



THE WAYS

GIVE CHEERFULLY. Rejoice, you get to give! Think of giving as a privilege rather than an obligation, a joy instead of a burden. As you consider all that’s been entrusted to you—time, abilities and money – ask, “How is God calling me to share what I’ve been given?”

1. Take a mental stock. How do you currently give to God?

READ 2 Cor. 9:6-15

1. By what means should a person “decide in your hearts what to give?”
2. Read closely. What does God promise to bless you abundantly with?
3. How does giving of time, abilities, or money “enrich” the giver?

Scenario: It’s everyone’s favorite time of year “Stewardship Season.” You are ready for a month of sermons about money but you already feel stretched as it is. Between kids, mortgage, saving for college, a vacation, and retirement, you don’t feel like there is really any room to give more money. You hear someone mention a tithe, and your first thought is: “There is no way I can give 10% and still balance my checkbook.”

1. What competing responsibilities/obligations do you feel in this moment?
2. When you think of the word “tithe” does it feel like a joy or a burden?
3. How do you decide how much you should/could give?
4. People talk about giving “time, abilities, and money.” Should that be an “and” or “or?”

On the one hand, the first century church didn’t understand mortgage payments and didn’t have to save for a kid’s college. On the other, they regularly experienced over-taxation, physical need, and persecution. They didn’t give because their surplus was so great, but because the mission they gave to was so great. Their support fed and clothed the needy, spread the gospel, supported missionaries. What great mission can you support and uplift through *Giving Cheerfully*?

PRAY TOGETHER.

(Pray through your expenses and savings and ask God what he can do with it.)

DAILY Devotional

MONDAY: *READ:* Luke 6:38. *THINK:* This might not be ground breaking information, but the hardest thing about giving is that you don't *have* anymore. Money given cannot be re-spent. When you *Give Cheerfully* though, there is a return on investment. This passage doesn't mean God will pay you back, but that what you receive when you *Give Cheerfully* will be far greater than what you gave. *PRAY:* with God about what you currently use as your measure.

TUESDAY: *READ:* Luke 21:1-4. *THINK:* *Giving Cheerfully* is not about the amount. \$10 or \$10,000 is not the goal. The man gave for his own pride. The widow gave though she was in need. Most of us would describe it as a financially irresponsible decision, but sometimes *Giving Cheerfully* is a statement and question of trust. What does your giving say about you? *PRAY:* through what you trust God with and what you trust money for.

WEDNESDAY: *READ:* John 6:9. *THINK:* If you know the story, you know God does BIG things with those loaves and fishes. It's easy in our math to figure out how many that would feed, how many meals a gift of \$20 can buy, or how much work can be done by volunteering one morning. God must not use our math though because when we *Give Cheerfully*, he multiplies the effects. *PRAY:* that God would multiply the gifts offered by Christians in our area.

THURSDAY: *READ:* 1 Chr. 29:6-9. *THINK:* The Temple was a place where for generations Israelites worshipped and found God. Each of these gifts did not merely buy something, but provided a space for God's people to find him. We are blessed with a wonderful church building and property that has provided a space for people to meet God. When you *Give Cheerfully* you play a part in each of those people's stories. *PRAY:* God would show you how your gifts have impacted other's faith.

FRIDAY: *READ:* Rom. 12:1. *THINK:* Often money is the focus of giving and of stewardship. Scripture talks about money for good reason, but it pales in comparison to what is actually asked of us: "a living sacrifice." All that we have and all that we are is living gift to God. If he could feed 5k with some buns and sardines, imagine what he can do with a life lived for him. *PRAY:* the Spirit would grow a need and desire to give yourself to God.

SATURDAY: *READ:* Gen. 4: 3-5. *THINK:* Cain gave "some" fruits, Abel gave the "firstborn." Abel gave his best to God and it was taken. How often do we give "some" instead of "first?" When you *Give Cheerfully*, you don't give God your leftovers or your excess. You give Him your first and you give Him your best, not as a duty but as a joy because He is worth it and He is Lord. *PRAY:* God would show you his greatness so you can see how good and mighty He is.