatched giver. It was He who left the wealth of heaven to make the supreme sacrifice to deliver us from eternal poverty and grant us eternal riches.

No matter how much we give, we can never out-give God.

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Read about R. G. LeTourneau at the LeTourneau Technologies website.

http://www.letourneau-inc.com/about/RG_bio.htm



The New Testament Pattern of Giving

Some appear to think there are no regulations for giving. With many, there is almost a “design-your-own-system” procedure, along with a flippant “it’s-nobody’s-business-what-I-do” disposition. If the Lord has prescribed a pattern for what we do in other acts of worship, is it reasonable to presume that he left the matter of “giving” as an entirely optional feature—or at best very ambiguous?

Paul discussed several requirements for Christian giving in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. 1 *“Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week (every Sunday), each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. NIV*

The Background

When Paul, in the company of Barnabas and Titus, went to Jerusalem to assure the church of the validity of his apostleship, and the genuineness of the gospel he preached (Galatians 2:1), he was readily endorsed. James, the half brother of the Lord, along with Peter and John, extended to the apostle the “right hand of fellowship” in the noble work in which they all were involved. They did encourage Paul, however, to “remember the poor,” which he was most zealous to do (2:10).

For the past half-dozen years, prior to the composition of 1 Corinthians, the great preacher had demonstrated his concern for the needy, and even now he was busily involved in a campaign to assist the poor among the saints at Jerusalem (cf. Romans 15:24-25; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Acts 24:17). In the apostle’s mind, there was no segregation of benevolence from evangelism; benevolence **is** evangelism (Matthew 5:16; Galatians 6:10)! These circumstances are the background of 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.

Command

Note that the instruction conveyed in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 is in the form of a “command” (“order,” ASV; diatasso—16times in the New Testament). Other texts that employ the word demonstrate the imperative nature of the language. When Jesus finished “commanding” his disciples, he departed to preach in their cities (Matthew 11:1). Aquila and Priscilla left Rome because Claudius Caesar had “commanded” all Jews to depart from Rome (Acts 18:2). The instructions that follow in this Corinthian correspondence are not optional suggestions. They constitute a pattern for the implementation of sacred duties.

As a result of something Paul later wrote to this church, some have surmised that this text is not to be viewed as a binding pattern. Regarding the same collection, the apostle would write: “I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love” (2 Corinthians 8:8).

Regarding this seeming discrepancy one may observe:

- The matter of supporting the cause of God in its various needs is unquestionably a sacred obligation.
- The specific **objects** of reception, involved in rendering that responsibility, are a matter of judgment.
- The general procedure for carrying out financial obligations is prescribed.
- It is better to motivate by love than by coercion, when at all possible.

Professor Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary once observed:

This [“order”] is the language of authority. For although these contributions were voluntary, and were required to be made cheerfully, 2 Corinthians 9:7, yet they were a duty, and therefore both the collection itself, and the mode in which it should be accomplished, were proper subjects for apostolic direction (362).

Individually

For each family income there must be a gift. If the husband/father is the sole wage earner, he obviously will be the only source for a gift. If the mother/wife has a separate income, she must contribute from that as well. When Christian teens have a job, they must give from their income. If they receive an allowance, a portion of that belongs to the Lord. If older folks are on social security, they are not exempt from this act of worship. “Each one” means “every one” who has income—rich or poor, young or old, male or female.

Proportionally

The expression, “as he may prosper” is one word in Greek (euodotai)—a subjunctive mood (most likely), present tense, passive voice verb. The subjunctive is the mood of possibility, the present tense reflects an action in progress, and the passive voice indicates that the subject is the recipient of action—in this case, prosperity from God. The term itself basically means “prosperous journey,” and thus suggests this idea: to whatever degree he “is prospered” by God, week-by-week, he must contribute a portion to the Lord’s work “according to his ability” (Acts 11:29; cf. the exceptional “beyond their power” – 2 Corinthians 8:3).

The more one is prospered, the more he should give; the less he prospers, less is required. As Christ once expressed the principle: “to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required” (Luke 12:48b).

Still, the amount expected seems vague. Is there more **precision** that might be anticipated, beyond the general principle—“to the degree one is blessed”?

While we do not live under the Old Testament economy, there are many incidental truths one can learn from those documents that assist us in arriving at various elements of truth. For example, Paul appealed to the law of Moses to establish the principle that one who exerts considerable labor in a cause, is worthy of sustenance for his effort (1 Timothy 5:17; cf. Deuteronomy 23:4).

The Old Testament “Tithe”

In the earliest age of Old Testament history, the patriarchal period, there are two examples of great servants of the Lord offering gifts to the Creator from their prosperity. Abraham gave to Melchizedek, a priest of God, ten percent of the “chief spoils” he recently had taken from some pagan kings (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:4). Later Jacob, after his dream of the ladder that reached from earth to heaven, with its ascending and descending angels, set up a pillar to memorialize the occasion. He pledged to give a tenth of his resources to Jehovah (Genesis 28:22).

Later the Mosaic law formalized the “tithe” (a tenth) as the required giving of Israel (Leviticus 27:30-32). In addition they offered various sacrifices, and gave “free-will” offerings. So actually, they gave much more than the tithe (a portion being considered taxation), but ten percent appears to have been the very minimum (cf. Malachi 3:10).

Gospel ministers have not rendered a balanced service by merely stating: “We do not live under the law of Moses; therefore we are not required to tithe,” as if that somehow leaves us with **no direction at all**—and we are free to give

as far **below** that level as we are disposed to do! Of course many are happy to accommodate themselves to a significantly smaller amount.

The Higher Ideal

One of the major designs of the book of Hebrews is to show the superiority of the new covenant of Jesus Christ, over the former covenant given through Moses. Again and again, the sacred writer uses the comparative term “better” to mark the qualitative distinction of the latter over the former.

Christ, as giver of the new covenant, is “better” than the angels, through whom the old regime came (1:4). We have a “better hope,” i.e., as priests ourselves (1 Peter 2:5, 9), a more direct access to God (7:21). The new covenant is a “better covenant” because of the unchangeable priesthood of our Savior (7:22). The ministry of Christ is a “more excellent” one; indeed it is a “better covenant” enacted upon “better promises” (8:6). The new covenant is one with “better sacrifices” (9:23)—a reference to the sacrifice of our Lord. [Note: The plural form is designed to correspond with the “sacrifices” of the Levitical system, but with a symbolic emphasis—suggesting the excellence of Christ’s offering, “perfect in all its parts” (Bengel, IV.426).]

In view of all this, how could a conscientious Bible student ever come to the conclusion that we may **sacrifice less** than the ancient patriarchs, or the nation of Israel—when we have **far more** revelation, and tremendously **greater** blessings, than they enjoyed? We must give consistently, generously, and joyfully.

2 Cor 9:6-15 “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 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. 8 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. 9 As it is written: “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” 10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 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. 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. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” NIV

How could any informed Christian possibly contend that he, as a beneficiary of the new covenant, and as a part of the body of Jesus Christ, could love less, thus give less, than the Jew who professes to honor God, but knows not our Savior?