
Following Jesus -- Course A

Instructions:

Please take all courses in order as listed on our home page (the computer will ask!). If you have not done all the lessons of previous courses, please [click here to go to the beginning](#).

If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at www.BibleStudyLessons.com and click on the link for the **answer quiz** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers to us and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed in the menus on our web site.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

Giving to Support Church Work

Following Jesus -- Course A, Lesson #8

Introduction:

Like other organizations, churches need financial income to accomplish their work. So God has authorized churches to take up collections from the members. The purpose of this study is to consider the Christian's responsibility to support the work of the local church financially.

Please consider the following gospel principles regarding giving.

I. Prosperity and Ability

A. The Old Law Taught Tithing.

>>> Please read Leviticus 27:30–33. <<<

1 How much did Israel give? (a) everything, (b) a tithe (one tenth), (c) 20%; (d) no amount was specified. Answer: _____.

Israelites also gave free-will offerings, taxes, and other gifts to support the religious service and civil government (Genesis 14:20; 28:20-22; Num. 18:21-32; Mal. 3:7-10; Ex. 35:29; 1 Chron. 29:1-19; Deut. 12:5-19).

>>> Please read Hebrews 10:9,10. <<<

2&3 What did Jesus do with the two covenants? Answer: Jesus took away the _____ covenant and established the _____.

Think: Should churches today require Christians to tithe? (See also Rom. 7:1-7; Col. 2:14,16; Gal. 3:24,25.) The Old Testament nevertheless teaches useful lessons (1 Cor. 10:6,11; Rom. 15:4). If people under the law were able to give at least 1/10 of their income to support religious work, why wouldn't we be able to do the same? Remember this as we study.

(Note: For more information showing that the Old Law has been removed, please see the links at the end of this study.)

B. The New Law Teaches Giving according to Prosperity and Ability.

>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 16:1,2. <<<

4 How should churches obtain funds? (a) bingo and raffles, (b) bake sales and rummages, (c) a collection on the first day of the week. Answer: _____.

5 How should each member determine how much to give? Answer: Each member should give as he has _____.

Think: What does "prospering" include: "take-home" pay? "gross pay"? income from investments? income from a family-owned business?

>>> Please read Acts 11:29. <<<

6 How did each person determine how much to give? Answer: Each person gave according to (in proportion to) his _____.

Think: If our income increases, should we increase our contribution? Explain. (See also 2 Cor. 8:12; Mark 12:41-44; Matt. 25:14-30.)

Think: Principles of giving apply to Christians in every place and in every age. Compared to other people, is the average American relatively poor or wealthy? How should this affect our giving? (Luke 12:48)

II. Stewardship and Sharing

A. We Should Give to Share in Church Work.

>>> Please read **Philippians 4:14–16**. <<<

7 In what work did the church in Philippi have fellowship (share)? (a) they operated a college, (b) they sent money to support Paul as a preacher, (c) they built a hospital, (d) they invested in the stock market. Answer: _____.

Note: Local churches today likewise need money so the gospel can be taught in our assemblies and classes, gospel meetings, literature, etc. (See also 1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 11:22–26; 1 Cor. 9:6–14; 2 Cor. 11:8,9.)

>>> Please read **Acts 4:32–35**. <<< (1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 8,9.)

8 What did this local church use money for? (a) help needy members, (b) elect a politician, (c) build a gym, (d) buy an organ. Answer: _____.

To the extent we are able, we should share in the church's work. Remember that the more we give, the more the church can accomplish.

B. We Are Stewards of God's Possessions.

A steward is a person responsible to use someone else's property to accomplish work for the owner.

>>> Please read **Psalms 24:1,2; Haggai 2:8**. <<<

9 Who owns all things on earth? Who gave us "our possessions"? Answer: The earth and everything on it belong to _____.

We "possess" things only in contrast to other people. But God is the real owner, not us. He has the ultimate control, for He is the Maker.

(Cf. Psalm 50:10,12; 1 Chron. 29:11–14; Deut. 8:11,17,18; 10:14.)

Think: The Christians in Acts 4:32–35 gave generously because they realized their possessions really belonged to God. How would this same understanding help us to give more generously?

Giving to the church just transfers funds from one of God's stewards to another of His stewards. Giving does not do God a favor. It just fulfills our duty as stewards to use God's possessions for His purposes.

C. This Stewardship Is a Duty of All Christians.

For each passage below, tell who gave money:

>>> Please read **Acts 11:29**. <<<

10 Who gave according to his ability? Answer: Each _____ gave according to his ability.

>>> Please read **1 Corinthians 16:1,2**. <<<

11 On the first day who should give as prospered? Answer: Paul said, "_____ of you" should give.

Think: In most congregations a few members give most of the money, even though others could give more. If you are truly able to give only a small amount, then God is pleased. But if you could give more but choose not to, are you a faithful steward? (Cf. Acts 2:44,45.)

