

## OLD TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES FOR GIVING

**No porch** today! Those of you who are regulars here know that means this sermon doesn't **have an intro!** Not only are you **not getting a porch**, I'm not even going to **preach today!** Why? Because I preached **6 times** this past week: Monday through Friday—and twice on Wednesday—so I'm all **"preached out!"**

Although it is true that I preached 6 times this past week, **I am not** "all preached out." The real reason I'm not "preaching" is because the subject we are looking at is more **informational** than it is **inspirational**. In other words, the topic is geared more toward a **Bible study** format than it is a **sermon**.

But...just because I'm not preaching *per se*, doesn't mean God won't be "stepping on our toes!"

Some of you have been believers for a long time; others of you have not. Suppose someone younger in the faith—or even your children—came to you and said, "Why **do we**—or **should we**—give money to the church?" What would your answer be? That is a very fair—and practical—question.

As believers, we should have a Bible reason for **believing** what we believe—and **doing** what we do! So this morning, we are going to look at—from the OT—**three** principles about giving.

Before we get started, I want to ensure you understand a very important point: what I am giving you today are **principles** from the OT—not **commands!** What's the difference? **A command** is something that God requires us to do—period!

**A principle**, on the other hand, is a broader, more general truth that is **underneath** the command. Most of the OT teaching regarding giving was specific to the **nation of Israel**. They were **commands** to them as **a nation**—not to us as the church! The NT church has not **replaced** Israel!

There were **specific commands** given to the nation of Israel that are **not** for the NT church—and there are **specific promises** made to the nation of Israel that we in the NT church-age **cannot claim!**

So we are looking at **principles** underneath the commands that God gave to the nation of Israel in the OT!

### **1. Bringing offerings to the tabernacle (or temple) was giving to God**

Please take your Bibles and turn to I Chronicles 29. We looked at this passage about a month ago but are looking at it again because it teaches us a lot about **cheerfully giving to God** and His house.

In the way of a reminder, the context of this chapter is that David wanted to build a temple for God. God said David couldn't because he was a man of war, but Solomon his son was going to build the temple instead. That did not stop David from **gathering materials** and **generously contributing** to the cost of building the temple, though.

Please follow along as I read verses 1-3. David prepared materials **from the king's treasury**—and he willingly **gave of his own wealth** for the construction of the temple.

--Now vs 9 "...because with perfect heart they offered willingly **to the Lord**"

--Look at the end of vs 17 "to offer willingly **unto thee**." Giving **for the temple**, then, was giving to God! When Moses led God's people out of Egypt, God gave Moses instructions on how to **build the tabernacle**—the place where God was to be worshipped. **Exodus 25:2** "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they **bring me an offering**: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take **my offering**."

**What** were God's instructions? To tell God's people to bring an offering for God—and take it from them! Now **Deuteronomy 16:10** "And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of **thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God**, according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee:"

Here we see a similar statement—the offering of their hand was to be given unto the Lord their God. How was something **given to God** in Moses' time? It was brought to the tabernacle!

I was quite surprised to learn that the phrase "offering unto the Lord" occurs 42 times in the OT! An offering unto the Lord is an offering to Who? **The Lord!**

But **where did they bring their** offering to the Lord? Did they just leave it out in a field somewhere for God to use as He wished? Obviously not! Offerings—gifts to God—were brought to the **tabernacle** during Moses' time...the **temple** during Solomon's time...and now they are brought **to the church!**

The principle, then, is this: **Giving to the church is a way to give to God!** Please notice that I did not say it is the **only way** to give to God, but it is certainly **one way!**

God dwells **in heaven**—not in a building. And God doesn't **need** money!

But...when you put money in the offering plate, you should **look at it as a gift** that is being given to God!

## **2. Bringing offerings to the tabernacle (or temple) was a way to worship God**

When we hear the word “worship”—especially when connected to the church—we often think of **music**. Some churches have worship “music;” others have worship “teams”—people that play instruments and/or sing.

Worship isn't just about **music**, though. In the OT, **giving** was often associated with **worship**.

Why? Because giving to God is not just about **the gift** we are giving Him—it is also about the **attitude** behind our giving and the **reason** we are giving!

First, we need to consider... A. What is worship

We could easily spend the rest of our time here this morning discussing what worship **is—and what it isn't**. We're obviously not going to do that, but I am going to give you a couple of definitions that Mark Herbster from Maranatha shared with a group of Pastors at Camp Chetek a few years ago.

