

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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## Give – Each One of You

*Mark Robbins, CPA*

Let's take a short quiz. It is only one statement, but your answer could be quite revealing. Are you ready? Now there is not much room for error here, so think carefully before you answer. True or False: Ten percent of what you make belongs to God. Oh, you want to know if that is before or after taxes? Speaking of which, did you pay attention to two very important lines on your tax forms? I am speaking of the lines that indicate your gross income and your charitable contributions. How did the two figures relate?

Over the last few weeks, we have seen in 2 Corinthians 8 that giving is a Christian grace, that it should be a willing and voluntary gift to God, and a gift given according to how He has prospered each of us. In 2 Corinthians 8:13-16, we see another very important aspect of the Grace of Giving.

The Grace of Giving is *for every believer*. Giving is universal, for rich and poor, for those with great ability to give and for those with less ability to give. God has, in His providence, enabled some to give substantially so that the needs of those with less might be met. However, that does not mean that Christian giving is to be burdensome to some while others are wholly eased or let off the hook (2 Corinthians 8:13). All believers are to see themselves and their giving, no matter how great or small, as meeting the needs of those who are in need. Verse 14 indicates that a charitable spirit is necessary for all. You see, the tables can be turned quickly, and those with abundance can quickly become those with great needs and vice versa. So, if God has prospered, there should be an attitude of charity in our giving. The blessing of our prosperity should propel us forward in our giving.

Paul illustrates this for us by reminding us of how God met the needs of the children of Israel while they were wandering in the wilderness. Through Moses, God told the people that He would supply their food in the form of manna (Exodus 16). Manna literally means, "What is it?" (Now, shame on some of you for thinking that about your dinner on occasion.) Manna was God's provision

of food for His people. It was the responsibility of each family member to gather manna for each day's food for the family. Some were able to gather much, and others, maybe the elderly, the infirmed, or children, could not gather as much. However, after the head of the family distributed what was collected, each person in the family had sufficient food to eat. Those who gathered much (more than they needed) had enough. Likewise, those who gathered less (those who could not gather all they would need) had sufficient and did not lack for food. This is a wonderful application for the body of Christ, whether individually or corporately as a body of believers in a specific locality (the local church). Each believer is to contribute according to his ability as God has prospered him in order that the needs of others might be met.

Now let's go back to our quiz. The correct answer is false. It is not just ten percent of what we make that belongs to God: God owns everything we have! We have what we have by God's grace. It is by His grace that we are able to work and invest wisely. We are simply stewards of what He has given to us, and we should give back to God as a form of worship. This brings me to the two lines on your tax form. How do they relate? Does the comparison indicate that you are giving as God has prospered you? Do you need to adjust your giving? If so, don't wait to make that commitment. Right now ask God what you need to do and take a step of faith this week in your next gift to your church. Commit to giving as He has prospered. Then as God continues to prosper you, ask Him if you should give even a greater amount. Giving generates great spiritual blessings. Trust God and watch how He blesses.

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