

# LAYING UP TREASURES FOR HEAVEN

From cover to cover God's Word is about GIVING.

- Genesis honors Abel for GIVING the offering that pleased the Lord; Enoch for GIVING God his walk; Abraham for GIVING God his faith; Joseph for GIVING God his life with its hurts and fears.
- Exodus records that only the families GIVING the Lord what He desired were saved on Passover.
- Leviticus portrays crowds of obedient worshipers GIVING to God their freewill offerings.
- Numbers tracks the lives of the few who never stopped GIVING to the Lord.
- Deuteronomy shows Moses as God's man who was GIVING to the Lord all of his days.
- Joshua pronounces doom of those who were taking instead of GIVING what God said was His.
- And finally, in the Historical Books the Lord traces the lives of great givers and at the head of the list is David GIVING his life to the Lord, his trophies to the Lord, and at the end of his life his treasures to the Lord.

Please stand with me as we read this account in 1 Chronicles 29:1-9

Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God. 2 Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. 3 Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, 4 Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal: 5 The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD? 6 Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly, 7 And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass

eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8 And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9 Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

Pray and be seated.

No one ever explained giving to God as well as God the Son – Jesus Christ. Jesus really explains giving so clearly. Basically when Jesus spoke about Heaven He spoke of it by using the term “laying up treasures”. Treasures are treasures, money is money. Jesus wants to have us be giving Him freely our treasures as an offering and as an expression of our love.

Please sit back and listen to these Scriptures this morning to set the tone for our study of Stewardship. Let me share a word of personal testimony about personal stewardship.

- Matthew 6:19-20 Lay not up (**thesauridzo**) for yourselves treasures (**thesauros**) upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up (**thesauridzo**) for yourselves treasures (**thesauros**) in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
- Luke 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure (**thesauridzo**) for himself, and is not rich toward God.
- James 5:3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together (**thesauridzo**) for the last days.
- 1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store (**thesauridzo**), as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Life was hard in Bible times. Like much of the non-industrialized world today, men awoke at dawn, trudged to the fields and picked away by hand at the soil, the rocks, and the weeds.

So why the history lesson? Because that was the world of Israel, the people of God's Word.

What did God expect under the strict code of the LAW from these hard working farmers and herdsman that made up His people? What did the Lord God Almighty demand from them?

It seems<sup>1</sup> fair to ask as we look at the Old Testament record, “God do You really expect less of me – who has Your Holy Spirit within and lives in the wealthiest society in human history – than You demanded of the poorest Israelite?”

Well a close examination of the Old Testament reveals that the Lord asked for two types of giving: required tithing and free will offerings.

Now let me ask you, what were Christians living as the New Testament was written, taught about giving?

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<sup>1</sup> Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2001, p.61.

1. **COMMANDED: Giving is commanded, and is not an option.** Paul instructed the Corinthian church, saying **Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders . . . so you must do also** (1 Corinthians 16:1). Also, in 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul directed the command to give in this way: **Let each one of you lay something aside.** Who was supposed to give? **Each one.** Paul wanted all to give. Giving should be individual. Every Christian should be a giver, because God is a giver (John 3:16). *Each one of you is all-inclusive. No Christian<sup>2</sup> is excepted or excused. We are stewards of whatever the Lord has given us, no matter how little it may be in economic terms. As Jesus observed different people putting their offerings in the Temple treasury, He did not discourage the widow from putting in her “two small copper coins, which amount to a cent,” nor did He chide Temple officials for accepting money from someone so destitute. His reaction was to use her generosity as a model of spiritual giving. “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on” (Mark 12:41–44).*
2. **PLANNED: Giving is to be regular.** Regarding the collection in Corinth, Paul said that it should be done every week: **On the first day of the week** (1 Corinthians 16:2). Paul wanted their giving to be systematic, not haphazard. When they came together for worship and the word, they were commanded to receive an offering. *The first principle<sup>3</sup> is that the most appropriate period for giving is weekly, on the first day of every week. This not only convinces us that the church met on Sunday, but that its worship included regular giving of money. God’s primary leading in giving, as in everything else, is through Scripture, and Scripture here mentions giving every week. Sunday giving appears as a mandated element of worship, part of the duty of a New Covenant priest offering up “spiritual sacrifices” to God (1 Pet. 2:5). Our giving should not be based on periodic emotional appeals or feelings, or on bonus income, but on regular, willing, and grateful commitment of our possessions to the Lord, to His people, and to His work. That forces every believer each week to consider the stewardship and sacrifice of giving. Weekly giving raises sensitivity to money, so that giving is seen as an ongoing, regular spiritual responsibility.*
3. **PREPARED: Giving is to be planned.** Paul wrote, **Lay something aside, storing up** (1 Corinthians 16:2). This has the idea of coming to church with your gift already prepared. This means that you should seek God about your gift at home, and prepare it at home. This causes us to seek the Lord more in our giving, and helps us resist any manipulation to give. *A more literal translation of each one of you put aside and save would be “each one of you by himself lay up, or store up.” The noun form of thēsaurizō (from which we get thesaurus, a collection, or treasury, of words), rendered here as put aside and save, represents a treasury where valuables are stored. If we do not give properly we cannot worship properly. Jesus said, “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?” (Luke 16:10–11).*
4. **PROPORTIONED: Giving is to be proportional.** Paul wrote that each one should give **As he may prosper** (1 Corinthians 16:2). This means that believers who have more should give more. We should give proportionately. In other words, if you give \$10 a week when you make \$100 a week, you should give more when you make \$200 a week. *Jesus<sup>4</sup> said that if we are not generous when we have little to give, we will not be generous when we have*

