

## When you get a paycheck, whose money is it?

Psalms 24:1 "The earth is the LORD'S, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 – *"You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for **it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth...**"*

1Ch 29:14. "Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."

We will cease having difficulty with whether we should give money away when we finally get past this issue of to whom it belongs. Are you the owner or the manager? Are you the master or the steward? If we get that right, we begin to see how the question is not "How much should I give?" but "How should I use God's possessions entrusted to me?" Someone might think this is all just semantics, but I don't think so. I think it fundamentally changes the way we think about our possessions. Applying that, it means I begin to think of my income, my house, my car, my time, my life itself, as truly belonging to God. And I'm the manager of His possessions.

### **For what purposes does God desire his resources used?**

Jesus contrasts two managers. The first manager uses the resources to do what the master requested. The manager/steward was to use the master's food to feed the master's other servants. I don't want to press the parable too far but it is at least consistent with the rest of the chapter and the rest of the New Testament to see that the master's desire was that the manager use the master's resources to meet the needs of others. The other manager uses the master's resources to satisfy his own desires. Thinking of the resources around him **as his own**, he began to freely use the resources for himself. Thinking of the resources around us as **our own**, we begin to freely use them as **we** desire. Even if we erroneously believe that only 10% belongs to God, we get so caught up in spending the remaining 90% that before long we must borrow from the 10% to make ends meet.

God says he wants his resources, entrusted to us, spent in the following ways:

Paying taxes

Meeting the NEEDS of our family

Meeting the NEEDS of others (through his church and directly)

Doing things or owning things we desire.

**If spending in any one, two or three of these areas robs us of the ability to meaningfully participate in the other(s) we are not spending God's money entrusted to us in the way he wishes.**

## **What does call God call it when we refuse to give?**

Mal 3:8.

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “In tithes and offerings.

2Co 9:6.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>2Co 9:7</sup> Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver

## **Why do we give? *Because we've been infected with grace.***

The Chicago Tribune (12/24/95) ran a story about George White. He lived in a rented room at the YMCA, wore clothes that were given to him, had shoes held together with rubber bands and spent his mornings napping in a metal chair in the 18<sup>th</sup> precinct police station. Two officers took an interest in the old man and learned that each morning Billy the Greek over at the G&W grill gave George a free breakfast. The two officers and their families decided to have George over for Christmas dinner. Then they gave him several gifts, which he opened very carefully. As they drove him back to the “Y” that day George asked if the presents were really his to keep. When he was assured they were, he asked if he could stop at the G&W grill. And with that he began re-wrapping the gifts. When they walked into the grill, Billy the Greek was there and George said, ‘You’ve been good to me Billy, (and as he handed him the gifts) he said, ‘now I can be good to you - Merry Christmas.’

## **How much should we give to others (church, charity and missions)?**

Mark 12:41ff “Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.”

***Generosity is not measured by how much one gives  
but by how much one has left.***

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