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CREATIVE STEWARDSHIP

By Jessie Burrall Eubank

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I

OUR POSITION AS STEWARDS

THE idea of Christian Stewardship carries many strange connotations. It is often thought of as a way of raising a church budget or paying off a debt. It has been confused with the idea of tithing the income, or plans for proportional giving. A moment's thought will show that it is none of these.

Stewardship is merely a convenient way of expressing our relationship to God and to all our resources, physical, mental and spiritual, while living here upon earth. We do not own our so-called possessions. We simply use them for a while. We are, therefore, Stewards. Hence, the management of all our resources in accordance with our highest understanding of the will of God is but the natural outcome of our recognition of the fact that we are Stewards, and of our desire to live the highest and best. And it is this management of our resources that we are to consider here. But always we are speaking of CREATIVE Stewardship, a way of management that leads to an ever greater abundance of all good in our lives. For correct use of what we have, far from depleting us, literally opens channels for greater receiving. There will be more about this later.

For this opening discussion, we consider *Our Position as Stewards*.

The IDEA of Christian Stewardship is so generally accepted as to need little emphasis here. But let us run briefly through a few of the many Bible teachings in this area in order to refresh our minds.

Are we at all aware of how completely the Master regarded himself and the people about him as STEWARDS of God's bounty? We note briefly the parables. The Watchful Servants (Luke 12:35-40); The Faithful and Wise Steward (Luke 12:11-48); The Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-14); The Vineyard Let to Husbandmen (Matt. 21:33-46); The Man Taking a Journey (Mark 13:34-37); The Faithful and the Evil Servant (Matt. 24:42-51); The Ten Talents (Matt. 25:14-30). These, and many others, teach Stewardship so plainly that the whole idea of our position as Stewards has been generally accepted.

Not only are we Stewards of material things, but of all the bounty of God on all planes, — of his exceeding abundance of love, to be expressed through us, — and also of the limitless resources of our minds, of the wealth of ideas that come to us. More than this, we are stewards of the highest things we can conceive, even of the very spirit of God himself.

"As good stewards of the manifold grace of God." — I Peter 4:8

"As stewards of the mysteries of God." — I Cor. 4:1

Then there is the whole idea of sharing. Very generally Christians quote the teachings of Jesus in this area. "Freely ye have received; freely give." "Give and it shall be given unto you: good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38.) With these and a myriad of verses we are so familiar that we scarcely need to quote them here.

Truly the IDEA of Christian Stewardship is so generally accepted as to need little emphasis.

But what of the PRACTICE of stewardship in our daily lives and the lives of other Christians?

We ask the crucial question: Just how, as Christians, are our daily lives different from the lives of others in our community who are not professing Christians?

Jesus clearly taught, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your GOOD WORKS and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (Matthew 5:16.) We are thus Stewards of the Light of God. In a far deeper sense, are we not Stewards of all the goodness of God manifested to human beings here on earth?

We stand in a pivotal position. On the one hand is all the abundance of God, physical, mental, spiritual. This abundance is poured out in lavish completeness. "Before they call I will answer." (Isaiah 65:24.) And before there was a human lung to gasp for air on the earth, there was such an abundance of air as no hosts of people could deplete. Moreover, through the interrelationship of plant and animal life the atmospheric needs of each are constantly and reciprocally renewed.

An abundance of fresh pure water, of soil and the minerals, of plant life, — of everything necessary to man's comfortable living on earth — was ready and waiting to his hand.

On the one side, we see the abundance of God for ALL his children; on the other a welter of human need. All about us are people in want, in degradation, and despair. There are millions in dire poverty, needing employment for food and clothing, for warmth and shelter.

Even when all these are supplied, there are the cries of the mind for education, of the soul for culture and of the heart for love.

This matter of Stewardship goes into every area of human contact. It is no exaggeration to say that not once, as Christians, can we even meet an acquaintance on the street, without there being right there an opportunity to share in some area and thus to meet another's need.

