

life group study guide

FINANCES: REWARDED TO GIVE

May 6, 2012



You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving. --Robert Louis Stevenson

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. -- Martin Luther King

We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give. -- Winston Churchill

I have the reality of working in an environment where there are I suspect more non-Christians than Christians. I hope I'm wrong! But in any environment it only takes one person and an attitude of hate and doubt or skepticism to cause people to pause and have indecision about something. Take for example the Church and finances.

I have heard an uncounted number of times people disparaging the church because they think all it speaks of is money. And it's no wonder with all the television people asking over and over for money and then we see many of them "living large." They make comments about a prosperity gospel that we've tabbed "name it claim it" when it comes to money. "Give me a hundred, tomorrow God will give you two-hundred back." No wonder non believers scoff. No wonder some believers struggle.

A week ago Matt spoke about riches and giving to the poor and contrasted the rich man's conversation with Jesus to the reality of having money or not having money and how it affects our trust in God. I thought he hit that perfectly. I was pleased to see the church's guidelines for giving money. In our family we have followed a set of guidelines that almost match those word for word.

I see the rich of this world, the Turner's and Gates giving money away in a proud and loud fashion and I think what a shame that they have no idea how to really get the worth and value out from their blessings. I know a lot of that money they donate will do good works, but what does it do for the Kingdom and what does it really do for them?

Is it any wonder the world is confused about the value and purpose of money?

Even for Christians often times the subject of money is difficult to come to terms with.

Let's start off with some discussion:

Q) How do you describe the purpose of having money?

Q) What is it for?

Q) Why do some have it and some not?

Q) What amount makes us wealthy? Or is it an amount?

Q) Today's sermon was rewarded to give. What does that mean to you?

In contrast to non-Christians we as Christians have heard over and over it's ok to have money and possessions; it how we use them that matter.

Let's begin by looking at our ability to have money, use it and spend it for our personal needs...

Just a couple scripture verses:

1 Timothy 5:8 (I like the KJ or the NLT versions here)

While we are pulling this verse out of a section on widows the point is still clear to us as believers.

To the best of our ability we are to provide for our own families.

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Acts 5:1-4 *Paying particular attention to the first part of verse 4, (4a).*

Q) What does that tell us about the money we have in our possession, freely and honestly earned?

Q) Is this in conflict with the thought that everything belongs to God?

Q) Why or Why not?

Q) So then we as Christians have income, blessings, can we spend it freely?

Look up these verses:

Numbers 18:26

Ezekiel 44:30

These are just two of many verses on tithing and the tithe being the "first fruits" or our offerings.

So now we have some restrictions or guidelines on how to spend part of our money.

Q) What is the purpose of *our* tithe?

Q) Of tithing in general?

Q) With a right heart, who gains more from the tithe, God, (The church) or us?

That should be an easy question if our hearts are in the right place.

Look at this verse:

Acts 20:35

Q) Without trying to make someone feel guilty or in a spotlight what are the things that interfere with Christians making a tithe? Is it a mindset or overspending or something else?

Q) How do we teach and encourage struggling Christians and especially the next generation of Christians to tithe and about the truth of this verse?

Q) For Christians that do tithe what about an offering above a tithe? How do we reach out and teach that to newer or struggling Christians as well?

Q) Is giving of blessings limited to money?

Give an example of some of your answers.

One of the most exciting ways I have learned about teaching and encouraging others to tithe and give is sharing stories about how giving has helped someone, or changed someone.

I know many of us are hesitant to share things you've done or how you've given for a variety of reasons.

However this discussion is an excellent place to share how some unexpected moment of giving, or receiving has changed your life.

Let the discussion flow, share and spend time discussing how God has shown Himself greater than our needs or our fears when it comes to finances.

Or any blessing involved with giving, the giving of time, talent or of course treasure.

Enjoy the stories, enjoy hearing how God delights in showing himself stronger than our needs or fears.