

What Does God Expect You to Put in the Offering Plate?

II Corinthians 8:1-15

Intro:

1. Are you confused on Sundays when the offering plate is passed about what to put in it?
2. What amount would give you the satisfaction of knowing you are pleasing God?
3. Let me share with you some Bible principles to help you to decide.

I. God Owns Everything.

- A. God is the Almighty Creator. He owns everything by right of creation.
 1. God said, . . . the whole earth is mine . . . - Ex 19:5.
 2. Again, The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it . . . - Ps 24:1.
 3. In talking to the Lord, Moses said, Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. - I Chron 29:14
 4. Ps 50:10 - for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. So the question, If He owns all that cattle, why doesn't He sell a few because I need the money? The answer:
- B. God has promised to provide all of your needs. Matt 6:33 - Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
 1. ILL: Feeding of the 5000 (Matt 14:13-21).
 2. ILL: Sending out the 72 (Lk 10:1-17).

II. He has Chosen You to Be His Steward

- A. A steward is a manager.
 1. **Steward** (οἰκονόμος) = a man who is “over a house”, one to whom the household has been entrusted, a guardian or a curator.
 2. Joseph was Potiphar's trusted steward. (Gen 39:1-6)
- B. God entrusted men to be His stewards.
 1. God put Adam in the garden & expected him to take care of it (Gen 2:15).
 2. I Pet 4:10 - Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
 3. I Cor 4:2 - Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
 4. I Tim 6:20 - Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge . . .
- C. God gave you delegated authority.
 1. ILL: Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-30).
 2. Each was given a responsibility, ample time & the master's trust to carry it out.
 3. Each was commended or criticized for their faithfulness in carrying out that task!

III. Do We Have Any Directions to Help Us Out?

- A. In the Old Testament, the direction was the tithe.
 1. So - should you use this example for your giving today?
 - a. Not if this standard is used legalistically!
 - b. ILL: The Parable of the Pharisee & the Tax Collector. Lk 18:11-12 - The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. (Because) I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get'. (and . . . and . . . and) (It's like saying, “Oh how wonderful I am!”)
 - c. He was so proud of himself because he kept all the rules even to excess.
 2. Legalistic giving can lead to pride, haughtiness & a “holier-than-thou” attitude.

B. In the New Testament, the direction was a cheerful heart. (II Cor 9:7)

1. Give sacrificially until it gives you joy!
2. ILL: Israel's joy when erecting the Tabernacle (Ex 36:6-7).
3. ILL: Our joy at the Tecate Christmas Party!

C. The Question!

1. The tithe was also used for civic goods & services as well as support of the Temple. So - Do you tithe what's left over after taxes?
 - a. Technically this is probably permissible to keep you from "robbing God" (Mal 3:8-10).
 - b. This is also a legalistic approach, so be careful. Lord Jesus criticized this kind of attitude when He said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. - Matt 23:23-24
 - c. Besides, think of what a pain it is to figure out; Form 1040 deductions, sales taxes on gasoline, groceries, retail purchases. You need a computer just to keep up with it!
2. Do you tithe the gross of your total income?
 - a. This is a much simpler method: just add up your total income & divide by 10!
 - b. However, this could tempt you with a legalistic attitude even more since you are giving more money this way.
3. Besides - is the "Name It & Claim It" theology true?
 - a. What is it? The more you store up in heaven by giving to the church, the more God will shower material blessings on you.
 - b. But what about our brothers & sisters in other parts of the world with nothing?

D. The Answer!

1. You simply give sacrificially until you find the joy?
 - a. God promises to provide an abundant life for you. Jn 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (have it abundantly).
 - b. But - this abundant life is not so much flooding your life with stuff as it is giving you a contentment & a peace with what you have!
2. The reason for sacrificial giving to the Lord is that's where the joy is!
3. This is one of the main tools God uses to draw you close to Him.
 - a. He wants you to give cheerfully (II Cor 9:7 & Act 11:29).
 - b. He wants you to give willingly (II Cor 8:12).

Do you want the close personal walk with the Lord
you've noticed some others have?
One of the major tools God provides to establish that intimacy
is sacrificial giving!
When you do it - your life receives blessing!