A crucial point in this whole matter is the *thinking* without the *doing*. We somehow think that when we have studied about a matter, have heard a speech about it or talked it over, SOMETHING HAS BEEN

DONE ABOUT IT. Nothing could be farther from the truth. "By their FRUITS ye shall know them." "Not everyone that sayeth unto me Lord, Lord, but he that DOETH the will of my Father." The law is plain. And so after each section of our thinking must come a plan for ACTION. And only as we individually and together carry out EACH WEEK these or other plans for action can we enter into the deeps of Christ-like living. So let us be practical.

A Practical Suggestion

Suppose we begin by clearing up some of the clutter of our houses. Every home has things that are no longer immediately useful to us but that would be used and enjoyed by others if only the right persons could have them.

We proceed first to find where these things should go. The missionary barrel has proved to be an unwise way because of misfits and freight bills and generally poor management. Nor is the rummage sale the solution we seek. There is surely a better way.

We turn to local needs and we get in touch with local agencies. Is there a "Christian Center" under the Woman's Home Mission Society or the General Society within a convenient distance? Or is there a Day Nursery or work with the unemployed or with foreigners?

If there is not any work of our own denominational responsibility, let us call up the Woman's Department of the Federation of Churches, The Salvation Army, The Good Will Industries and the Community Chest or Council of Social Agencies, if they are represented directly in the local community.

Even if the community is small, there is sure to be dire need of the very things now getting dusty in our homes. In towns and villages it will be best to inquire very generally through schools and local organizations as to exact needs. Then the goods can be taken to some central place and careful plans made for distribution or personal delivery as seems best.

We may need to set up a committee akin to the Red Cross, to open a room, to furnish employment to some in need, as is the way of the Good Will Industries, to remake and sell these things at such prices as those needing them can pay. If that should seem desirable, one can get information as to ways of working from Morgan Memorial, 89 Shawmut Avenue, Boston, Mass.

Once we have a plan for distribution, the real fun can begin. Everyone who will can join in taking a day off for clearing out our attic trunks, our clothes presses, our basements, of any and all things not needed by us now. As we work at this general clearing out we realize that people in every city and village, in the rural areas, in the mountain schools, — people EVERYWHERE — are in dire need.

They need shoes and dresses, suits and shirts, ties and handkerchiefs, furniture and bedding.

What about the towels received for Christmas that we are not using because their color is not agreeable in our rooms? What about the old tables and chairs, the broken down "sofas," the worn rugs, the myriad of things "too worn to use, too good to throw away"?

We are all hesitant because our things seem either too good to share or too far gone for use. But let us forget all that and test each item only as to whether we are using or needing it now or in the near future.

Once started, why should we stop? Why not make this sharing an ordinary part of our church life. At regular intervals of not less than three months the whole process should be repeated. The idea must spread to more and more women until the whole community is passing on this part of its abundance to others and others and others.

Lastly, we remember the great principle of being a DOER of the word. Why not add to this process TODAY by slipping a handkerchief or a bright card or other little gift into an envelope with a cordial note and mailing it to some shut-in or invalid or aged person. Why not act TODAY?

We are STEWARDS of God's bounty? Let us be Stewards in ACTION.

II

THE PRESENT STATUS

What seems to ail us all is a sort of spiritual Asthma. In this disease it is often much easier to breathe *in* than to breathe *out*. In other words the worst wheeze is on the outgoing breath. Isn't that a parable of our spiritual life? We want to take in and take in more and more of spiritual inspiration. We want uplifting music and prayers, sermons and books. We seem to have forgotten the law: "No inspiration without expiration."

Here is a stagnant pool, with all the disagreeable aspects of stagnant water. Why is it stagnant? Possibly the inlet is closed and no new water is coming in. But that is not the real cause. Where stagnant water has collected, it is always the *outlet* that is clogged. Open up the outlet and the slimy water flows out. Then, when an inlet is opened, and then only, can we have a stream of pure flowing water or a sparkling lake.

