

## 20:20 Vision Ministries—Devotions by Roger Browning Week 14 (March 31-April 6, 2019)

We will continue to explore God's instructions on giving in this week's devotions.

**Sunday**, March 31 (read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7)

*And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves **first** to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. (2 Corinthians 8:5, emphasis mine)*

Last Tuesday, we looked at the first four verses in this chapter, so I will not repeat their content. We pick up today with the third concept in giving to God's work: **Giving should be done in response to our love for Christ**. Many people give large sums to the church in their own name and for their own recognition. Such giving may benefit the church (unless the church compromises what they teach in order to receive the gift), but it does not benefit the donor (see Matthew 6:2-4). The church should be financed by the **sacrificial** giving of the people of God for the glory of God! Those who are motivated by a deep love for Jesus will **understand** and joyfully **take care of** the financial needs of the church.

**Monday**, April 1 (read 2 Corinthians 8:8-12)

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)*

**Giving is to be done in response to our love for Jesus**, and today's printed verse gives you an abundant reason to love Him with all your heart. What a verse! Jesus created the entire universe and had all the angels reporting to Him while they were carrying out His will. He left all **that** in Heaven to come to earth to become the Sacrificial Lamb who willingly died for our sins so that we might be the benefactors of His generosity (v. 9). As a result, God's grace allows us to give generously and freely. The Lord does not require you to give more than your means allows; therefore, "if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have" (v. 12). Don't worry about the amount when compared to what others are able to give. Just examine the **motive** and the **attitude**. God will multiply the amount to meet His need!

**Tuesday**, April 2 (read Luke 21:1-4)

*"I tell you the truth," He said, "This poor widow has put in more than all the others." (Luke 21:3)*

Today's text is a good follow-up to yesterday's devotion. This poor widow is the only person in Scripture whom Jesus compliments for her giving, and she puts in the equivalent of two pennies (v. 2). What makes her meager gift so special? Jesus tells you in verse 4: "All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." What an example of **sacrificial** giving! The widow has enough faith to know that her God can meet all her needs, so she gives all she has on this principle alone (see Philippians 4:19). Have you ever given God any amount that put your current lifestyle in jeopardy? If so, you know the joy that comes from **sacrificial** giving!

**Wednesday**, April 3 (read 1 John 3:16-20)

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we **ought to** lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16, emphasis mine)*

Today's text is another passage that teaches us to give in **response to our love for Jesus**. The Lord said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). What could we give back to God that would even come close to the Gift of Life He has given us? If we are following His example, we will sacrifice some of our own time and possessions to meet the needs of our Christian brothers/sisters who have much less than we do (v. 17). I highlighted the words "ought to" in the printed verse to remind you that God wants our giving to be volunteered and not forced (2 Corinthians 9:7). Do you want to do the right thing in giving your time, talents and resources? Open your hand to the Lord who provides all good things for you.

**Thursday**, April 4 (read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

*On the first day of every week, 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. (1 Corinthians 16:2)*

The next concept God wants you to know is that giving should be done **proportionately in a planned manner**. Paul does not want the offering to be a distraction to his teaching and worship time, so he tells the Corinthians to set aside an amount each week "in keeping with his (their) income" (v. 2). I am thrilled that the church I pastor (New Hope Christian Church) and the ministry that I lead (20:20 Vision Ministries) both budget money for missions freely from the **regular giving** of the participants. Individuals always give some extra gifts to our missionaries, but the basic giving comes from the stored-up gifts from those who benefit from the local ministry, in keeping with God's Word.

**Friday**, April 5 (read Acts 3:1-11)

*Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. **In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, walk." (Acts 3:6, emphasis mine)*

Today's text teaches the next concept that is vital in giving: **Give in the Name of Jesus**. There are many worthwhile charities to which I can give my time and money, but I try to use my resources for those organizations that glorify Jesus. In today's text, Peter and John do not have what the lame man **thinks** he wants (v. 5); instead, they give him a much more permanent gift, the ability to walk and take care of his own needs (v. 6). I often say, "Jesus did not come into the world to take man out of the slums, but He gave His precious life to take the slums out of the man." The church will be called upon to meet some **financial** needs of the members, but the primary goal must always be their **spiritual** needs. Making a person dependent on the church is not our goal. Helping them to become participating members will bear much fruit!

**Saturday**, April 6 (read 2 Corinthians 9:1-5)

*Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. (2 Corinthians 9:5b)*

This concept is implied in several of the previous ones, but our giving should be done **willingly**. This principle is taught in today's printed verse as well as in 2 Corinthians 8:3-4, 10 and 9:7. If we give **secretly, sacrificially, in response to our love for Christ, in a planned manner and in the Name of Jesus**, our giving certainly will be done **willingly** and **generously**, not in a grudging manner. God loves those who give willingly and cheerfully according to His Word (2 Corinthians 9:7). Next week, we will see some of the promises the Lord makes to those who follow His pattern for giving.