



## How & Why To Give Our Money

It's often said that the last part of a person to be converted to Christ is their wallet! Money is the most powerful god of our age - and desire for more money, along with fear of not having enough, affects every one of us.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to put to death any idols in our lives and have no other gods apart from Him. If money is such a powerful 'god' or idol in our age, then we will need to learn how to put this 'god' to death – by giving money away cheerfully, generously and sacrificially.

Here are some reasons and thoughts on why and how we should give our money away. There are some bible passages to read and reflect on, and through which God may speak to us.

### *Insufficient Offering Principle (Bible Reading – John 6:1-15)*

God can do miracles with what we offer - and it's a joy to behold! The young boy reported in John 6 presented just two fish and five loaves to Jesus - blatantly nowhere near enough food to feed the 5,000 gather men (with many more women and children besides). And yet Jesus takes what is offered, and transforms it to feed the multitude. What we have to offer is insufficient - and yet can be transformed by Jesus who is all-sufficient.

### *A Sign of Belonging (Bible Reading – 2 Corinthians 8:1-15)*

A friend of mine once commented that you couldn't be a proper church without three essential things: authorised leadership; sacramental worship (Baptism & Holy Communion); and - a collection! It was a surprising claim.

But the point is profound: the collection is the opportunity for us to contribute to the life of the church. It's the opportunity for us to express our belonging. When we give our money (as well as our time and gifts) to the church, we are saying that we belong. We move from being consumers to contributors; from passengers to participants; from spectators to stakeholders.

### *Pro-Vision (Bible Reading – Ephesians 4:1-13)*

Giving our money to the church expresses that we are 'pro-vision' - that is, we are 'for' the vision of the church. If we believe that our local church has an important part to play in God's mission to the world, and we believe that its staff and ministries are necessary and valuable, then we will find ourselves excited about giving our money to support the work.



Our financial giving becomes a mark of our commitment to God's work of mission through our local church. We help to provide the resources that enable mission and ministry staff to lead, serve and equip the whole church for worship, discipleship and mission in our neighbourhood.

### Break The Chains (*Bible Reading – 1 Timothy 6:3-10 & 17-19*)

Slavery is alive and well in modern life! But the slavery most of us experience is to money. We are enslaved either by the belief that more money will afford us the security and the means to be who we want to be; or by a fear that not having enough money will cause us great stress and suffering. Either way, it's our 'faith' in the ability of money to either purchase satisfaction or avoid desolation that leaves us enslaved to money.

Giving money away is an incredibly powerful way to break the chains that money ties around us. There's something quite reckless about giving money away - especially when we really don't get any reward from doing so. It's a powerful sign that we're not going to be conformed to a society that is obsessed with money.

### Develop Deeper Trust In God (*Bible Reading – Matthew 6:19-24*)

Giving our money away helps us to depend on God for our needs rather than on our own means. When we give sacrificially, we know that we will have to go without something we wish for or desire because of our giving. We will have to learn a deeper trust in God to provide the things we need (Matt.6:32). Our giving reveals what we truly treasure and who we really trust.

### What It Costs Is What Is Valued (*Bible Reading – Luke 21:1-4*)

The story of the widow's mite in Luke 21 reveals to us that it is not how much we give that God values, but rather how much it costs us. Giving a small amount out of our poverty and scarcity is more sacrificial, and therefore more valuable to God than giving a modest amount out of our riches. In the real world, God may value the gift of £20 per month from the person surviving on tax credits and benefits that he does the gift of £100 per month from the person with a six-figure salary!

### Give Generously (*Bible Reading – 2 Corinthians 6-15*)

Followers of Jesus seek to reflect and embody his generous love and goodness in the world around us. His generosity is inexhaustible, and so may ours be. The author Francis Spufford wrote:

*'Give as though nothing you gave away could ever make you poorer - for you can never run out of that which you give.'*

All we have comes from God, and his generosity is the source and inspiration of all our giving. When we remember what we have received, God's grace makes us generous.

