

WORD WORSHIP IN GIVING

The church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ serves in the greatest mission effort under Heaven. We know that the *“Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10). Money is necessary in carrying out that mission. Therefore, the proper use of money becomes an important theme in the New Testament.

The Bible describes and characterizes the Giver with the following terms: Stewardship, Fellowship, Discipleship, and Love.

Stewardship – Stewards are those that are seen as trustees or caretakers of that which belongs to another. The apostles tell us that we are to be *“as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”* (1 Peter 4:10) and that we must be *“faithful”* (1 Corinthians 4:2). Jesus taught of a steward that *“had wasted his goods”* (Luke 16:1). Like this man we, too, will give an account of our stewardship (Romans 14:12). Stewardship has everything to do with the way we are using, spending, and living. As stewards, God does not allow us to take out all that we want or feel that we need and give what’s left over. Remember, He demands a *“first fruit offering”* (Leviticus 23:9ff; Matthew 6:25-34). When it comes to our giving each Lord’s Day, it is not a question of how much of our substance we are willing to give, but **“how much of what the Lord has entrusted to us shall I keep?”**

Fellowship – Fellowship is the idea of cooperation, coordination, mutual participation and joint effort. On that first Pentecost Day after the Lord’s Resurrection, the brand-new Lord’s church (Acts 2:1, 37-38, 41-47) *“continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (v. 42). Fellowship spans the whole of the Christian’s life by way of love (1 Pet. 1:22; Colossians 2:2), by way of suffering (Galatians 6:2), by way of service (Gal. 2:9-10; Philippians 1:5; 4:6), and by way of our giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:12-15, NKJV). We learn that *“each one”* is to give is seen as an individual responsibility (1 Cor. 16:1-2) according what he/she has (2 Cor. 8:12) that there may be an *“equality”* (2 Cor. 8:14-15). This is each one giving according to their ability taking individual responsibility (equality) in the work to be done. Then one can be said to be **“in full fellowship”** by doing their part in the Lord’s church.

Discipleship – Discipleship requires self-sacrifice and a willingness to give up the things of the world. Jesus gave this example (Luke 9:57-62) of Himself, but also spoke of His disciples (which includes us, too): *“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life”* (Mt. 19:27-29). Paul says of Jesus, *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich”* (2 Cor. 8:9). This is written in the context of the discussion of the Corinthians’ giving and again a reminder of a sacrificial life is required to be a disciple of Christ.

Love – Love is the very motivation for our giving. The Macedonians mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 first “gave of themselves” and then gave out of “their deep poverty.” In that same context, he admonishes the Corinthians “to prove the sincerity of their love” (v. 8, 24). It is true that we are commanded to give, but even more are we commanded to live a faithful life in Christ, which shows to others by our salt and light what is most important is the great redemption work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May we each consider our lives and the work as we give.