

Shiny gods Lesson 3: Be Faithful, Save, and Give

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION:

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

First and foremost, our giving is a response to what God has done in giving his Son as the once for all sacrifice to redeem humanity from the guilt of sin. When our giving is a response to what God has given to us our giving becomes an act of worship. When we properly understand that giving is an act of worship in response to the love that God has shown us, we can't help but to be givers.

A **second reason** why we give is because *giving is a spiritual discipline*. Giving promotes spiritual growth. We come to see it as a privilege rather than an obligation or duty. Giving becomes a matter of trust and faith in God that he is the supplier of our needs. We learn to give to God with the same joy that God gives to us.

A **third reason** why we give is **to support the mission and ministry of the church**. It's helpful to see our giving as giving through the church and not to the church. *"Giving 'to' the church supports the institution. Giving 'through' the church supports God's work in the world. Giving through the church 'empowers ministry.'"*ⁱ *"The problem of poverty is not merely one of economics, it is also one of love. If we all saw ourselves as trustees of what we possess, the problem of poverty would not be as pervasive as it is"*ⁱⁱ

vv. 6-7 Paul encourages us to give generously and cheerfully. The context of this passage is that Paul has taken on the mission of helping the poor saints in Jerusalem, and he is calling on the saints in Corinth to share in the giving of their financial resources to assist their brothers and sisters in Christ who are in Jerusalem. And the way that Paul approaches this mission is to encourage saints in Corinth to give bearing in mind the generosity of other believers who have shared in giving though they were having their own struggles as well as the generosity that Christ has shown them in giving his life for them. In **8:8-9** Paul says, **"I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others."** He goes on to say, **"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."** The example the Macedonian churches set in giving was one that was worthy of being followed.

Paul says our **giving should be done cheerfully as we have purposed/decided in our hearts to give**. In other words, we need to give careful consideration about what we are going to give taking into account not only our own needs but the needs of those we seek to help.

The Greek word translated as **"decided/purposed"** means ***"to deliberately choose; to decide ahead of time."***ⁱⁱⁱ What that means for us is that we should decide before we get to church how much we are going to give to support the ministry of the church with the goal of giving as generously as we can.

Cheerful giving conveys a ***"sincere desire to do good for others."***^{iv} When our giving is motivated simply by a sense of obligation or duty because God said so, or because we've been pressured or guilted into giving, then we lose the blessing of giving because our giving is not from the heart. But when our giving is from the heart what happens is that the more we give the

more we want to give. As we become more like him the more we will find joy in giving. Withholding our gifts isn't just withholding from the church, it is withholding from God which means that we are not being good stewards of what God has placed in our hands.

The more faithful we are in giving the more God will bless us to be a blessing to others.

VIDEO PRESENTATION:

Session 3: Be Faithful, Save, and Give (13:36)

GROUP DISCUSSION (Key Insights):

- We are to be the channels through which God's blessings and redemptive intentions flow to the world.
- Wesley's 3 directives on the use of money: earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can
- "God doesn't print money; God gives seed." What does this mean?
- Giving affects our spiritual and physical health
- When we hold on to our resources too tightly, we are preventing God from helping to make our resources grow (Mark 6:34-43).
- Generosity is God's design for wealth, and our generosity shows our thanksgiving to God.
- When we are rightly acting according to God's directives for our money, we supply God's resources in the world.

Shiny Gods

Lesson Four: Heart Giving

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION:

Matthew 6:19-21 – “The wise person works hard and makes financial provision for lean times ([Prov. 6:6-8](#)). Believers have a responsibility to provide for their needy relatives ([1 Tim. 5:8](#)) and to be generous with others in need. We can enjoy what God has given us ([1 Tim. 4:3-4](#); [6:17](#)). What Jesus forbade here was selfishness. Misers hoard more than they need ([James 5:2-3](#)). Materialists always want more. It is the *love* of money that is a root of all kinds of evil ([1 Tim. 6:10](#)).”

