

Series on the Faith Promise Mission Offering

Lesson One: Guidelines for Giving in the Local Church

Text: *1 Corinthians 16:1-2* ¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. ² Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Introduction: The book of First Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul to the local church in the city of Corinth, in Greece. Paul had started the church a few years earlier and left it after it was established. He then went to start churches in other areas. Later the church developed some serious problems, both doctrinally and morally. Different believers visited Paul explaining to him some of the problems in the church. Also, Paul received a letter from the church itself asking advice concerning the difficulties they were facing. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul then wrote First Corinthians to rebuke them, to correct them, to encourage them, to teach them, and to answer their questions.

The subjects which Paul gave instruction about were:

1. Divisions and strife – (1:11)
2. Sexual immorality – (5:1)
3. Accusing fellow-believers in court – (6:1)
4. Marriage, divorce, and singleness – (7:1)
5. Christian liberty and idolatry – (8:1)
6. Observance of the Lord's Supper – (11:17)
7. Spiritual gifts – (12:1)
8. Resurrection of the dead – (15:1)
9. Giving offerings through the church – (16:1)

The last instructions Paul gave were those of how to give offerings in the local church. He gave guidelines which he had

taught to other churches, such as those in the province of Galatia, and which he also wanted the church in Corinth to follow. These instructions should be followed by all local churches. God wants His people to learn how to give and then to practice what they learn. These guidelines for giving all center around giving through the local church. The believer should not just keep his tithes and offerings at home and give them any way he wants (Acts 4:34-35).

1. Believers should give. (I Cor.16:1)

Giving generously is a part of the Christian life and God gives instructions on how to do this in the right way. If there is a believer who does not want to give to the Lord through His local church there is something seriously wrong. That believer should determine the reason why he or she does not have a desire to give. Is it because there is a lack of understanding or a lack of spiritual growth? Possibly the reason is selfishness or a lack of real love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice some reasons why the Corinthian Christians, and all other Christians also, are encouraged to give to the Lord materially.

- A. We have a command – “as I have given order...even so do ye.”** (John 14:15; Luke 6:46; I John 5:2-3)
- B. We have an example – “the churches of Galatia.”** It always helps us to do right when we have a good example to follow. The churches of Galatia were a good example of giving therefore the Corinthians should be encouraged to give also. The Corinthian church would then be a good example for other churches to follow.
- C. We have an obligation.** The believers in Corinth had been saved because believers in other places had given to help the mission work Paul had started in Corinth (II Cor.11:8-9). Now the believers in Corinth had an obligation to help others come to Jesus Christ. If you are now saved it is because other churches gave sacrificially to help get the

gospel to you. Do you feel an obligation to give in order to help others hear the good news of Jesus Christ?

2. Believers should give personally. (I Cor.16:2)

The Scripture says “let everyone of you...,” making it clear there are no exceptions. Every believer can give something and should give something. The amount which we give is not the issue. The real issue is if we have a desire to personally support God’s work.

- A. You should take your offering yourself.** Do not just send it with someone else because you are “too busy” to go to church.
- B. You should take your offering weekly.** If you fail to give your offering one week because of some reason, usually you will spend it on something else instead of bringing it to the church the next week.
- C. You must be faithful in your church attendance in order to be faithful in your giving (Heb. 10:25).** This shows the necessity of faithful church attendance in order to be able to give. For sure, a Christian who is irregular in attending church will not be faithful in giving to the Lord.

3. Believers should give purposefully. (I Cor.16:2)

We can see that the kind of giving being taught by Paul is purposeful giving. It is not just waiting until you get to church and then looking to see how much money you have in your pocket or handbag. Plan and prepare your tithes and offerings ahead of time. Teach your children to also prepare their tithes and offerings before they go to church.

- A. Purposeful giving requires a decision.** To make a decision that you are going to give God through His church, you must plan how much you will give. Then you purpose in your heart that you will be honest and faithful in giving it (II Cor.9:7).

B. Purposeful giving requires proper priorities. Believers purposefully pay their house rent, debts, electricity and water bills, school expenses, etc. They do this because they believe these things are important; even more so believers should give purposefully to their Lord.

4. Believers should give proportionately. (I Cor.16:2).

God does not expect every believer to give the same amount. No, because not every believer receives the same amount. To whom much is given, much is expected and to whom little is given less is expected. The believer should give according to what he has received (*II Cor.8:12-15*).

A. The tithe is expected of every believer.

- 1) The tithe is the first ten percent of what we receive.
- 2) The tithe is the Lord's. (Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:8-10)
- 3) The tithe should be set aside first, before you pay your bills, buy food, or pay your rent. (Pro.3:9-10)

B. The amount of the offering is determined by the believer with guidance from the Holy Spirit.

- 1) The offering comes from the 90% we have left after the tithe.
- 2) Tithing proves that we are honest with God and giving offerings proves our love for God.
- 3) We should pray and ask God's direction about how much offering He wants us to give.
- 4) We should trust God and give by faith the amount of offering which He leads us to give.

Conclusion: God has given us clear guidelines to follow in how we should give back to Him. We know what we should do, so let us be cheerful givers (*II Cor.9:7*). Everything we have is from God's hand (*Jas.1:17*) and we should therefore have a desire to return a portion to Him.