

What's the Point *What's the point of giving?* Part 6

Intro: Out of all activities and practices of the church none is more controversial than the practice of giving. Social media is filled with criticisms and judgments aimed at churches who have the audacity of requesting their attenders give financially to that local church. People really get upset over this money issue.

- Now of course, there are churches and church leaders who have abused their authority for financial gain. BUT, it's unfair to put every church in that category. Most churches and church leaders simply want to make a difference and advance the Gospel in their communities. They want to love people and be stewards of the sources God has entrusted to them.
- That being said, giving is still one practice every church does in its own unique way. Some are pretty aggressive at it (passing the plate) while others are more low key (us)
- BUT the question remains... "What's the point of giving?"

1. Giving protects us from materialism

I Tim. 6:17-18 "Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others." (NLT)

What's materialism? **Definition:** a tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual values.

- We are all susceptible to materialism. We live in a very materialistic culture. We don't have to be rich to struggle with the influence of money and possessions. The pursuit or desire for money and wealth can hinder us following Jesus.
- I realize most of us don't consider ourselves rich but compared to the rest of the world, we are.
- Global wealth data: If you had a salary of \$70K a year, this puts you in the global 1% of annual income. Why do I point this out? Because I Tim says "those who are rich in this world." This is for us!
- I realize in the US this doesn't make us rich, but compared to the world, it does. I share this just for perspective. We are a wealthy culture and we need to embrace generosity so we don't value material things over our relationship with Jesus.
- Generosity is a constant reminder to us to not allow materialism to drive our lives and our decisions. It reminds us to choose biblical values and God's kingdom over worldly values and my personal kingdom.

2. Giving helps maintain our loyalties

Matt. 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.” (NLT)

- Generosity helps us maintain our loyalty to Jesus rather than money. Let me ask you a question. How else do you prove you are not more loyal to money or it's pursuit? How do you prove you are not enslaved to money? You choose to be generous.
- If you cannot part with your money, it controls you. It is a higher value than obedience to Jesus. BUT you're thinking, "I don't have any money to give away?"
 - If you're in so much debt that you can't give, you serve money
 - If you are obsessed with building your portfolio you won't give, you serve money
 - If you're saving for your dream house – or boat – or truck you choose not to give, you serve money.
 - If you think that your money and possessions belong to you, you serve money
 - If the topic of giving and generosity makes you uncomfortable, you probably serve money.
- Giving is the antidote for materialism and divided loyalties. When I use my money to advance the Kingdom of God and its values, it shows where my loyalties are.

3. Giving meets the needs of others

2 Cor. 9:12 “So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.” (NLT)

- Notice Paul calls generosity the “ministry of giving.” Notice the result of this ministry. The needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met. Giving to your church helps to meet the needs of others.
- Foothills is committed to using the generosity of God's people to meet needs in our community and beyond.
 - Food Pantry
 - Backpack buddies
 - Adult Center
 - FSM
 - Hope Counseling
 - Guatemala
- Every week you can come down here and see where your generosity is going and what it is doing in the lives of others.

4. Giving helps other people see God

“...and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.”

- I just love this result from our giving. Not only do we meet tangible needs, but our generosity also impacts their faith. They experience God through our giving. It goes beyond the physical into the spiritual. They thank God for taking care of them.
- Our physical generosity has a spiritual result. WHY? Because God uses our lives as His hands and feet of provision. God moves in the hearts of His people to reflect God's heart.
- If you have ever been on the receiving end of generosity from others, you know what I'm talking about. There have been times in my life when God has used other people to meet a need, and the result is spiritual.
 - Not only did I feel loved by the person meeting the need, but I felt loved by God. I felt His care, His compassion, His provision, His love for me personally. Then, my heart was filled with gratitude.
- As we met needs in our community, we want people to give thanks to God. We want them to know that God sees them and cares for them. How are they going to know this unless the church becomes the literal hands and feet of Jesus. Most people need to see the love of Jesus through others before they experience the love of Jesus for themselves. Generosity does this!