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from sections of MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians 16*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

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*much. The dollar amount of our giving may increase, but our generosity will not. “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much” (Luke 16:10).*

5. **REASONED: Giving should never be Humanly Prompted.** Paul told the Corinthians: **That there be no collections when I come** (1 Corinthians 16:2). This means Paul didn't want to manipulate anyone! He wanted giving to be from the heart, as the heart heard from God, not in response to a high-pressure fund-raiser. This is a very important principle. The Apostle Paul tells us that we should make a decision and have a definite objective in view.
6. **ENCOURAGED: True examples** of giving are found in giving **according to their ability, beyond their ability**, and giving in a **freely willing** manner (2 Corinthians 8:3). *Speaking<sup>5</sup> of the churches of Macedonia, Paul wrote, “In a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality” (2 Cor. 8:2). The reason for their generosity was that “they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God” (v. 5). They gave out of love for God and for His servants. Generosity is impossible apart from our love of God and of His people. But with such love, generosity not only is possible but inevitable.*
7. **DEDICATED: True giving** comes as we first give ourselves to the Lord, then we will give our financial resources to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5). In giving, the real issue isn't giving money. It is giving our selves to the Lord. If we have really given ourselves to the Lord, then the right kind of giving will naturally follow.
8. **COMPLETED: Giving must be actually completed.** Paul told the Corinthians regarding their giving, that they must **Complete this grace** (2 Corinthians 8:6). The Corinthian Christians may have intended to give. They may have thought about giving. They may have been favorable to the idea of giving. Yet all of this was useless unless they did in fact **complete this grace**. Often, intentions, vows, and resolutions are useless without action. *The basic<sup>6</sup> principle for voluntary giving in the Old Testament is reflected in Proverbs: “Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine” (3:9–10). The idea was to give to the Lord generously and to give to the Lord first. Again we are told, “There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, but it results only in want” (Prov. 11:24). In other words, if you want to increase your money, share it generously; if you want to lose your money, hoard it. To raise money to build the Tabernacle, the Lord told Moses, “Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution” (Ex. 25:1–2; cf. 35:5, 21). The standard was heart-directed generosity, based on thankfulness to the Lord for what He had done and given. Based on that principle the gifts for the building of the Tabernacle were so great that Moses had to tell the people to stop giving (36:6)! Required giving was taxation; freewill giving was to be from the heart, with the amount left up to the worshiper. David had the key idea when he said that he would not give God that which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24).*

2 Corinthians 8:4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive **the gift** (*charis*) and **the fellowship** (*koinonia*) of **the ministering** (*diakonia*) to the saints. Praying<sup>1189</sup> <sup>5740</sup> us <sup>2257</sup> with<sup>2842</sup> <sup>3326</sup> much<sup>4183</sup> <sup>3874</sup> intreaty<sup>2842</sup> that we<sup>2248</sup> would receive<sup>1209</sup> <sup>5664</sup> the gift, <sup>5485</sup> and <sup>2532</sup> take upon us the <sup>2842</sup> fellowship<sup>2842</sup> of the ministering<sup>1248</sup> to<sup>1519</sup> the saints.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from sections of MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians 16*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.  
<sup>6</sup> Quoted from sections of MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians 16*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

With all that in our hearts and minds, is it fair to ask,  
Lord do You really expect less of me?  
Your Holy Spirit lives within me guiding me as I live in the wealthiest society in human  
history.  
Do you expect less than You demanded of the poorest Israelite?