

Giving Money to God's Work – as Students!!!

Money is a big concern for all students, and as Christian students it can be difficult to know exactly how to treat it. In the bible, God clearly tells all Christians to respond to his indescribable gift of his Son to us by worshipping him in every aspect of our lives. This includes being responsible in the way we treat the money he has given us and giving some of what he has given us back to him for his purposes. However, we might rightly still have some questions:

- If I'm borrowing money, is the money mine to give?
- How can I afford to give, if money is quite tight already?
- Can't I just money in later life when I've got enough?
- Who should I give to?
- How much should I give?

My aim in writing this is not to make you feel guilty, to pressure you into giving, or even to directly answer all of the above questions, but to encourage you towards the **blessing** of giving by looking over a few verses from the bible

Background in the bible

The bible gives us many examples, encouragements, warnings and instructions about giving and I can't cover them all! The first example, a fundamental one, can be found in the book of Genesis when Abraham gave a tenth of all that he had to Melchizedek who was a priest of God, after God has saved Abraham from his enemies. (See Genesis 14 and Hebrews 7). Giving is therefore **not** a legal principle, although it is also a big part of the law of Moses, but an **act of worship** in response to what God has done for us and therefore a part of our relationship with God through Jesus.

Some advice and encouragement from Paul

By far the best place to get advice on any matter is in the inspired word of God. One of the most useful passages on this subject, which I strongly recommend that you read, is in **2 Corinthians 8&9**.

Paul is writing to the church in Corinth, encouraging them, (and equally us) to give, using the example of the churches in Macedonia.

- The first thing the Macedonians did was to **give themselves to the Lord** (8:5), making their whole lives available to God. This is the first thing we should do and if it is, then giving money should be a comparatively easy (though very important) thing!
- They gave **without being told to do so** (just like Abraham) and considered it a privilege which they pleaded for! (8:3,4)
- Even though they were **very poor**, they gave generously, even giving more than they could afford! (8:2,3) (see also Luke 21:1-4)
- It all sprang out of the **grace** that God given them (8:1). **Pray** that God gives you this same grace, it's not natural to us as sinful humans!

From verses 7 to 9, Paul goes on the challenge the Corinthians (and equally us) to do the same as the Macedonians.

- He repeats what he told these same people before, that they are not lacking in any spiritual gift (1 Cor. 1:7) and that they excel in everything. He therefore challenges them to make sure that they really do "excel in this grace of giving". **Do we excel in the grace of giving?!**
- Paul emphasises that he is not encouraging legalism (like that of the Pharisees see Matthew 23:23-24), but he says that giving is actually a **test of the sincerity of our love for God!** (v8)

- Just in case we had forgotten (!) he then reminds us **why** we should love and obey God – because Jesus humbled himself to the incredible extent that he became a man and suffered the most humiliating of deaths which gave those who believe in his name something that none of us could possibly achieve or deserve – eternal life! (v9) (See also Philippians 2:8, John 5:24)
- God made the first move by paying the ultimate price for the ultimate gift of grace to us, sinners. This is the ultimate example of giving and **we are to respond** in worship, a part of which is giving money.

From here to the end of chapter 9, Paul explains a few more very important things about giving, including what our attitude should be, how to decide what to give and the results of giving.

- We should **decided in our hearts** what to give (9:7). It's not an 'on the spot', random decision, but something that needs to be considered in our hearts and in prayer.
- We should not be reluctant to give, or do it out of duty, but we should give out of love and **cheerfully** (9:7). It should be a **joy** like it was for the Macedonians.
- When we give to God with the right attitude, **he will bless us!** (9:6, 10). The good things which God gives us in the greater measure in response to our generosity, are far more valuable than the money that we give to his work. This should never be our reason for giving, but is nevertheless an encouragement and a reassurance.
- We should remember that **it's all his anyway** and he is capable of giving us all that we need in every way! (9:8)
- **Chapter 9 verses 12-15 are the most encouraging of all – READ THEM!**

Back to those tricky questions...

Is the money mine to give? First let's remember that according to the bible, it's right to give a proportion of what we have earned ourselves (e.g. from a part time or summer job) to God's work, remembering that right and wrong reasons for doing so mentioned above. If you are borrowing from the bank, or your parents with a view to future repayment, then the question is about what the money is for. If we have the right to spend it on luxuries (like nights out, music, the cinema, sports, a mobile phone, drinks, etc) then surely we have the right to give some to the most important thing in life – God! Remember that giving should be joyful worship and we should treat **all** of the money we have as God's because it's his gift to us in the first place!

How much should I give? It's not right to get hugely further into debt by giving too much, it's your attitude that counts and not the amount. I'm certainly not saying that 10% of all that you spend should necessarily be given away, if you are a student who is borrowing money. However, I would encourage you to give regularly, no matter how small the amount, because **worship is a joy, a blessing, a command and a full time principle**. You should give what you have decided in your heart to give, as we saw in the bible study.

Who can I give to? The list is endless, the key thing is that it's for God's purposes. I would recommend that as well as giving to overseas aid and mission, we should **give to the needs around us** that we can see directly. It's good to give to your home/and or local **church**, and as CU treasurer, I'd say give to **CU!** What greater need do people have than to hear the gospel? The CU very gratefully gets the biggest part of its money from **YOU** (the member) as well as from churches and past members. We need money purely for our **mission** to campus (gospel booklets, speakers, food, leaflets, posters, resources, carol service, t-towels etc.), supporting main meeting **speakers** (not much given the amount of time and effort they put in, in preparing, speaking and travelling and the value of their teaching to us!). We're talking thousands of pounds a year!!

How can I give to the CU? It's easy! The best way of making a committed, regular donation to CU is by standing order. It makes budgeting easier so we can make the most of the money we have. Just ask me for the sort code and account number to set it up with your bank. As little as 50p a week is a great and vital help! You can give through online

donations – check the finance page of the CU website. You can give me a cheque if you like, made payable to ‘UWCU’ or if you would like to give cash please don’t hesitate to come up to me after a main meeting.

“When you give money away, you are giving away your false security – and that must be good.” – Martin Luther

“It’s not a question of how much money we give to God, but how much of His money we keep for ourselves!”

Any questions – come talk to me or email me at treasurer@warwickcu.org