

## **“FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER...” (2)**

By Keith Greer

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." (Matthew 6:1)

Previously, we have looked at the law God gave the Israelites concerning tithing. They were to give liberally, but like so many of God's other commandments, the Jews abused tithing. Jesus told them that they practiced the "letter of the law" but not the "intent" of the law.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." (Matthew 23:23)

"For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have." (2 Corinthians 8:12) God has never asked for us to give what we do not have. He does not expect us to give until we are in a state of poverty. However, we cannot give our "left-overs" to God, either. No amount of money can buy the physical and spiritual blessings that we have from God, but if a person truly has God first, the amount will take care of itself. In my short life upon God's earth, I have seen much harm done in this area of God's word. I have seen men give formulas, equations, and guidelines as to the "amount" we should give.

A man that devotes his life to preaching God's word has a right to live from the gospel. "Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:14) We are able to "pay the preacher" for spending his time in the "work of the ministry" through the collection that is made upon the first day of the week.

A third consideration is that the collection is "for the saints". God has never intended for the world to "foot the bill" when the church should be "helping its own". "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17)

In 1 Timothy 5, Paul wrote the guidelines (from God) for helping a widow indeed. "If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows." (1 Timothy 5: 16)

The guidelines are very simple. As Christians, we are to help, individually, those that we see in need. The Lord's money collected upon the first day of the week is to be used for His work: spreading the gospel, having a place to meet in, and providing for needy saints.

We need to always keep in mind:

- (1). Giving is to be done upon the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2)
- (2). Giving is to be done from the heart-willingly and cheerfully. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- (3). There must be planning and thought in our giving- "as he purposes in his heart."  
(2 Corinthians 9: 7)
- (4). Each local church has a responsibility to take care of its own needs.
- (5). Remember the words of 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 in examining our attitude about giving in every area of our lives – God is keeping the only record that counts! \*\*\* (cont.)