

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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## Learning How to Give?

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- Q. When does a person decide to become an accountant?
- A. When he realizes he doesn't have the charisma to succeed as an undertaker.
- Q. What's the definition of an accountant?
- A. Someone who solves a problem you didn't know you had in a way you don't understand.

Being an accountant, I can appreciate the above humor! Nothing can be more disarming than to have someone tell you about a problem that you didn't even know you had. Sometimes you just want that person to go away. Life can seem less complicated when we don't know about our problems!

Jesus often identified situations and foundational issues that people should be concerned about, problems or issues they didn't know they had. There were many who just wanted him to go away. They did not want to be bothered by his lessons or the conviction those lessons brought. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught a lesson on giving so basic that he must have offended some of his hearers.

He said, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 6:1, NASB). Jesus didn't mince words as He taught a lesson on how to give money! Was it offensive? Was it too basic a topic? Jesus was concerned with not only that we give, but also how we give. His point was that it is possible to give the right gift in the wrong way and earn no reward.

Many in Jesus' day were giving—often and much—to the poor. Wasn't that a good thing then, and isn't it a good thing now? But they were giving "that they may be honored by men" (Matt 6:2, NASB). You may say, "So what! At least they gave!" However, Christ said of them, "Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full," the recognition of men (Matt 6:2, NASB). Anytime we give to so that others think highly of us,

we show the sin of pride in our hearts. There is no eternal reward for a proud heart.

"But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you" (Matt. 6:3-4, NASB). We do not sin when others know that we give. We sin when we want them to know that we give. God is not impressed when we give to get. God blesses giving that is motivated to help others (Eph 6:28) and glorify Him (Col 3:17).

Take a quick quiz to check your motivation:

- Do you give only to ministry projects that benefit you and your friends?
- Do you only give to your Christian school when you get a gift in return?
- Do you sponsor events for ministries simply to get your name known?

Christ's encouragement is: "keep giving to the Lord's work!" Jesus taught much about giving because he knows that we need help to learn to give with the right motivation. He did it also out of a loving desire that we receive eternal reward for our giving! He implied that the praise of others is not worth having, but the reward from God is definitely worth having. Your sacrificial giving can truly help others and truly glorify God.

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BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: [bbcfoundation.org](http://bbcfoundation.org); e-mail: [info@bbcfoundation.org](mailto:info@bbcfoundation.org)