D. We Will Be Judged for Our Giving.

A property owner has the right to hold a steward accountable for how he uses the property (Luke 16:1,2; 12:42–46; 1 Cor. 4:2).

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 5:10. <<<

12 Who will judge us for our stewardship in giving? Answer: We must all appear before the judgment seat of _____.

(Cf. Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:12; Matt. 25:31–46.)

III. Regularity

>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 16:2. <<<

13 When should we give to the church? (a) every day, (b) once a year, (c) three times a week, (d) on the first day of the week. Answer: _____.

Think: The Mosaic Law said the sabbath should be remembered on the seventh day of the week (Ex. 20:8–10), so how often was that? If your employer said, "You will be paid on the last day of the week," how often would you expect to be paid? The New Testament says to have the Lord's Supper and giving on the "first day of the week" (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). So how often should we give?

Think: Do denominations follow the Bible when they take up collections on weekdays? What should we conclude about a Christian who could give on a first day of the week, yet he fails to do so?

Do you give to the church regularly?

(Note: If you would like more information about the significance of the first day of the week, see our links at the end of this lesson.)

IV. Purpose

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 9:7. <<<

14 How should we give according to this verse? We should (a) give as we purposed, (b) give a little of whatever we happen to have with us, (c) we must always give 10% of our income. Answer: _____.

>>> Please read Acts 11:29. <<<

15 Who decided how much these people would give? (a) the preacher, (b) the elders, (c) each disciple determined for himself. Answer: _____.

Some people think more carefully about buying a new pair of shoes than they do about giving to the church! Meditate on these Bible principles, analyze your prosperity and ability, then decide how much

to give.

V. Love, Liberality, and Cheerfulness

A. Giving Lovingly.

>>> Please read John 3:16. <<<(Cf. Galatians 2:20.)

16&17 How did the Father express His love for us? Answer: God so loved the world that He _____ His only begotten _____.

Scriptural love is an unselfish concern for the well being of others. It motivates people to give what others need but are unable to do for themselves. (See also John 15:13; 1 Cor. 13:4–7; 1 John 4:9; Eph. 5:2,25.)

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 8:8,24. <<<

18 What is the connection between our giving and love? Answer: Our giving proves the sincerity of our _____.

Think: If you were lost and the church could teach you if it had the money, or if you had a genuine material need and the church could help you if it had the money, how generously would you want the church members to give? (Matt. 7:12; 22:39; 1 John 3:16–18).

Every good thing you have, physically or spiritually, came from God. Now God asks you to show your love by supporting the church.

B. Give Liberally.

>>> Please read James 1:17. <<<

19 What kind of gifts does God give to people? Answer: Every good and perfect _____ comes from God.

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 9:6. <<<

20 What must we do to reap bountifully? Answer: To reap bountifully we must _____ bountifully.

Think: At the Judgment Day do we want a bountiful harvest or a sparing one (Gal. 6:8)? Can we reap that harvest by being stingy in our giving?

C. Give Cheerfully.

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:7. <<<

21 How should we give? (a) cheerfully, (b) grudgingly, (c) unwillingly, (d) of necessity, (e) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

Think: Should we grieve over what we have given, feeling sorry that we had to give so much? Should we give because someone pressured or embarrassed us? Or should we consider it a privilege to give?

>>> Please read Acts 20:35. <<<

22&23 What results in the greatest blessing to us? Answer: It is more blessed to _____ than to _____.

Surely God does not need our gifts. Giving is for our good! The reason many people get so little out of their religion is that they put so little into it. To really be blessed in God's service, we must give of ourselves.

(See also Phil. 4:14–18; Mark 10:29,30; Luke 6:38; Prov. 11:24,25.)

VI. SACRIFICE

A. God Sacrificed Much for Us.

>>> Please read John 15:13. <<< (Cf. John 3:16.)

24 What sacrifice did Jesus make for us? Answer: Jesus gave His _____ for us.

God did not keep His best possessions for Himself, giving us the leftovers. He gave the best He had, though it cost Him great pain and sacrifice. (See Phil. 2:5–8; Rom. 6:23; 8:32 1 Tim. 2:6; Gal. 1:4; 2:20).

B. We Should also Sacrifice.

Jesus' example is a lesson showing how we should give. He left the riches of heaven to live in poverty on earth, so we could receive the riches of heaven (2 Corinthians 8:9).

