

“I Cannot Give”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Mal. 3:6-12
- B. Giving is a very personal application of an individual Christian's faith.
 - 1. Neither the scriptures nor the church enforces a standard on anyone. Each disciple determines the amount in his or her heart.
 - 2. Giving is a strong indicator of one's spirituality easily subject to self-examination and correction
- C. Giving is not a financial necessity for God; His cause will prosper without your offering - Psalm 50:12, 24:1
 - 1. It is a spiritual matter which reflects your relationship with God.
 - 2. Like prayer, giving is for our benefit, not God's
- D. Giving is about stewardship; God already owns everything; we are returning a portion for His service
 - 1. He views those who do not give their due as thieves and embezzlers
- E. Why should Christians give as they have prospered?
 - 1. It honors the principle of giving in God's word.
 - 2. It honors God who created us and given us all we enjoy
 - 3. It helps us to overcome greed and covetousness
 - 4. It helps us to think responsibly about what we have
 - 5. It gives us an opportunity to prove our commitment to God
 - 6. It gives others an opportunity to glorify God by means of our generosity
- F. Jesus issued a challenge to Christians similar to Malachi's
 - 1. Matt. 6:25-33
 - 2. Let us consider some excuses given by some Christians for not giving

I. “I CAN'T AFFORD TO GIVE”

- A. Really, they cannot afford not to give.
 - 1. “If I give to God, I cannot pay my bills.” They've used God's blessings to support a higher lifestyle than they can afford.
 - 2. “There isn't very much at all left over after I meet my obligations. It is a sin not to pay my bills.” - Rom. 13:8
 - 3. Those in this condition have contracted two spiritual troubles
 - a. They have placed their loyalty in the wrong place; God comes first every time, regardless of what they think or believe
 - b. They have underestimated the power of God in seeing them through; they think that giving to God is financially irresponsible, and that they are solely responsible for their financial solubility
- B. “Things and stuff” are the weapons Satan uses against Christians.
 - 1. Americans are caught on a runaway treadmill of accumulation.
 - a. Our lives center around getting more and better things.
 - b. Approximately 50,000 self-storage businesses in the U.S. (80% of all self-storage units in world are in the US)
 - 2. We are trained from childhood to think in terms of things.

3. Jesus demands that we choose - Matt. 6:24; 1John 2:15-17
- C. God promises to bless those who put Him first.
1. We reap **what** we sow - Gal. 6:6-8
 2. We reap **more** than we sow. 15 lbs. of seed corn sown on one acre will yield 7,000 lbs. of corn (500 to 1)
 3. We reap **in proportion** to our sowing. If we plant 10 acres; we can expect to harvest 10 acres. If we plant 100 acres, we will reap 100.
 - a) Little commitment yields little.
 4. We reap **after** we sow - Gal. 6:9; Mal. 3:10
 5. Missionary preacher was teaching about giving. A boy from the congregation knocked on his door holding a fish. When the preacher came to the door, the boy reached out with the fish and said, "Here, you said we need to give 10% so here's my offering." The preacher asked, "Where are the other nine fish?" The boy responded, "They're still in the river; I'm going back to catch them." He understood what God wants.

II. "THE CHURCH DOESN'T NEED IT"

- A. "The church doesn't need as much as it gets; they have money in the bank."
 1. Some people think they should only give when there is a serious need.
 2. "I'd give more if the church did not have so much money in the bank."
 3. The one who gives, gives to the Lord, not to the church.
 4. We are like children who use their allowance to buy a gift for God. God doesn't need it; we need to be giving it.
 5. Neh. 13:10-14 - The tithe was about keeping Judah reformed, not sponsoring God. God who can create the universe, does not need a tithe of oil, wine, and grain
- B. In the New Testament, Christians must give to have a share in the work of the Lord in the local church
 1. 1Tim. 3:15; Acts 4:37; 1Cor. 16:1-2
 2. A child had all the canned goods from the kitchen pantry playing store. When the father came home and saw it, he decided to play along with his child. "I'll take a can of corn," he said. The child put the can on the counter, the father picked it up and put down a penny; but, when he started to walk away, the child protested, "Daddy, we're playing store, not church."
 3. Your children are watching how you give, can sense hypocrisy quite readily, and will follow your example when they grow up.

III. "I DON'T APPROVE OF HOW THE OFFERINGS ARE SPENT"

- A. When one makes an offering, he gives it to God. The elders are His stewards in its use and distribution.
 1. Once an offering is given, it is no longer in the control of the giver.
 2. The elders are chosen and ordained by the congregation. Their approval of the wisdom and judgment of the elders is implicit in their individual and collective endorsement of them as elders

3. The fact that they one making the objection is not qualified to be an elder, disqualifies him from making judgments about the decisions of the elders
- B. Once the offering reaches the treasury of the church, the leaders of the church become accountable for it.
1. We may not approve of the decisions of our civil leaders, but the Lord still commands us to pay taxes to them. Once we have paid our taxes, our responsibility in the matter ends, and theirs begins
 2. Likewise with giving of our means: we are to give, and once we have done so, our responsibility in the matter ends, and the elders' begins.
 3. If we do not give, God will hold us accountable. If the elders misuse the offering, God will hold them accountable

Conclusion:

- A. There no good reason not to give of our means.
- B. Our spirit in giving will reflect the condition of our heart - Matt. 6:19-21