

# ***“Can’t Lose in Giving!”***

***Acts 20:35; Proverbs 3:9-10***

Intro. – Mary and I had not been married two months before one of the students from the college we were attending came wanted to sell me a life insurance policy. I was young, foolish and very gullible. He appealed to me on the basis of “my responsibility” to provide for my wife. I remember him saying, “Nichols, you can’t lose getting this policy.” To make a long story short – I did! -- \$240.00.

Daniel Adam Nichols was born April 15, 1980. I filed our claim forms prior to that date with our health insurance. At that time our insurance was Blue Cross/Blue Shield out of Hurst, Texas. We thought at the time that Hurst sounded a lot like hearse which was quite prophetic. This policy had a good premium... great coverage... etc. Some ten days prior to my filing with this policy, Blue Cross/Blue Shield filed their own forms – Chapter 13 bankruptcy. Again, I was sold on this company with the idea, “Nichols, you can’t lose...” Mary and I did lose -- \$1,500 in premiums and \$3,500 in hospitals/doctor bills.

Needless to say, I don’t have warm/fuzzy feelings when it comes to insurance companies. And it is through experiences like these one begins to question the principle, “You can’t lose in giving.” Is this really true? What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”? How can this be possible? In what way can this be tested and proven?

Purpose: to review two of God’s promises when it comes to giving

Our texts take us to two areas in particular when it comes to testing the principle of giving:

## **I In Giving We Can’t Lose SPIRITUALLY**

- Illus. – when one goes to a foreign country, one usually exchanges what? – US currency for the currency of the foreign country being visited.
  - this is exactly what Christ is asking of us in Matthew 6:19-21 where He instructs us all to “...lay up..”
- A. By Giving We Lay Up Treasures
1. Heaven never goes bankrupt
    - a. no stealing, no decay, no worry = investments are guaranteed!
    - b. God simply encouraging us to exchange material goods for spiritual...
    - c. don’t know of a better way to increase our desire for heaven than that of increasing our investments over there...
  2. Luke 16:1-12 (Parable of the Unjust Steward) – God is not commending deceit/cheating – steward used what he had to secure his future... i.e. God was commending for his looking ahead and planning for the future:
    - a. it is not what we leave behind, but, what we send ahead that really matters....
    - b. Illus. – George Pepperdine: “All I have left is what I have given away.”
    - c. Illus. – headstone in England: “What I spent, I had; What I kept, I lost; What I gave, I have.”
  3. Can’t take anything with us – why lay it up here?
    - a. Illus. – like attorney’s response when asked how much a deceased client left – “He left it all.”
    - b. how true for there are no pockets in a shroud.
    - c. Illus. – when Alexander the Great was buried he had one final request – that his hands be placed outside coffin so everyone see, though he conquered the world, he left empty handed.
- B. By Giving We Become God-like
1. Getting is animal like – visual picture = e.g. pack of wolves... circling vultures waiting for their next meal to die so they can feast...
  2. Giving, however is God-like:
    - a. personal experience has taught us this... Illus. – Wayne Jackson – “God hasn’t ever let us down. He won’t begin now.”
    - b. God’s Word affirms this: John 3:16; Acts 17:25 etc.

3. In short, we are to be like our Heavenly Father – 1 Peter 1:15,16 “...be holy because I am Holy...”
4. Therefore, when we give of material goods – our lives are more and more conformed to His holiness. Every time we give sacrificially we give more of our selfishness away!

C. By Giving We Free Our Hearts

1. Specifically, we free them from covetousness = low debasing desire for something not ours = giving affects that which properly belongs to God alone!
  - Illus. – Sixth grade – Scott Rupperd and the Creepy Crawlers set...
2. Biblical illus. = Achan, Gehazi, Ananias/Sapphira...
3. It has been said, “For every Christian lost to murder or adultery, there will be fifty lost to covetousness.”
4. Giving of one’s tithes and beyond will not mix with covetousness – one will nullify the other – can’t exist together.

By giving of tithes/offerings we make deposits in heaven. We clear our hearts from covetousness. Thus, we can’t lose spiritual when we give!

## II In Giving We Can’t Lose PHYSICALLY

- do Christians have to wait for heaven to be blessed of God? Is it best NOT to expect material blessings from God? Are physical blessings exempt for Christians?
- though giving should never be for the mercenary motive of gain... God promises that’s exactly what will happen when His people learn and practice giving His way!

A. Scriptures Concerning This Matter

1. Malachi 3:8-12
2. Matthew 6:33
3. Luke 6:38
  - a. like an athlete gains strength in proportion to energy expended in exercising...
  - b. like an investor gains only when they invest wisely...
  - c. like a farmer reaps a bountiful harvest only if they first sow bountifully...
  - d. like a business grows when it advertises and spends more towards growing the business...
  - e. ships that stay in the harbor bring no cargo to shore...
- the bottom line: God will bless His people materially speaking when they learn to practice giving according to His will...

B. Examples Concerning This Matter

1. Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16)
  - a. in view that famine and death by starvation was imminent... took lot faith do what she did!
  - b. the Lord proved – flour and jar of oil never ran out!
2. Widow with 2 mites (Luke 21:1-4) – Lord showed pathway receiving came from the pathway of...
2. ODB 4/13/80 – Depression days, young father/husband struggled. With little work = little money and food. Sometimes the only food was a sack of potatoes. On such occasions this husband insisted his wife and children eat the potatoes while he ate peelings. At that time he had no idea what we have since learned – outside of potato has more vitamins/minerals than the meat... You see, in sacrificing this husband/dad was actually receiving when he was giving.
4. Wouldn’t hesitate to permit tithers and beyonders to give personal testimonies...
5. Illus. – Malcom MacGregor (CPA) Your Money Matters – if not tithing challenged folk to start by next paycheck = 10% of gross and do so for the next three months. If at the end of three months, God had not met your needs and you owe bills that are unpaid because of the amount of money being tithed/given – SEND HIM THE BILL! – Never paid back a cent
6. Illus. – First Christian Church of Owasso, Oklahoma: made this offer the church family – “Try tithing for ninety days, and if you are not blessed, the church will refund your money.” – Never paid back a cent of money!

7. All of this goes back to oft repeated principle – “The hand closed to giving is also closed to receiving.” You see our Lord seeks not to make us poor when asking for tithes/offerings; instead, He seeks to make us blessed!

One way the Lord does bless us is physically. O brethren and friend, we can't lose physically in our giving of tithes/offerings. 90% + God's blessings = more than 100% without God's blessings.

**Conclusion:** In 1901 Andrew Carnegie sold his steel company to J.P. Morgan for two hundred million dollars. On that day, Carnegie became the wealthiest man in the world. But he spent the rest of his life trying to give away his entire fortune, most of it for educational purposes. He said, “The man who dies rich dies disgraced.”

A wiser man of God summed it up this way: “I have found I cannot afford NOT to give to God!”

Why don't all of God's people give like they should? Several reasons... but the main one, they don't realize God means exactly what He says – it really is more blessed to give than to receive!