5. Giving helps us experience God

2 Cor. 9:7-8 "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others." (NLT)

- Not only does God love it when we give cheerfully, He will continue to bless us financially so we can continue giving to others. He makes us into a channel for His resources and generosity to flow through.
- God doesn't ask us to give so we have less. He asks us to be generous so He can bless us with even more so we can be even more generous. We become a river of His resources.
- Therefore, not only do the recipients of our generosity experience God so do we in an ever increasing measure. Do you see how God wants to use your life to make a difference in the lives of others?
- Most people think they will never have enough money to be a blessing like this. BUT, as we choose generosity, God promises to bless this behavior and make us into channels of His blessing.
- God desires this quality so much in His people He promises to bless you if you practice it. God gives us resources to give away. As you give away more God promises to give you more.
- Experiencing this dynamic with God is truly fun and amazing. We often forget that scripture tells us we have been invited into this wonderful partnership with Jesus. God wants to show you this partnership. It's not all on you! Our Kingdom partner is pretty wealthy.

- I have told people for years you can operate from one of two Kingdoms. This worldly kingdom has a scarcity issue. God's Kingdom knows no such thing. When you finally change Kingdoms, giving is pretty fun.

6. Giving resources the mission of the church

1 Cor. 16:1-2 "Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God's people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. ² On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned..." (NLT)

- Paul is talking about developing the habit of giving so we can consistently meet needs. He's asking the church to develop a giving habit weekly. This giving habit resources the church so it can meet needs – advance the Gospel – and fulfill its mission.
- I realize there are some people who think churches shouldn't ask people to give. First, that perspective is simply unbiblical. The bible commands it. Secondly, influence is not free. God has called Foothills to influence in a big way. We literally minister to 1000s of people weekly. That's not cheap.
- We have a building that is often open 7 days a week touching people's lives in a variety of ways. Many church buildings are vacant all week long and only used on Sundays. Not ours! This place is hopping all week long and on Sundays.
- That being said, our PGE bill is a little bit bigger than yours. Our utility bill is big because we have a big weekly influence. Praise God for this. I have no problem with my money going to take care of this facility because this facility allows us to love and take care of people.
- Question: Do you have a giving habit? It doesn't have to be weekly. It can be bi-weekly / monthly – but it does need to be consistent to be a habit. If the answer is no, will you begin this giving journey? Will you start using your money to help this church move the mission forward impacting people's lives?
- Here in a moment, I will explain how to do this, but let me mention one final thing.

7. Giving is an area to grow in

2 Cor. 8:7 "Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving." (NLT)

- Our giving is like any other area of growth in our character following Jesus. We continue growing in our faith – continue growing in our serving – continue growing in our knowledge – continue growing in our love – AND we continue growing in this gracious act of giving.
- For some of you this is your time to begin this journey. But for others who currently do practice giving, this is your time to grow. Paul is telling the church to excel at giving not just do it. He wants the church to be amazing at it.

- For those of you who currently give...thank you! BUT, is it time to grow and excel even more? Is it time to trust more? Is it time to grow?
- At this point I could tell you what we need financially as a church to move the mission forward as we look at 2026. I could give you an amount that we feel is needed to do what we feel God is calling us to do. BUT I'm not going to do this.
- WHY? Because I don't want you to give simply because we have a need. I want you to give because you're following Jesus. I want you to give because you believe God's word is your authority and you believe that obedience equals blessing. I want you to give because you believe in the mission of the church and reaching people for Christ.
- Needs come and go but the truth of God's word stands forever. I want you to give because your decision is founded on something that is true and will never change.
- Therefore will some of you begin to give and will some of you grow in your giving? WHY? Because this is what God asks of us.

HOW TO GIVE?

- Methods of giving
 - Giving boxes / envelopes
 - Online giving platform
- Where to direct my giving?
 - General fund is the most important and strategic place – explain
 - Designated funds / restricted funds
 - These funds can only be used for what you gave them for
 - Food Pantry
 - Backpack Buddies
 - Guatemala

Please do not send all your giving to designated funds – this actually hinders the church.

- **Illustrate with table** - One big bucket and other smaller containers
 - We can take money out of the general fund to support any other need but we cannot take money out of a designated fund to support the general fund.

Let's excel in this. Let's keep growing in this. Let's continue partnering with Jesus seeing the transformation of lives and communities. This is the point of our giving.

Prayer