And so it is with our religious life. We've paid a great deal of attention to the inflow of blessings from God to the almost entire neglect of the out-go. No wonder our churches seem a bit stagnant.

Is this a fair statement? Let us face the facts about giving to missions in one large denominational group, namely, the Northern Baptist Convention.

In 1939 the members of the Baptist churches in the area of the Northern Baptist Convention gave for all missionary purposes a total of \$2,470,203.00. At first sight that seems like a fairly adequate sum. But let us really think about it. That sum was the amount given by a total membership of 1,468,043 persons. This means that the average giving per member for the entire year was the astonishing sum of \$1.68. It seems incredible, but those are the figures. A dollar and sixty-eight cents apiece for the whole year for each member.

We hear the quick objection, "Oh, but many of our members are children in their teens and we have many truly poor families in our churches." It is a poor family, indeed, that does not waste or spend carelessly much more than \$1.68 a year for each member of the family. Truly we Baptists are not that poor. As for the youth membership, they are much more than offset by the larger gifts in every church, given by the few.

Would it be any comfort to know that other large denominations are in about the same brackets as to giving? Or does it give us serious cause to think on this whole matter of giving, and then to THINK AGAIN?

But now we face it more practically. Suppose we divide that \$1.68 into the 52 weeks of the year, what do we find? The average giving per week per member is a trifle less than $3\frac{1}{4}$ cents! A little more than a postage stamp each week, to support the entire missionary

outlet of the local church members. This for carrying the whole gospel to the whole world!

Many years ago, when penny-a-day or penny-a-meal banks were started by certain church groups, the plan received acute and widespread criticism. It was stated that it was high time that we got off the penny basis in giving to the Lord's work.

No one seemed to realize that with the single exception of the few years of the New World Movement, our denomination has never even approached a penny per day per member status!

A penny a day per member for missions would mean a total giving per year per member of \$3.65 as over against our present \$1.68, or a grand total of \$5,358,856.95. This is more than twice our present giving. In fact it is the neat little sum of \$418,450 more than twice as much!

Is not the chief trouble that we have never had a chance to think about these things in this way?

Now that we are thinking about it, now that we know the facts, what shall we do?

Practical Suggestions

First, let us get the exact figures for our own church. We divide the total giving to the missionary enterprises of the Northern Baptist Convention by the exact number of our members. That gives us the amount per year per member. Possibly our faces will be very red, but let us proceed.

We divide this sum by the fifty-two weeks in the year and look clearly and steadily at our giving per week per member.

Churches vary greatly in this, the giving ranging all the way from less than a quarter of a cent per week per member up to ten or eleven cents per member in a few churches! Rare indeed is the church beyond that figure!

No matter what record our church has made, can we not set a new goal of gradually but definitely increased giving until we have at least double our present figure?

Let us forget for the time being our budgets and quotas and think only of the individuals in the church.

Let us put this matter squarely before the entire membership, requesting, if possible, a statement from the pulpit at both an evening and a morning service.

Let us select and train a group of people able and willing to put it before every class in the Sunday School, especially all classes above the Intermediate department.

Let us put it before the young people at their meeting. Let us think and let us act, to DOUBLE the "per week per member" giving. Let us BEGIN NOW. The crucial need in all our fields cries for this to be done TODAY.

III

THE POVERTY COMPLEX

One great difficulty in this whole matter of Stewardship is an astonishing, a persistent and a wide-spread "poverty complex" on the part of our church members. We seem to love to feel poor and to talk poor. And we have our most complete poverty talk and feeling when we come to church!

I suppose that this has its roots in some twisted thinking with regard to our Master's teaching about riches and poverty. We seem to feel that Jesus condemned riches as such, and exalted poverty as a virtue. We've been altogether too quick to identify ourselves with Lazarus instead of the Rich Man in the parable, and thought of our state of riches as comparable to the fisherman disciples instead of the rich young ruler.

