

# GIVING GOD'S WAY

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This is the time of year that we often have many requests or opportunities to help those in need. There are many types of organizations that seek donations for various causes as well as individuals who seek to have needs filled. Christians may have questions about how our giving should be done. As with all things the Lord gives us guidance in His Word. This article will focus on those we may give to or support and also on how and the way we are to give.

## **Preferring the brethren**

We are commanded to give on the first day of the week to the Church. Paul said, *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...”* (1 Cor 16:1-2). So we know that our first priority for money we give is to fulfill this command. While we are commanded to give on the first day of the week to the church, it is not the only time we may give. In fact, we have many examples of those who gave of their time, property, money, etc. at other times than the first day of the week. However, the Lord also wants us to know that our brethren have priority. Paul told those in Galatia, *“...let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (Gal 6:10). Our love and compassion can be tested by our willingness to help the brethren, *“but whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”* (1 John 3:17). Simply put, God's children must have priority.

## **The Lord's church versus other organizations**

There are many other organizations doing much good and we often get solicitations from them. While I do not believe we have scriptural authority for the Church to join or contribute through these organizations, individuals need to consider and make their own decisions. However, we must avoid any organization that has a religious affiliation that is not doctrinally sound. John warns us that, *“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”* (1 John 1:10-11). There are many secular organizations doing good and there are also many religious (or affiliated) organizations doing good but who aren't doctrinally sound and we must not contribute to the latter. The works we do on this earth will be tested by fire on the Day of Judgment and then we will receive a reward (1 Cor 3:13-14) if they are true. Jesus promises us that giving for His works will always be rewarded: *“He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the*

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*name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward"* (Matt 10:41-42). May we all be blessed as we give!

## **Giving with the right heart**

Paul said that if *"...I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing"* (1Cor 13:3). So if we hope to profit spiritually with our giving we must give with a charitable heart. This principle applies both to our contributions to the church as well as other types of giving.

Jesus warns us of not giving for the purpose of being seen and praised by men and he also gives instruction on the way we are to give so that we receive our reward with the Father. He said, *"take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven...when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do...that they may have glory of men. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly"* (Matt 6:1-4). We often hear of those who tell what they've done to help people or how much they have given and Jesus tells us they will not receive a reward from the Father. We know we are commanded to give to the church but we have also been told with what frequency and when; *"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..."* (1 Cor 16:2). The Old Testament commanded that a tenth part be given as the tithe but the New Testament is silent as to the specific amount; it's clear that our giving should be in proportion as to how God has prospered us.

## **Giving as we have been prospered**

Paul gives more instruction for our giving in his second letter to the Corinthian brethren; *"But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"* (2 Cor 9:6-8). In other words, we need to give cheerfully out of a charitable and generous heart and not grudgingly or by constraint. There is a practice emerging among some congregations of using pledge cards. Ostensibly it is to facilitate the budgeting process but I believe it is unscriptural (i.e. without scriptural authority) and jeopardizes members' ability to give willingly and not of necessity. Whatever the case, our Father will only reward those who give as He has directed. Let us all be blessed through our giving!