

Romans 14:19
So then let us
follow after things
which make for
peace, and things
whereby we may
edify one another.



John 8:32 and
ye shall know
the truth, and
the truth shall
make you free.

JANUARY

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DECIDING HOW MUCH TO GIVE

Jim Stauffer

One of the most obvious facts Americans have to deal with is the contrast in prosperity between them and third world countries. Of course, it is the same for people of any nation where they enjoy a robust economy and reap the benefits of full time employment with good wages and benefits.

Our subject then comes to mind. How much of my wealth and time and energy should I devote to helping others both next door and abroad. Many people solve this issue by giving a certain amount to charitable organizations. That is a good thing but it by no means solves the problem.

Even after such donations most of us have plenty left over. We plan our retirement so we will not be in need when we are no longer employed. We allow sufficiently for our leisure time to spend in recreation, travel, etc.

Just think about that for a minute. This is not intended to be a guilt trip. This is intended to bring perspective to our lives. We are a people who proudly proclaim our faith in Christ. We demonstrate it by assembling regularly for worship of God and Christ.

So the question again is how much time, energy and money should we devote to others. Should I wait to see what others are doing before I act? Should I make sure I have covered all my financial bases or schedule considerations before becoming involved?

We start by looking at our perfect example, Jesus Christ. We are, after all, disciples of His. That means we have committed to walking in His steps (1Pet.

2:21-24). When we consider Christ, we are reminded that compared to the foxes and birds having a place of their own, *the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.* (Mat. 8:20) The Son of God relinquished His hold on heaven to come to earth for one reason only. That reason was to help us in our distress. We were lost in sin and had no power to overcome it without His great sacrifice.

So we consider His life and perspective on material and spiritual matters.

Most brethren I know stand firmly on the principles Jesus taught. We believe we should love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind as He says in Mat. 22:37. We all believe we should love not only our neighbor but also our enemy as He taught in His Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5:43-48). We truly believe we are sufficiently committed to the faith to remain faithful unto death as he told the church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:10).

A question before us is whether we truly believe the quote attributed to Christ by the apostle Paul in his visit with the Ephesian elders in the city of Miletus. Acts 20:35 *In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.* It is obvious Paul was faithful to that saying. And he is the one who told us to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

Now when Jesus, by way of the Holy Spirit, teaches us to lay by in store as we are prospered.

When he tells us to purpose in our hearts to give, not grudgingly but cheerfully; how are we doing (**1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:6**)?

Our direction in this writing is not the collection taken on the first day of the week though that also comes under scrutiny when we offer this introspection. It is the principle Jesus taught of giving to and serving the needs of others that we hope to shine light on. It is not just financial. Sometimes the needs are not financial. It may call upon us to rise from our comfortable chair and go spend time and effort in helping them in whatever their need may be.

But as disciples of Christ there is no material need so great it overshadows the spiritual needs of mankind. It is therefore foolish on our part to take the approach of just throwing money at the problems of those in need. Yes, just as Jesus did, sometimes you have to solve the hunger of men before they have the strength to hear and digest the word of God, but the task is ours and we must put forth the effort, make whatever sacrifice is called for to carry the message of Christ to any and all we can reach (**Mat. 15:32**).

This means bringing our teaching efforts, our financial assistance or whatever we possess to bear according to the needs at the time. Jesus did, even unto death. Surely we can even unto inconvenience.

Let me suggest reading the parable of the talents again (**Mat. 25:14-30**). We must be certain we are not hiding ours in the ground. We are well aware of the reward for faithfulness to the discipleship of our Lord and we know as well what His wrath will bring to those who are not.

LORD OF THE SABBATH

"Now it happened that He went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain ...the Pharisees said to Him, Why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath? He said to them, have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, how he went into the house of God ... and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat, except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him? He said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:23-28).

Gathering grain and eating that grain on the Sabbath added "fuel to the fire" between Jesus and the religious leaders. This episode in Mark portends later conflict with the temple aristocracy. Clearly, the Law of Moses spoke about *not* working on the Sabbath. *"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in*

harvest you shall rest" (Exodus 34:21). Jesus references the story of David going into the temple and taking bread that was intended for the priests (**1 Samuel 21:1-6; Leviticus 24:5-9**). David's soldiers were hungry, as were Jesus' disciples. Could the Law be set aside to accommodate a human need? Matthew's account (**Matthew 12**) adds the man with the withered hand and the sheep in the ditch as illustrations of needs that could be addressed even on the Sabbath Day. And, were the priests who were doing their duties on the Sabbath day guilty as well? The real question is: Who has the right to decide; Jesus or the Pharisees?

The Pharisees had been around for nearly 200 years. Their beginnings sprang from their resistance to the efforts of Antiochus Epiphanes (others, too) to force the Greek/Hellenistic way of life on everyone. This happened in the "period between the testaments." The Pharisees, the "separated ones" sought to adhere as closely as possible to the Law of Moses. As long as they were able to decide and legislate and force compliance, all was well. As there were myriads of details about the Law (do this, don't do that), these guardians of orthodoxy had lots of concerns; there were lots of people to watch. They were threatened and alarmed when Jesus healed the lame man and then said to him: *"Son, your sins are forgiven you."* Only God can forgive sin; this man is not God; how could He be? We must oppose Him. And so they did.