“Worship” carries the idea of ascribing “worth-ship” to God. It is an acknowledgment that God is **worthy** of our adoration and praise because of **who He is** and what **He has done**. It is a response to God that involves both **attitudes and acts** of reverence to God.

**Warren Wiersbe** defined it like this: “Worship is the believer's response of all that they are—mind, emotions, will and body—to what God is and says and does.”

Next, let's consider... B. How giving is an act of worship

So how is giving an act of worship? Let's notice what David says in his public prayer of thanksgiving to God.

--Vs 10. “Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel...for ever and ever” ‘May you be praised!’

--In vs 11, David proclaims God should be praised because of **Who He is**.

--‘To you, God, belongs greatness...and power...and glory...and victory...and majesty.’

--David also praises God because He is the owner and ruler of everything: “...for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.”

--In vs 12, David praises God for **what He does**: He gives riches and honor and power and might and strength.

--In vs 13, David then—because of who **God is** and what **God does**--exclaims, “...we **thank thee** and **praise** thy glorious name.”

--And in vs 14, David humbly acknowledges that he and God's people are able to give to God only because God had first given to them!

--Now vs 20. Pretty hard to miss the fact that their giving came from thankful hearts—and that that was part of their worship!

C. First-fruits giving was an act of worship

The phrase “first-fruits” is found in both the Old and New Testaments. In the OT, it is used in reference to a worship feast that the nation of Israel held each year. The specifics of the feast are given in Leviticus 23, but I want to look at the **attitude underneath** it as found in Deuteronomy 26.

Please turn there and follow along as I read verses 1-11.

What was the **attitude** behind this giving of the first fruits of the land? **Gratitude**, right?

--‘We were in bondage to the Egyptians who treated us horribly.’

--‘When we cried unto you, God, you heard us and brought us out of that place with an awesome display of power.’

--‘You not only brought us out of Egypt, though—you also brought us to this wonderful place, a land that “floweth with milk and honey.”’

‘And now, I bring the first fruits to you and rejoice in what you have given me.’

Have we—as children of God—**been rescued?** We certainly have—and from much more than the slavery of Egypt! We’ve been snatched from the **hand of the devil**—and rescued from the **penalty of hell!**

And our land of milk and honey is much better than theirs! Ours—according to Revelation 21:4—will be where “...God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

The second principle then, is this: **Giving at church is a way to worship God!**

We have been rescued from much—and have been given much—and our attitude of gratitude should lead us to **thank** Him and **worship** Him **by giving to Him!** Maybe I’m only speaking for myself, but sometimes we can look at **putting money** in the plate like “paying a bill.” We shouldn’t, though, because we don’t always want to pay a bill! But we **should want to express our thanks** for what God has given us by joyfully giving to Him!

**II Cor 8:9** “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

### **3. Bringing offerings to the tabernacle (or temple) was the way to build (or maintain) the house of worship**

This one should hardly come as a surprise. A physical tent—or temple—does not **build itself**—and it does not **maintain** itself! People have to **build it**—and people have to **maintain it**—and both take **money!**

#### A. Giving for construction of the tabernacle

You’re in Deuteronomy, turn toward the front of your Bibles to the book of Exodus—the 2<sup>nd</sup> book of the Bible. We’re going to look at Exodus 24:18. Here we see Moses on the top of the mountain with God.

Now follow along as I read Exodus 25:1-9. Here God gives Moses instructions that he is supposed to pass on to the people. In Exodus 35:4-19, Moses tells the people what they are to bring for the tabernacle to be built.

Did they obey? They sure did! In fact, it is one of the few places in the Bible—and maybe the only one—where the people were told to **stop giving** because they were giving too much!

We see that in Exodus 36; let’s turn there. Please follow along as I read verses 3-9.

The principle should be obvious: God’s people give money to the **church in order for the physical building to be built!** We also saw that principle being carried out earlier today when we looked at the giving of David—and the people—in I Chronicles 29.

#### B. Giving for the maintenance of God’s house

Solomon completed the temple in 960 B.C. Sadly, it was not always treated as the house of God. In fact, 120 years later the temple needed some significant repair work. We see that in II Chronicles 24, let’s turn there.

--Please follow along as I read verses 1-3. Some time obviously elapsed here for Joash to go from 7 years of age to **being married and having children of his own**. Not told how much, though.