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 8:1–4. <<<

25 Who else gave sacrificially as an example to us? (a) the Pharisees, (b) the Macedonians, (c) Ananias and Sapphira, (d) no one. Answer: _____.

>>> Please read Mark 12:41–44. <<<

26 How much of what she had did the poor widow give? Answer: She gave _____ of what she had.

Think: Is God impressed by the size of our gift or by the degree of our sacrifice? The gospel does not require us to give all we have (cf. Acts 5:4), but it does require sacrifice.

What things have you sacrificed so you could give to the church? Does your giving to God show sacrifice for Him as He sacrificed for you?

(See Mal. 1:13,14; Phil. 4:18; Rom. 12:1; Gen. 4:4; 2 Sam. 24:24.)

VII. Priorities and Total Commitment

A. Serving God Must Be Our Highest Priority in Life.

>>> Please read Matthew 6:19–24,33; 16:24–27. <<<

27 What should be our greatest priority in life? (a) mammon (riches), (b) gaining the world, (c) God's kingdom and righteousness. Answer: _____.

Think: Material things can be a very corrupting influence (1 Tim. 6:6–10,17–19; Luke 12:15–21; Deut. 8:11–18; Matt. 19:23,24; 1 John 2:15ff). For the average American, is his way of living determined more by material things or by a dedicated desire to please God?

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 8:5. <<<

28 Why did the Macedonians give generously? Answer: The Macedonians first gave _____ to the Lord.

Think: Are people usually willing to sacrifice for things that are really important to them? If serving God becomes the most important thing in our lives, how will that affect our giving?

B. Consider Your Priorities.

Budgeting involves studying what we spend in order to make sure we spend wisely for that which is most important. Each of us should study our finances in light of our priorities. If serving God is your highest priority, then it should show in the way you spend your money.

Suggestion: Try writing down how much you spend in a typical week (or month) for housing, food, clothing, transportation, entertainment, etc. Then compare these items to your church contribution. What do you learn about your priorities?

Some say, "I'd give more, but I can't because I have so many bills to pay." But what are your bills for? Often we buy to please ourselves because we want the things other people have, then we do not give as we prospered because we "have so many bills to pay"!

If you considered your priorities more carefully, would you be paying less for personal desires and giving to the church more generously? Is God really first in your life, if you are spending more on recreation and entertainment than you are giving to the church (cf. 2 Tim. 3:4)?

Does your giving reflect proper priorities and commitment in life?

Conclusion

There are many ways to give of ourselves in God's service besides just giving money to support the church. Nevertheless, giving to the church is a fundamental duty of all Christians.

Before concluding this lesson, please consider some thought questions to help you determine whether your giving is pleasing to God.

1. How much am I sacrificing to support God's work? How much am I really giving up in comparison to what I have left?

2. Am I carrying my fair share of the responsibility to support the work of the church, or am I leaving this up to others when I really could be giving more?

3. Am I seeking to give as much as I can, or do I try to "get by" with giving just a little to the Lord and spending the rest to please myself and my family?
4. How does my church contribution compare to other items in my budget? Does my giving indicate that the church and service to God are really the most important things in life to me?
5. Do I give the way I would want other people to give if they were giving to meet my need – if I were the lost person who needed to hear the gospel, or if I were the preacher or the Christian in need?
6. Do I give as much as Jesus would give if He were in my place? If He had my income and my family obligations, would He give more? (1 Pet. 2:21)
7. How much would I give each Sunday if I had to personally put the gift into the nail-pierced hand of Jesus Himself? Would I give more than I do now? Would I feel ashamed of what I give now? Remember, whatever I am giving now, He does know, and He will judge me for it.

Is God pleased with your giving?

Personal application questions:

(These questions are for you to ponder. Your answers will help us understand your thinking, however they will not affect your "score.")

29 How important do you consider the work of the local church to be? _____

30 How would you describe your own attitude toward giving to support the local church?

Note: This lesson is **not** a request for funds to be sent to support this web site. These lessons are provided free of charge. We do encourage our students to obey the gospel conditions to be forgiven of sins. Then we urge you to become part of a faithful local congregation of God's people, such as we have described elsewhere in these studies. Then you should obey God's teaching to support that local church financially, as discussed in this lesson.

Note: We would be glad to help in your attempt to learn the truth of God's word about salvation or about Jesus' church. If you would like to find a faithful church in your area or someone to personally discuss the Scriptures with you, please let us know when you complete your answer form.

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, click on this link to submit your answers.

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Topics for further Bible study

Must We Keep the Law of Moses Today?

The Importance of the Church

The Day for the Lord's Supper

(This study is helpful because it emphasizes the first day of the week.)

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