

## **Offering Ourselves**

Giving is one of the most misunderstood and abused concepts taught in the Bible. Generally, teaching about money is neglected in the church. This neglect is at best highly dangerous to the life of a church. At worst it can be fatal both to the church and the individuals. We live in a society obsessed with money. Our economy is rooted in consumption. The advertising industry devotes massive resources convincing us that happiness is found in consuming more. Misuse of financial resources destroys churches, families, and individual lives every day.

Jesus taught more about money than any other single subject. Teaching on money and giving fills the pages of the New and Old Testament. Clearly God sees that our approach to money needs to be brought into subjection to Him if we are to live the abundant kingdom life He has for us.

This study is designed to help believers examine their own attitudes toward money in light of several significant Biblical passages. It is not intended to exhaust the scriptural themes regarding money, but rather bring the appropriate teaching to light in the hopes that believers will examine themselves and allow the Holy Spirit to remold their attitudes.

The study concludes with a worksheet that will help the believer examine his/her financial condition and apply the lessons learned in the studies to each one's specific financial condition.

### **Study #1: Giving in the Church**

Read Acts 4:32-37

1. What did the early Christians do with their money?
  2. Did the believers give a set percentage of their money to the church?
  3. Was the giving "surplus giving", that is extra money for which the believers had no other use? (see also Luke 21:1-4).
  4. What did the believers do with those possessions that they did not sell?
  5. What was the result of this giving?
  6. Does your giving follow this pattern? Do you have any pattern of giving?
  7. What are some things you can do to more closely approximate the example of the first Christians?
- Suggested Memory verse: I Timothy 6:9-11

### **Study #2: Giving as a Response**

Read Acts 11:27-29, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

In both of these cases, we see the church responding to the needs of a sister congregation.

1. What was the response of the believers to the crisis?
2. Were the needy believers people that the giving church would have known?
3. How much did the believers give?
4. To whom did they give?

5. What motivated their giving?
  6. What was their attitude toward money?
  7. What is your attitude toward money?
- Suggested memory verse: 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

### **Study #3: Obstacles to Giving**

Read Luke 18:18-30

1. Jesus quotes a number of Old Testament commandments that bear on our relationships to others. Which one of these did he leave out (Compare Deuteronomy 5:16-21)?
  2. What was the "one thing" that the ruler lacked?
  3. What prevented him from giving?
  4. What are some obstacles that prevent people from giving in our culture? Which apply to you?
  5. What can you do to remove these obstacles?
  6. What are some things you can do to avoid these in the future?
- Suggested memory verse: Matthew 23:23

### **Study #4: Underlying Attitudes toward Giving**

Read Matthew 6:19-34

1. How secure are earthly riches?
  2. Why are earthly riches dangerous?
  3. What is the world's priority? What should God's people have as their priority?
  4. What are some of your "treasures"? Are they perishable or imperishable?
  5. Being totally honest, and looking at how you have been living your life, who has been your master?
  6. What changes do you believe need to be made in you financial habits?
- Suggested memory verses: Luke 12:33-34

### **Study #5: Redeeming Our Attitudes toward Giving**

Read Philippians 4:15-19

1. What kind of gift did the Philippian Christians offer? How often did they support Paul?
2. What were some of the results of their gifts?
3. Why did they support Paul?

4. Why did Paul receive their support?

5. What can you do to bring the Philippian pattern of giving into your life?  
Suggested memory verse: 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2