--Now vss 4-5. Joash wanted to repair the house of God—the temple—so he instructed the men who worked in the temple—the priests and the Levites—to gather in the money that was supposed to be given each year. He wanted them to “hasten”—hurry it up—but they failed to do that.

--It is interesting to me that the young king asks Jehoiada—the chief of the priests who was his mentor—why the money wasn’t being collected. We see that in vss 6-7.

--Before even giving them an opportunity to answer, the king comes up with a new plan—put a chest by the gate of the house of the Lord for the people to put money in! In vs 9, a proclamation is made to bring the money in the way they were supposed to according to the law of Moses.

--Now vss 10-11. In the middle of vs 11 we see there was **much money** and in the end of the verse we see that money was gathered **in abundance**.

--Now vss 12-13. Here we see the money that came in was used to hire people to repair and mend the house of the Lord. The work got done—and the house of God was restored to the way it was supposed to be—because **God’s people gave money to hire workers** to get the work done.

This is hardly the only time the temple got “run-down”—or partially destroyed—and needed repair.

This very same thing happened again 200 years later during the reign of another boy king—Josiah!

### C. God's concern over the condition of His house

Does God care what His house—His place of worship—looks like? He certainly does!

--In vs 2, we see that Joash “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” Part of his doing right was seeing to it that the house of the Lord got repaired!

--And in vs 7, we saw that wicked queen Athaliah had taken things dedicated to God and used them to worship idols. It was obviously a good thing that Josiah wanted those things replaced.

For the sake of time—and because the book of Haggai is hard to find—notice on your outline the verses I have there for you. Before I read them, here is some of the background.

The year was 520 B.C.—66 years after Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon—had leveled the temple. The Babylonians fell to the Medes and Persians, and Cyrus—the King of Persia—allowed God's people to go back to Jerusalem to build the temple. We know from the book of Ezra and Nehemiah that they experienced opposition at times, but during the time of Haggai that was not the case.

We can't help but get the impression from the following verses that the temple wasn't being re-built because God's people had **other priorities!**

**Haggai 1:2-4,7-9** “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, **The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.** <sup>3</sup>Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>4</sup>Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, **and this house lie waste?**

<sup>7</sup>Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. <sup>8</sup>Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, **and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it,** and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. <sup>9</sup>Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. **Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.”**

Got the picture, right? **God's house was in disrepair** because the people were more worried about their houses than they were about His house!

Switching gears, during the process of becoming your Pastor, I was very thankful to learn that the church family had a desire to improve the outside appearance of our building. We had that gray, fiber board siding that was starting to rot in a number of places. So in May of 2018, we started tearing off the old siding and in the fall, began putting on the new.

We did some ourselves, then hired out some and finished 2/3 of the building that year. The following summer, we hired Ron Amell and his crew (meaning his children) to finish the auditorium- end of the building. The money was there—and enough to spare—to get the job done.

But if you look around, there's still work to be done, isn't there? And I'm not just talking about the sidewalk! Some of things take money and expertise—but some of it just takes a little tender-loving-care! There is trim to put on...and heating base board to be painted and put on...and bugs to clean from light fixtures. So sometimes the maintenance of God's house is not about giving **money**—it is also about giving **our time!**

Here they are again; three principles from the OT that should motivate us to give to the church:

- 1. Bringing offerings to the tabernacle (or temple) was giving to God—and giving to the church is *giving to God!***
- 2. Bringing offerings to the tabernacle (or temple) was a way to worship God—and giving at church is a way to *worship God!***
- 3. Bringing offerings to the tabernacle (or temple) was the way to build (or maintain) the house of worship—and giving to church is a way to *maintain our building.***

Next week—unless the Lord leads otherwise—we will be looking at 3 more reasons to give to church.

So what would God have us do in light of His Word this morning?

1. First—even though you are here this morning in a Bible-preaching church—it would be wrong for me to assume that all of you are on your way to heaven.

--Giving money to the church won't get you to heaven

--Being baptized as an infant won't get you to heaven

--And doing good deeds won't get you to heaven

The only way for you to get to heaven is to **have** Jesus! I John 5:12 "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

2. Second, are you thankful for being saved? Do you praise God for who He is and what He does? If so, offer unto God thanksgiving—and give back to Him a portion of what He has given you!

3. Third, look around our building. Are there things you can do to help maintain it?