



GOD'S WORD ON GIVING

Just what does the Bible tell us about financial giving? It suggests it should be:

- **Supernatural:** All we have comes from God (Ps 24:1: 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it'). We give to his work because all we have is only on loan. More than that, we love him, we want to thank him – and make sure others taste his goodness. But often, we humans are not very good at being grateful. So it gets even better: God actually helps us to give, changing our hearts – as we see more of Jesus, and begin to learn what Paul calls the “grace of giving” (2 Cor 8:9). The whole character of God is to be generous and to overflow in kindness and blessing – that's what grace is. As his Spirit works in us, we grow more and more like Christ, giving more of ourselves and growing in generosity. It's like stepping onto a travelator of grace: we find that even the motivation and power to give comes from him, and we go so much further in our faith!
- **Sacrificial:** Paul's friends in Macedonia “gave as much as they were able, even beyond their ability” (2 Cor 8:3). Our Saviour's love for us isn't calculating or limited; the cross was costly and painful. We too should feel the cost of our giving: it's joyful, loving sacrifice for God and others. When that happens, it doesn't matter how much (or little) we give compared with others – or even if we can't afford a particular increase – it's what it shows of our love. That's why Jesus was once so impressed with a poor widow, who didn't give much compared with others, but he said her gift was far more generous. Because for her, it was sacrificial (Luke 21:1-4).
- **Systematic:** “Each one should give what they have decided” (2 Cor 9:7) “Each one should set aside a sum of money in keeping

with his income” (1 Cor 16:2). So we make time to plan what and how we will give, avoiding the “what’s in my wallet today?” syndrome. Many Christians follow the Old Testament pattern of giving 10% of their net income to God’s work, particularly our local church. We’d recommend that percentage as a great place to start if you’ve not done so before. But it’s not the place to finish. Some of us, blessed by God with more, can – and should – learn to give more than that.

- **Strategic:** The example of Jesus and the early church show that after providing for ourselves and our family, our main priority in using our money should be God’s kingdom through the local church, in particular:
 1. funding those engaged in the church’s public **teaching & evangelism** (1 Cor 9:3-14; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17-18);
 2. **supporting the vulnerable**, firstly in the church and then in our community (2 Cor 8:1-7; Gal 6:9-10);
 3. equipping those on **mission further afield**, across the world (Rom 15:24; Phil 1:5, 4:14-18; 2 Cor 11:9).
- **Symbolic:** There’s nothing more exciting and enriching in life than to give ourselves, all that we are and have, to God and his glory. The giving of our money is a tangible sign that we want to do that: “They gave themselves first to the Lord” (2 Cor 8:5). It’s a powerful witness to the outside world of what’s in our hearts: our adoration for Christ our Treasure, and how wonderful he is. That is why each one of us can be a ‘cheerful giver’ (2 Cor 9:7)!