Moths eat clothing, a major form of wealth in the ancient Near East. “Rust” (corrosion; eating into) refers to the destructive force of rats, woodworm (from beetle infestation) and mildew as well as the corrosion that eats metal. Thieves can carry off just about anything in one way or another.

The treasures in heaven Jesus spoke of were the rewards God will give His faithful followers ([5:12](#), [30](#), [46](#); [6:6](#), [15](#); cf. [10:42](#); [18:5](#); [25:40](#); [2 Cor. 4:17](#); [1 Tim. 6:13-19](#)). They are the product of truly good works. These are secure in heaven, and God will dispense them to the faithful at His appointed time (cf. [1 Pet. 1:4](#)).

The thing that a person values most highly inevitably occupies the center of his or her heart. The heart is the center of the personality, and it controls the intellect, emotions, and will.

If a person values eternal riches most highly, he or she will pursue kingdom values (cf. [Col. 3:1-2](#); [Rev. 14:13](#)). *“The heart must and will go in the direction of that which we count precious.”*

VIDEO PRESENTATION:

Session 4: Heart Giving (8:45)

GROUP DISCUSSION (Key Insights):

- “Wealth” in the Bible does not refer to an abundance of money. It refers to the seeds God has placed in our hand—our talents, gifts, and resources.
- What we do with our wealth has the power to change the world.
- When have you experienced heart giving?
- How can we give sacrificially during times of economic hardship?
- Law of Gleaning – Lev. 19:9
- We are accountable to God for using the resources that he has placed in our hands to serve God’s redemptive purpose in the world.
- The tithe (the first 10% of all that comes into our hands) belongs to God.

Defying Gravity: Break Free from the Culture of More

The premise of this study is that there are 2 opposing forces at work in our lives as Christians. One is the pull of financial gravity that causes us to want to accumulate more and more material and financial wealth, and the call of Christ who asks us to generously offer our wealth to God.

Week 1: Discovering Gravity - Matthew 19:16-24

- “*Financial gravity*,” Berlin says, is the force that pulls or compels us to pursue not only the basic necessities of life, but also our wants.
 - We live in two kingdoms. One is the kingdom of self and the other is “*the kingdom of God*.” When Berlin talks about the kingdom of self, he’s referring to our own little world that each of us has created that includes our family, friends, work, hobbies possessions, abilities, and interests. Everything in the kingdom of self revolves around us. *What do I want to do with my finances* is the primary concern in the kingdom of self. The kingdom of God, on the other hand, refers to the rule and reign of the sovereign God over all creation. The kingdom of God is God’s rule over the hearts and lives of those who willingly submit to God’s authority. *What is that God would have me to do with my finances* is the primary concern in this kingdom.
 - Story of the rich young man

Week 2: Breaking Free From the Kingdom of Self- Luke 15:11-20

- 2 opposing forces at work in our lives as Christians. One is the pull of financial gravity that causes us to want to accumulate more and more material and financial wealth. The other force is the call of Christ who asks us to generously offer our wealth to God. The thing that will determine which way we are pulled is which kingdom we give the bigger place in our lives.
- Story of “The Prodigal Son”
- We break free from the kingdom of self by developing a spirit of generosity.

Week 3: Embracing a Life of Giving - Matthew 6:24

- “How do we as children of God who have been the beneficiaries of God’s generosity to us break free from the kingdom of self and embrace a life of giving and participate in the practice of generosity regardless of what we do or do not have?”
- In God’s economy, in God’s way of doing things, generosity is proportional. Gods asks us to give in proportion to what we have.
- “We create a false dichotomy when we divide our financial world between what we spend on ourselves and what we offer to God which can create as sense of guilt over our personal expenditures for basic necessities...The Bible is clear that we are to provide for our needs and those our family. Seen this way, supplying food, shelter, clothing, and other basic of life is itself and act of generosity.”
- 3 things the author suggests that will help us get to the place where you can become the generous givers that we want to be: make a budget, live simply, and set goals for giving. These practices are important “because effective generosity does not just happen. It’s the result of thoughtful planning and design... we need to think about what we hope to accomplish, plan a strategy that fits our time and finances, and then muster the courage to act.”

