



## Giving From the Bottom: Giving God First Place, Not Leftovers Series

### God's Plan for Your Financial Wealth

#### Session Subtitle

#### Giving God First Place, Not Leftovers

#### Purpose of the Lesson

To teach that giving is not only a practice for the wealthy. Giving is worship, trust, obedience, and heart training. However, it must be taught with wisdom and without manipulation, especially among persons living at or below minimum wage.

#### Main Idea

Poverty does not cancel worship, but giving must never be used to exploit the poor. The believer gives because God is Lord, not because a preacher pressures him, not because he is trying to impress people, and not because he believes giving is a gamble to force God to make him rich.

#### Key Texts

##### Malachi 3:10

("Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.")

##### 2 Corinthians 9:7

("Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.")

##### Mark 12:41-44

("And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.")

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Matthew 6:21

("For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.")

### Opening Discussion

Ask the class:

Why do some people find it difficult to give when they are struggling financially?

Allow brief responses. Common answers may include fear, lack of income, debt, distrust of churches, bad experiences with manipulative leaders, household pressure, or the feeling that "I barely have enough for myself."

Then say:

This lesson is not designed to pressure the poor. It is designed to teach that God must not be removed from our finances simply because life is hard. If God is Lord over our worship, our body, our family, and our future, then He must also be Lord over our money.

### 1. Giving Begins with Lordship

The first issue in giving is not money. It is lordship.

Matthew 6:24

("No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.")

Jesus did not say that money itself is evil. He warned that money can become a master. Mammon speaks of wealth, possessions, and the power money seems to promise. Money can begin to tell people how to live, who to honour, what to fear, and what to trust.

A believer must therefore ask:

Does God rule my money, or does money rule my heart?

Giving is one of the ways God trains the believer to keep money in its proper place. When I give to God, I am declaring that money is not my source. God is my source.

Deuteronomy 8:18

("But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth...")

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The believer must remember that even the ability to work, think, earn, learn, sell, serve, and build comes from God.

## 2. Giving While Poor Is Not Shameful

Jesus deliberately noticed the poor widow.

Mark 12:42

("And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.")

The Bible does not hide her poverty. She was poor, yet she gave. Jesus did not despise her offering because it was small. He honoured it because of the heart behind it.

Mark 12:43-44

("And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.")

This does not mean that poor people should be pressured to give their last dollar every week. The passage shows that Jesus measures giving differently from men. Men measure the amount. God measures the sacrifice, trust, and heart.

The widow teaches us that poverty does not remove a person from meaningful worship. A small gift given sincerely may be greater before God than a large gift given carelessly.

## 3. Giving Must Not Be Manipulated

2 Corinthians 9:7

("Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.")

This verse protects the giver from manipulation.

Paul says giving should not be:

Grudgingly: with resentment, bitterness, or unwillingness.

Of necessity: under compulsion, pressure, intimidation, or emotional force.

A church should never manipulate the poor by suggesting that God will curse them unless they give beyond wisdom, or that they must give a certain amount to receive a miracle. Giving is holy, but manipulation is not.

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A biblical teacher must avoid statements like:

“Give this amount or you do not have faith.”

“Borrow money to sow this seed.”

“Your miracle depends on this special offering.”

“God told me ten people must give this exact amount.”

That kind of pressure can abuse sincere people, especially those who are already financially vulnerable.

The right teaching is this:

Give faithfully. Give worshipfully. Give honestly. Give according to Scripture. Give with wisdom. Give without show. Give without fear. Give because God is worthy.

#### 4. Tithes Teach First Place

Malachi 3:10

("Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house...")

The tithe teaches priority. It says, “God is first, not last.”

In the Old Testament, the tithe supported the house of God and the work connected to worship. In the life of the church, giving supports ministry, teaching, care, missions, evangelism, administration, and the needs of the work of God.

Proverbs 3:9-10

("Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.")

The principle is honour. Giving should not be what is left after appetite, pressure, entertainment, and impulse spending have taken their share.

For the low-income believer, the discipline may be hard, but the principle still matters. God must not be treated as an afterthought.

Practical example:



If someone receives \$16,000 for the week, giving should be planned before spending begins. The person should not wait until food, transport, data, snacks, loans, and household demands consume everything, then say, "I have nothing for God."

## 5. Giving Is Part of the Budget, Not a Substitute for Budgeting

Some people give, but they do not budget. That is not wisdom.

Luke 14:28

("For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost...")

A believer should not use giving as an excuse for disorder. If a person gives but refuses to track spending, refuses to reduce waste, refuses to deal with debt, and refuses to increase income, that person is not walking in full financial wisdom.

Giving does not cancel the need to:

Plan food money.

Pay rent or household contribution.

Support children responsibly.

Pay debts honestly.

Save for emergencies.

Avoid waste.

Improve earning capacity.

The God who receives worship also commands wisdom.

Proverbs 21:20

("There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.")

A foolish person spends everything. A wise person gives, saves, plans, and manages.

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## 6. Giving Must Be Honest

Acts 5:3-4

("But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost... Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.")

Ananias and Sapphira were not judged because they failed to give everything. Peter said the property was theirs, and the money was in their power. The sin was deceit. They wanted the reputation of sacrifice without the truth of sacrifice.

