

## Give Generously: Be Christ's Disciple (5)

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> Honor the Lord from your wealth  
And from the first of all your produce;  
<sup>10</sup> So your barns will be filled with plenty  
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

## Introduction

**Recap:** Over the past few weeks, we've been exploring what sets apart true followers of Christ from mere churchgoers. So far, we've identified several key marks of a disciple:

- **Putting Christ First** – placing Him above everyone and everything else.
- **Living Set Apart** – not conforming to the patterns of this world, but being transformed daily by the renewing of our minds.
- **Remaining Steadfast** – building our lives on Christ the solid Rock, not on shifting foundations (as the song goes—*Christ is the solid rock I stand, all others are sinking sand*).
- **Serving Others** – fulfilling God's will by serving and strengthening those around us.

Today, we turn our focus to another essential trait of a Christ-follower: **Giving Generously**.

## Content

**Why This Sermon Today:** In today's American church culture, many believers have a poor—or even negative—attitude toward giving. This usually stems from a lack of clear biblical understanding. My goal this morning is to teach you what Scripture says about giving so that you may shift that perspective.

Let me be very clear up front: I am *not* preaching this message because our church needs more money. In fact, I'm thankful to say we're better than last year. I praise God for His faithful provision, and I sincerely appreciate for your generosity.

Let me say it again: this sermon is not a fundraising message. I'm not here to ask for more money. Rather, my purpose is to help you understand how essential generous giving is to the life of a Christ's disciple. Show me someone who is truly a disciple of Jesus, and I will show you someone who gives generously—not necessarily in large amounts, but in proportion to their income.

Here's a truth: Like it or not, our level of generosity reveals the depth of our faith and our devotion to the Lord. As Jesus said, *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21). Where your heart is, there your devotion will be also.

It's important that young Christians learn this early in their faith journey: giving to the Lord is not just a practice, but a vital part of discipleship. And that begins with a right understanding of what giving means in the kingdom of God.

**Reasons for Giving:** Scripture clearly commands us to give generously to the Lord. And I can speak from personal experience: I've been practicing this for 50 years. From the day I gave my very first tithe until today, my joy in giving—and the amount I give—has only grown. Why? Because as I've matured in faith, I've come to understand more deeply what my giving means to the Lord and to His Church.

Now, let's be honest with ourselves this morning and ask: *Why do I give?* Why do you give to the Lord? Why do people give at all?

Here are some honest answers many of us might relate to:

- Some give simply because **God commands it** (Malachi 3). They don't question it—they just obey.
- Others give out of **love for the Lord**—they want to express their devotion tangibly.
- Some give to **support God's Church**, knowing their contributions help advance the kingdom on earth.
- Many give because they believe it's simply **the right thing to do**—a way of sharing God's blessings with others.
- And let's not overlook this: giving **feels good**. It lifts our hearts. As Scripture says, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35).

I used to think these reasons covered it all—until I studied today's passage. It revealed something even deeper about why we give...

### **Honoring the LORD**

Proverbs 3:9 reveals a powerful truth about giving—one that many believers overlook: **giving is an act of honoring the LORD**. Each time we give, we're not just meeting a need or fulfilling a duty—we're actively honoring God. We're responding to His command in Proverbs 3:9, and whenever we obey His command, we bring Him honor.

Let's take a closer look at verse 9:  
“**Honor** the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops.”

### The Command

Notice the word “*honor*” in the verse—this is not a suggestion or a helpful tip; it’s a command. It’s written in the imperative form. God doesn’t say, “*Consider honoring Me,*” or “*Try to give when it’s convenient.*” He says, “*Honor the LORD.*”

And who is this command for? Not just for the wealthy. Not just for mature believers. This is a call to **everyone who professes faith in Christ**—young and old, male and female, seasoned saints and brand-new believers. Even those who are living paycheck to paycheck are commanded to honor God through their giving.

No matter your financial situation, if you belong to the Lord, you are called to reflect your love, trust, and worship through generous giving. Giving isn’t primarily about money—it’s about *honor*.