Week 4: Returning to God What Belongs to Him - Psalm 116:4-7; 12-14

What will your response be to the goodness God has shown to you? What will you give to the Lord through the church in response to what God has done for you?

Tom Berlin identifies Joseph as “perhaps the greatest example of a steward in the Bible.” Whether he lived in lack or whether he prospered, he gave God his best. Joseph maintained his integrity. He honored God with his life and God gave him success.

ⁱ John Stott, Ten Principles of Christian Giving, nashaumf.org/

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Friberg/Liddell Scott Dictionaries, Bibleworks

^{iv} Friberg

“Earn. Save. Give: Wisdom” (Based on Wesley’s ‘The Use of Money’)

1 Kings 3:1-13 (Solomon Asks for Wisdom)

- Our ability to understand what it means to be a good steward begins with wisdom
- Harnish correctly writes that “in order for us to have a right attitude about money, and how to use it, what we need is not more information. What we need is wisdom.”
- As we think about how it is that God would have us to give to support the ministry and mission of the church, we need to begin by asking God to give us wisdom concerning the attitude we should have about money and how God wants us to use the money he has placed in our hands so that his will and purpose might be accomplished in the earth.
- Our giving to the church is not about raising money to meet a budget. Our giving is about using godly wisdom to partner with God in the work of ministry. It’s about managing and using our money in ways that are consistent with our Christian faith. Wesley summed up the proper use of money in three simple rules: gain all you can; save all you can; give all you can.

“Earn, Save, Give: Money-The Excellent Gift”

Luke 16:1-13 (Parable of the Shrewd Manager)

- Wesley summed up the proper use of money in three simple rules, and we show ourselves to be faithful stewards of the money we have when we follow these three simple rules: earn all you can; save all you can; give all you can.
- The purpose of earning all we can for Wesley is not to make ourselves more financially secure. It is so that we will be in the position to help those who can’t help themselves
- See Wesley’s “The Use of Money”

“Earn, Save, Give: What Shall I Give Unto the Lord”

Mark 12:41-44 (The Widow’s Offering)

- We need to keep in mind that NOTHING THAT WE HAVE BELONGS TO US.
- Earning and saving are not ends in themselves; rather, they are a means to an end. And the end of earning and saving all we can is giving all we can.
- We are called to practice extravagant generosity in response to the extravagant generosity God has shown us. God gave his best for us and it is right and good that we give our best to God whether it’s with our time, our talents, or our money.
- How is it that the 2 small coins the poor woman gave were worth more than the large offerings given by the rich?
- Does our giving in any way demonstrate that we are committed to our relationship with God?

“Earn, Save, Give: Money – Investing in Eternity”

Matthew 25:14-18 (Parable of the Three Servants)

- Oseola McCarty’s story - After setting aside enough to live on, and setting aside some for family members, Oseola gave \$150,000 to the University of Southern Mississippi to establish a scholarship fund.
- Rather than just holding on to what we have, storing it up for safekeeping, we are to manage what God has placed in our hands in a way that allows us to save and invest in our own future but also to do the greatest good for the kingdom of God.

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- When we use what God has placed in our hands for the good of God's kingdom we store up treasures in heaven; we invest in eternity.
 - Saving all we can and investing doesn't always require that we earn more. Sometimes it's simply making what we already have go farther.
 - If you are looking for a way to begin saving for the future and at the same time support the ministry of the church you might consider the 10-10-80 plan. Give 10 % to God. Give 10% to yourself to save for the future. And then wisely use the other 80% in ways that are consistent with who we profess to be as disciples of Jesus Christ