

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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God Notices Your Financial Sacrifice

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Does God notice our problems? Does He care? Is He aware that many families are making large financial sacrifices to obey God's call to vocational Christian service? Some spend sizeable sums of money to send children to Christian schools. Others place a large commitment on giving to the church. Things can be financially tight when we truly "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Does any of this attract God's attention?

If you are struggling with these questions, be encouraged by a small passage in the Gospel of Mark: The Widow's Offering. Jesus is in Jerusalem the very week of His pending crucifixion. The expectation of His followers is mounting because they want to make Him an earthly ruler. The disdain of his critics (Pharisees) is also rising because He is speaking against their spiritual hypocrisy. Jesus, the Passover Lamb, is about to be killed in a climactic turn of events. This is all a part of God's salvation plan.

Jesus is busy avoiding schemes and answering theological questions. During the course of one day, the chief priests sent a delegation to attempt to trick Jesus into giving an unpopular answer regarding paying taxes (Mark 12:13-17). Jesus avoided this trick. Then a group of Sadducees had to be schooled on the power of God and the resurrection (Mark 12:18-27). Next, a teacher of the law asked Jesus to give an interpretation on the greatest commandment in the Old Testament (Mark 12:28-34). Jesus rightly answered that it was to love God with everything we have. Finally, Jesus challenged the temple attendees about the deity of the Christ (Mark 12:35-40). The hearers were amazed at His teaching.

Jesus had a busy day and was probably very tired! "Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting

their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on'" (Mark 12:41-44, NIV).

Even during a busy day, Jesus noticed the sacrifice of the widow. In terms of absolute wealth, she did not put in much at all. In terms of what she had after the gift, she gave more than all the others combined. Be encouraged! If you are sacrificing for Christ, your gifts are noticed! Every check to the church, the Christian school, or mission agency is fully noticed by God. You will be rewarded for your service and your sacrifice. None of it is in vain!

Do you feel like you are not contributing much to the kingdom of Christ? Do you have wealth that has been "off limits" to God? Are you giving out of your need and not just out of your wealth? God can use your gifts to impact people for eternity. Determine to increase your giving. Make an intentional plan to exalt God by being a good steward of His money. If you have questions on how to set up a budget, contact BBC FOUNDATION INC. for a sample plan. God will reward your heart of faith!

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; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org