

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

By Keith Greer

Too many have tried to make it the church's business to "check-up" as to what people are giving. Elders, preachers, or deacons have no authority in God's word to be a "watchdog" over the money given by individual members.

If we are not commanded to give a specific amount, how do we know what to do? "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Paul wrote to the Corinthians "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:2) Every first day of the week we are to lay by in store as God has prospered us.

Many times, gathered around the Lord's table after the serving of the Lord's Supper, being a set aside time for taking up the collection, one may read 1 Corinthians 16:2 virtually every Sunday. It is the authority we have for gathering money to do the Lord's work. No where in God's word is there any authority for collecting money on any other day or receiving money in any way other than what is received upon the first day of the week.

We have no authority for "bake sales", "car washes", "ice-cream socials", "pancake breakfasts", "spaghetti and chili nights" or "special drives for special projects". If God has given us no authority through His word, it cannot scripturally be done.

Since God doesn't need money, why is there a need for money in the Lord's church?

First, there are "physical needs" in maintaining a place for Christians to meet in. There are utility bills to pay as well as building upkeep and maintenance. We must purchase teaching materials and office supplies. The items that are used for the Lord's Supper: cups, unleavened bread, and grape juice—all must be purchased.

The Macedonians, apparently were poor and yet, Paul wrote about their liberality, "For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God." (2 Corinthians 8:3-5)

We have so much to be truly thankful for. Does our giving in TIME, EFFORT, and CONSIDERATION for one another, as well as the money we give, a true indicator of how thankful we are for the blessings of God? God's children must always be sure their hearts are right with God while giving upon the first day of the week.

Giving is an individual responsibility God commanded us to accomplish on the first day of the week. Sadly, I'm afraid many of God's people fail to consider how our giving says much about our love and commitment to the Lord and His work. Living in this "land of plenty" we have been richly blessed. On many occasions I've heard men utter this sentiment in their prayer before the taking up the offering—" **we are thankful for all of our blessings and prosperity for everything we have is given to us by you and without you we would have nothing.**" Dear reader, without any reservation this is a true statement. Does your giving express to God this is how we view all of our physical blessings? God knows the truth!