The Sabbath was a day of rest for God's people, a gift to His people. Jesus, the Son of Man, is Lord of the Sabbath. He is Lord over all—the universe, creation, people, observances of any who might seek to obey Him. He is greater than the temple. He has all authority. That is why He can heal people. That is why He can forgive sin. And that is why He alone is able to save you and me from sin. Should we ever casually ignore or violate any law Christ has given? No! Should we always acknowledge who Jesus is as Lord of all? Yes! And remember: That is the way citizens of the kingdom act.

Randy Harshbarger

Emotionalism is NOT Worship

A friend of mine shared a comment with me some months ago after a Bible Class that struck a chord. She described some of the modern songs used in worship as "seven songs", that is, "seven words repeated eleven times". It struck a chord with me because I remember attending a "worship" service with a friend that employed this type of music

some 44 years ago, near where I grew up. EVERYTHING in the assembly was designed to appeal to the emotions, from the music to the “sermon”. No scripture was used that I can recall and no references given to those alluded to in order to look it up in your own Bible. No explanation or teaching at all. The singing was endless repetition of a chorus of a song. This all went on for about an hour and then the most important part of the ‘service’: the contribution! After the close one of the leaders looked at the basket and complained there were too many twenties and not enough fifties and hundreds. It was an emotionalistic fleecing scam, pure and simple, and I never went back.

I said all that to say this: Genuine worship will touch your emotions. It cannot be otherwise. If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and endured the Crucifixion for you, it will touch your heart. Contemplating Heaven or considering Hell will do the same. They will spur you to act in a reasonable manner in obeying the Gospel. Jesus said, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”* **John 4:24**. Both the spirit (the seat of man’s will includes his emotions) and truth must be present. Truth comes only from teaching, **John 17:17**. (Continued Next Week)

Cleveland Reddinger

MATERIALISM

He had it made! The produce of his land was so plentiful that he had to build larger barns to store all his grain and goods. In fact, his goods were so plentiful that he was planning to retire to live the good life. He said, *“Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”* “Who would not want to be in his position? He was rich. His business was booming. He was financially secure for years to come. He was living the proverbial “American dream.”

The rich man in Jesus’ parable (**Luke-12: 13-21**), however, is not someone to be admired. He is not set before us as a positive example. Rather, his lifestyle is one to be avoided at all costs.

The rich man made three lifestyle choices that caused him to be known as the rich fool. First, he was preoccupied with material possessions. “My crops, “my barns,” my grain,” and “my goods” were all he could think about. Second, he gave no thought to spiritual matters. He never said, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; give thanks to God and be generous to others.” Third, he laid up treasure for himself and was not rich toward God.

Sadly, this is the way that many have chosen to live their lives. Material objects, comforts, and

considerations are pursued while God, spiritual values, and others are neglected.

Materialism is the preoccupation with material objects, comforts, and considerations. It is the disinterest in or rejection of spiritual values. Materialism is something that followers of Jesus Christ must be on guard against. He taught that man’s life consists of much more than possessions. Life, according to Jesus, is about loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind. It is about loving our neighbor. It is impossible to live that way when materialism is present in our hearts. Jesus said, *“No one can serve two masters.... You cannot serve God and money”* (**Matt 6:24**).

Jesus told his disciples what they should be focused on. He said, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (**Matt. 6:19-21**). Jesus wants his disciples to: *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*” (**Matt. 6:33**).

Scripture teaches us about the fleeting nature of life and material possessions (**Prov. 23:4-5**). The rich fool never had the opportunity to live out his plans. His life ended and his abundant possessions went to someone else. He wasted his life focused on something that he was never really able to grasp. He should have lived differently.

Materialism will prevent us from serving God and growing spiritually. It creates a divided heart and causes us to live foolishly. There is more to life than money, possessions and comfort. God’s kingdom and his righteousness are far more valuable. What are we preoccupied with?

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There are two ways to get enough: One is to accumulate more and more, the other is to desire less.

G.K. Chesterton.

The world is full of people who are making a good living but living poor lives.

Source Unknown.

Life is tragic for the person who has plenty to live on but nothing to live for.

Source Unknown.

Psalm 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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NEWS AND NOTES: REMEMBER THE
SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS.

JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER,
JOANN MEYER, LINDIA JACKSON AND
THE MOTHER OF ALMA BAUMGARTNER

STEVE WIMP IS IN OVERLAND PARK
REHAB, ROOM 124 @ 75TH & METCALF

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:
EPHESIANS THRU COLOSSIANS
BILL MILLER TEACHER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: CHRISTIAN
STEWARDSHIP
RON PECK TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
LOVED, WASHED, MADE



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10