### What Does It Mean to “Honor” the Lord?

Let’s take a moment to reflect on the meaning of the Hebrew word used in Proverbs 3:9—*kābēd*, translated “honor.” This is the same verb used in the commandment, “*Honor your father and mother*” (Exodus 20:12).

At its core, *kābēd* means more than just showing respect—it carries the idea of giving *weight, value, or glory* to someone. To honor someone is to treat them as significant, worthy, and glorious.

So when Scripture commands us to *honor the Lord with our wealth*, it means that our giving should glorify God. It should reflect His worth to us. It should be something that brings Him joy and shows Him—and the world—that God matters deeply to us.

### Simply Put: if you want to glorify God, take giving seriously.

Here’s a picture to help us grasp this:

Think of how Olympic athletes honor their home countries. Maybe you’ve watched the Olympics. After a gold medal performance, the athlete steps onto the podium. They’re given flowers and a medal. The national anthem plays, and the flag of their country is raised. The camera zooms in, and often, the athlete’s eyes are filled with tears—tears of pride, joy, and love for their homeland.

In that very moment, they’ve done more than win a medal—they’ve brought honor to their nation.

In the same way, when we give to the Lord with sincere and generous hearts, we're honoring our King. We're saying, "Lord, You are worthy. I want to make You proud. I want to bring You joy."

But too often, we miss this. On a typical Sunday, we may drop a few dollars or a tithe envelope into the plate without much thought. No real worship. No sense of glory. No sense of honoring the Lord.

Next time you give—whether online or in person—remember what you're doing: **you are honoring the Lord**. Give with pride. Give with joy. Give knowing that your offering brings glory to your Father in heaven.

### **Encounter the Living God**

There's a powerful blessing that often comes with generous giving: **it creates space in our lives and opens the door of opportunity to encounter the living God in real and unforgettable ways**. When we give sacrificially—beyond what feels easy or safe—we place ourselves in a position of deeper dependence on God. And in that place, we often experience His provision, His faithfulness, and His presence like never before.

As Philippians 4:19 promises, *"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*

Now picture two individuals this morning: **Mr. Stingy** and **Mrs. Generous**.

Mr. Stingy claims to believe in Jesus. Every Sunday, he drops a couple of dollars into the offering plate—not because he's struggling financially, but because he simply doesn't want to give more. In truth, he's wealthy—he has over a million dollars saved and lives very comfortably. But he rarely senses any real need for God in his life. Deep down, he thinks, *"Why rely on God when my bank account takes care of everything I need?"*

This, I believe, is one of the most subtle and dangerous curses of wealth: it can create the illusion that we don't need God. And because Mr. Stingy never steps out in faith with his finances, he rarely—if ever—experiences the living God in a personal, powerful way.

His self-sufficiency robs him of the chance to know God as Provider.

Now let's consider **Mrs. Generous**.

She doesn't have much—she lives paycheck to paycheck. Often, she feels stretched thin, barely able to cover her own needs. Giving to God sometimes feels impossible. And yet, she chooses to give anyway—out of faith and love, not abundance.

And what happens when she does? **She encounters the living God in a way she will never forget.**

Let me share a real example: *Brother Andrew*, the author of *God's Smuggler*, once gave the last of his money to a homeless man. It was all he had left for his tuition. Later that same day, he received an envelope in the mail containing **the exact same amount** he needed to pay his tuition—just in time.

Now think about this: if he had held onto that money instead of giving it away, he likely would have continued faithfully following God. But he would have missed an incredible opportunity to *experience* God's provision firsthand—to know what it truly means to trust Him completely.

That one act of sacrificial generosity opened the door for a deeper relationship with God, one shaped by faith, dependence, and awe.

The same can be true for us. When we give beyond what's comfortable, we discover that God really does supply all our needs—and that He is far more real and faithful than we ever imagined. Take Lois, for example—a single mother of two boys who was going through serious financial struggles. She came to me one day for counseling. As a fellow believer, I gently encouraged her to start honoring God by tithing—yes, giving that 10%. She was hesitant at first, but eventually decided to trust God and give.