This is important for the church. Giving must not become performance.

Do not pretend to give more than you gave.

Do not pledge what you know you cannot pay just to look spiritual.

Do not borrow to impress people with your offering.

Do not give publicly to shame others.

Do not use giving to control the church.

God wants truthful worship.

John 4:24

("God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.")

## 7. Giving Must Not Neglect Responsibility

1 Timothy 5:8

("But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.")

This verse must be handled carefully. It does not cancel giving. It corrects irresponsibility.

A person should not give in a way that deliberately neglects basic responsibilities to children, dependents, or honest obligations. God is not honoured by religious display that abandons household duty.

The believer must seek wisdom:



Give God first place.

Provide responsibly for the household.

Pay what is owed.

Avoid unnecessary spending.

Live within means.

Ask for counsel when there is pressure or confusion.

Giving should flow from worship, not from disorder.

## 8. Giving Opens the Heart to Generosity

The goal is not only tithing. The goal is a generous heart.

2 Corinthians 9:6

("But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.")

Galatians 6:9-10

("And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.")

Generosity includes:

Giving to the church.

Helping the poor.

Supporting missions.

Caring for family wisely.

Feeding someone in need.

Helping with school expenses where possible.

Giving time, skill, and service.

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Being generous does not mean being careless. Some people use “helping others” as a reason to destroy their own household stability. Others help people who refuse responsibility, while neglecting savings, rent, children, or debt.

Generosity must be guided by wisdom.

## 9. Giving Trains the Heart for Wealth

If God cannot trust a person to honour Him with little, why should that person assume they will honour Him with much?

Luke 16:10-11

("He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?")

Giving while poor trains the believer before increase comes.

It teaches:

God first.

Money is not master.

I can obey even when it costs me.

I can resist selfishness.

I can plan.

I can trust God.

I can be faithful over little.

Many people say, “When I get more, I will give.” But Jesus teaches that faithfulness begins with the least.

## Practical Teaching: How to Give When Money Is Tight

1. Decide before payday.

Do not wait until every other pressure speaks first.

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2. Give proportionately and faithfully.

Let giving be part of your normal financial rhythm.

3. Do not give for show.

Matthew 6:3-4

("But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.")

4. Do not borrow to give.

Giving should not create another debt trap.

5. Do not make emotional pledges.

Think, pray, count the cost, then commit.

6. Keep your household responsibilities in view.

God cares about your worship and your household.

7. Keep records.

Record your giving, debts, savings, and spending. Order is part of stewardship.

8. Grow in generosity as God increases you.

Do not remain at the same level of giving if God has brought you into greater income and stability.

### Class Activity

Give each participant this short worksheet:

My current income is:

My normal giving pattern is:

Do I give first or from leftovers?

One fear I have about giving is:



One wasteful expense I can reduce is:

One way I can honour God more faithfully is:

One way I can be generous without being irresponsible is:

Allow participants to reflect privately. This does not need to be shared publicly.

### Common Mistakes to Correct

Mistake 1: “I am poor, so God expects nothing from me.”

Correction: God sees the poor and receives sincere worship.

Mistake 2: “If I give, God must make me rich immediately.”

Correction: Giving is worship, not gambling.

Mistake 3: “The bigger the offering, the more spiritual the person.”

Correction: Jesus honoured the widow’s two mites because of her heart.

Mistake 4: “I should borrow money to prove my faith.”

Correction: Scripture warns against debt bondage.

Mistake 5: “Giving replaces budgeting.”

Correction: Biblical stewardship includes giving, planning, saving, paying debts, and working wisely.

Mistake 6: “The church should pressure people until they give.”

Correction: God loves cheerful giving, not forced giving.

### Discussion Questions

Why is giving difficult when money is tight?

What is the difference between faithful giving and manipulated giving?

How does giving show that God has first place?

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Why should giving be included in a budget?

How can a person be generous without being financially careless?

What does the widow's offering teach us about God's view of sacrifice?

### Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 9:7

("Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.")

### Key Takeaways

Giving is worship before it is finance.

Poverty does not remove a believer from meaningful giving.

Giving must never be forced, manipulated, or used to exploit the poor.

God measures the heart, not merely the amount.

Giving should be planned, honest, and part of a wise budget.

The believer must give without neglecting household responsibility.

Faithfulness over little prepares the heart for greater increase.

### Closing Exhortation

God does not ask for giving because He is poor. He asks for giving because we need our hearts trained. Money is one of the strongest competitors for human trust. When a believer gives faithfully, especially from a place of struggle, that believer declares, "Jesus is Lord over my money, my fear, my future, and my household."

The goal is not to give and remain disorderly. The goal is to give, budget, save, work, grow, and become a faithful steward whom God can trust with more.



## Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach me to honour You with what You have placed in my hand. Deliver me from fear, greed, manipulation, pride, and careless spending. Help me to give with a cheerful heart, to manage my household with wisdom, and to walk in financial integrity. Train my heart to trust You above money. Let my giving be worship, not performance; faith, not fear; obedience, not pressure. Make me faithful over little, and prepare me to steward greater increase for Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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