

## The Spirit of Generous Giving #2

### Consecration Sunday Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> 2023

There are many “biblical” giving Themes that support Consecration Sunday and its message of intentional Financial Stewardship by the faithful as an important aspect of a spiritual life. Here is #2.

The second biblically supported theme is this:  
Intentional Financial Stewardship is important to our spiritual lives,  
And Our Giving Motivates Others to Put God First, too.

The story goes, that a pastor once asked a successful retired businessman, ... who had just committed himself, ... to giving a \$100,000 gift in his church, ... “Are you comfortable with our publicizing this gift, or would you prefer that it remain anonymous?”

The old man thought a moment and said, “It might be good to let people know about it. Perhaps it will motivate some of them to give such gifts.” And that wise remark, ... stands on the solid rock of biblical evidence.

Again and again throughout its pages, ... the Bible illustrates, ... that positive behavior, also increases the likelihood of positive behavior by other people.

This principle repeatedly plays out on the stage of biblical history, ... and also in contemporary giving habits.

People who give generously back to God, ... not only accomplish God’s goals; ... but they also influence spiritual growth in other people, ... who decide to give, ... by following the example of other givers .

Scripturally, ... First Chronicles says,... King David gave from his personal property, ... (above and beyond the tithe he has already given,) ... 115 tons of gold and 265 tons of silver, ... for decorating the Temple walls and making utensils for worship. Then David asked,... “*Now who else is willing to give a generous offering to the Lord?*”

And scripture tells us the leaders and people responded with 190 tons of gold, 380 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, and 3,750 tons of iron, plus precious stones for the Temple treasury. “So, ... The people gave willingly to the Lord, and the (the land rejoiced) that so much had been given.”

In the New Testament, ... in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, ... Paul also shares, ... that the generous giving of the disciples in Corinth, ... actually

MOTIVATED, ... the Macedonian disciples,... to give generously, too.

Now, ... Some commentator on our modern society once said,... that the lives of people, ... in our culture, ... are guided by three questions:

*So What? Who cares? And How do I get mine? (sound familiar?)*

And a little later, ... Someone else proclaimed in response, ...that is not quite true, ... and many people today, ...live by these three questions, instead:

*Is it easy? Is it fun? and What’s in it for me?*

Now, **Neither** of those cynics, ... accurately describes the thinking and behavior of vast numbers of Americans, whose giving has steadily increased for decades.

The incredible relief response, ... to the wide variety of disasters in the world, ... indicates clearly, ... that selfless motives, ... drive far more of faithful human helping behaviors, ... than is given credit for, ... and the 9-1-1 disaster here, ... is indicative of this phenomenon.

A survey from January of 2002, ... reported that 48 percent of people surveyed nationwide, ... said they were now more likely to help poverty-stricken Americans, ... than they were before the events of 9-1-1.

And they added, ... that the generous giving of other people, ... to assist those impacted by that tragedy, ... had significantly inclined them to give, too, ... and not just to the 9-1-1 relief efforts, ... but to other worthy causes all over the world, ... as well.

So now, ... knowing that simple Financial Giving, ... Expresses Our Thankfulness to God, ... and that Our Giving, ... Motivates Others, ... to Put God First, too.

The question from scripture being lifted up for you, ... as Christ's disciples here at Mt Zion is this: Do you want to help your brothers and sisters to give generously from the heart, ... as you are giving right now of your own time and talents?

Then take time, ... to tell the stories of people in here, ... and out there, ... who have given generously to great and worthy causes for God.

Tell the Good News, ... of all the GOOD, ... that simple, ... faithful giving, ... has accomplished in the world.

Tell the stories of the inner rewards, ... that faithful stewarding has accomplished in the lives of self-less givers, ...

And remember in your **every** conversation, ... with your friends and neighbors here in the church, ... and out there in the world, ... that most People, ... are not selfish, ... but they are both compassionate and generous, ... and only mostly in need, ... of some good role models, ... to guide and show them the faithful way.

When they see, ... compassion and generosity in the efforts and giving of their friends and leaders, ... they are so much more likely, ... to find it in themselves.

May God bless you, ... and God's peace be with you, ... in this MINISTRY of love, ... that you are GIVING yourselves to.

Truly, ... it is evidence of your love for God, ... and your desire to love your neighbor.

Thank you for letting me be a part of this with you, ... and bless you for all the lives you will touch, ... and change, ... for Jesus sake.

*Please take time this week to pray about how you might respond to God's call to generosity. Know that He is listening and will answer.*

*Peace  
Pastor Burkhardt*