Two years later, Lois was running her own massage therapy business—and had even hired another person to help with the growing workload. How did it all happen? Only the Lord knows. But one thing is clear: *God supplies all our needs*, often in ways far beyond what we could ask or imagine.

As Scripture says: “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us...” (Ephesians 3:20).

### **Acceptable to the LORD**

There's one more essential truth about giving that we must not overlook: **our giving must be acceptable to the Lord.**

That means we don't just give *anything* to God—we give Him our *best*. Because God doesn't just look at the gift; **He looks at the heart of the giver**. Every offering we bring to Him should come from a heart that is right with Him—humble, sincere, and full of reverence.

Yes, it's true that God blesses those who honor Him with their giving. But let's be very clear: **blessing should never be the main reason we give**. The purpose of giving is not to become rich or to manipulate God into giving us more.

That kind of thinking turns giving into a selfish transaction. And it completely misses the heart of biblical generosity.

Let me give you a few examples of **wrong motives** for giving:

- “I want to live in a mansion, so I tithe.” — Wrong motive.
- “I want to drive a Rolls-Royce, so I give 10% of my income.” — Wrong motive.
- “If I win \$20 million in the lottery, I’ll give half to God.” — Again, wrong motive.

**Giving is not a bargaining chip.** It’s not a bait to get more from God. That mindset turns giving into manipulation, not worship.

God wants our gifts, yes—but even more than that, **He wants our hearts.** And when we give with a heart full of love, gratitude, and trust, our offering becomes truly pleasing to Him.

### **Giving Is Not a Financial Strategy**

Giving to God is not a way to fatten your portfolio or strike a deal with heaven.

I once heard about a church finance workshop where a woman complained that her church wouldn’t accept her promised donation—half of her lottery winnings if she ever won. The speaker replied that *he* would have no problem accepting such an offer.

But I respectfully disagreed. That kind of giving may be generous in amount, but it lacks righteousness. It’s not aligned with the heart of God.

To illustrate, imagine someone running a morally corrupt business—let’s say, a pimp—who regularly donates a portion of his profits to the church out of guilt. Would you receive that offering and call it holy? Of course not. Why? Because **true giving must be in step with God's righteousness.**

The same principle applies in all situations. It's not just *what* we give that matters—it's *how* and *why* we give. Our giving should flow from a life that seeks to honor God in every area, not just through dollars dropped in the offering plate.

I say this not based on opinion, but on the clear teaching of Scripture: **God desires offerings that come from righteous hearts and lives that honor Him.** Anything less may look generous on the outside—but it is not pleasing in His sight. Proverbs 15:8 reads, “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.”

### **Giving Righteously and from the Heart**

The act of giving is a matter of the heart, but it must also be rooted in righteousness. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, clarifies this principle in Proverbs 3:9, which reads, "Honor the LORD from your **righteous labor/hard works** and from the first fruits of **righteousness**." This means that the source of our gift matters to God. Earnings from gambling, such as lottery winnings, or money acquired through illicit means like prostitution or drugs, are not considered righteous labor. They fail this crucial test and are therefore not an honorable offering to the Lord. Our gifts must be in sync with God's righteousness to be truly acceptable to Him.

Furthermore, as the Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 9, our attitude toward giving is paramount. The eternal truth is that we will reap what we sow. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly; if we sow bountifully, we will reap bountifully. This principle applies to all areas of our lives, and especially to our giving. Therefore, Paul instructs us to give cheerfully and from the heart, not out of grudging obligation or compulsion. Every gift, given with a joyful and sincere heart, is a precious offering to God.

## **Conclusion**

So, let's make a conscious effort to change our practice. Starting today, as you place your offering in the plate, take a moment to pause and reflect. Say this prayer in your heart: "Lord, I am honoring You today with this offering. It is the best I can give, and it comes from my heart. May it be acceptable in Your sight. Amen."