In very truth the rich man of Jesus' day was far poorer than most of us. And we are so far from the status of Lazarus that we cannot even dimly sense his misery. We do not even want to think about such a horror!

We often speak of putting in the "widow's mite," entirely forgetting that she put into the temple treasury "her entire living." Have we ever even dimly approached her action?

We need to examine our entire thinking in this field. How often we hear some one say, "I don't want to hear about money in the church, I want to hear about SPIRITUAL things." Or we remember the saying of Peter, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought the gift of God could be purchased with money" (Acts 8:20) — and then we think and sing about salvation and grace being free. Possibly it misleads us to sing "Jesus paid it all" — for we may forget the next line, "All to him I owe." True it is that we cannot buy religion, nor salvation. But if we really *have* it, what will we do?

Surely the thief on the cross might consider that he had made a rare bargain. Jesus said to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Yes, his salvation was free. But do you suppose that could he have come down from the cross and lived out his span of life as a free man he would have gone around saying, "I'm free. I'm saved. It didn't cost me a cent"? Or would he have been like Zacchaeus, the publican who said, "Behold, Lord, the HALF of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold"? (Luke 19:8.) It is significant to note that it was after that statement that Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house."

So now just what is money? And how are we to regard it? Is it not after all merely a tool to use in getting things done? Is it either

good or evil of itself? Of course it is neither. It is a bit of substance that we have in our control for a time, to use as we see fit.

Have you ever thought that there are only two things you can do with money? You can destroy it or you can invest it. You can burn a five dollar bill to ashes, or drop a bundle of money in the depths of the sea. For all practical purposes, that is destruction.

Or you can invest it. Someone may say, "But can not I give it away?" Can we escape the investment feature even in making a gift? We give it because we see a need, thus investing in the happiness or the growth or well being of another. Or we feel it a duty. We then invest in an easier conscience or a sense of our own virtue.

But are we not a bit mistaken usually in feeling that we "give" the money that we pay into the church. We often speak of it as a gift. But what are the facts? The great bulk of our "giving" goes to support the local church, that is, to pay for light and heat and janitor service, for repairs on the building, for the pastor's and other salaries. And all this is a real benefit to us. Unless we put in more than it actually costs per member to keep up these necessary expenses, what are we paying beyond the amount necessary to keep our own religion alive and our own souls inspired? Is this giving or simply paying a just (or possibly a very scanty) amount for services actually rendered?

And now back to our main question of our ever-present and all pervasive poverty complex. Truly, it seems polite and proper now, in all religious atmospheres, to speak poor and to think poor.

"Why does a ten dollar bill look so much larger on the collection plate than anywhere else?" asked a thoughtful woman in a conference. She added quietly, "It really *does*, you know." She was asked if she had ever seen a ten dollar bill on a collection plate, and admitted she hadn't.

Or consider this question, put forward seriously at the same conference. A man and his wife live in the suburbs and must each pay a twenty cent bus fare to come to church and to return home. This makes a total cost of eighty cents just for transportation. Are they not justified in putting only twenty cents into the collection plate because that makes church attendance cost a whole dollar?

The man readily admitted that he never so much as thought of the bus fare when coming into town for business or pleasure. He never dreamed of limiting himself to a twenty cent luncheon with his friends because of the forty cent bus ride. Nor did it occur to him to buy one less article or omit a single movie. It was only at church that he felt so poor.

A hundred equally good illustrations could be given. We feel poor in church. Yet we are really very, very rich in actual money. Our standards of living have risen very rapidly. Things that would

have been unheard of luxuries to our grandparents are actual necessities to us.

We have stopped thinking in the money categories of pioneer days, with the one huge exception of religion and the church. Let us change our feelings and our ideas in this area of life to correspond with all others.

Practical Suggestions

Let us begin to think of all church offerings in terms of at least a dollar bill for adults and fifty cents and quarters for youth and children!

Surely the price of a good luncheon or a small book, or a pair of hose, or two-thirds of a concert ticket, is a fair amount to put once a week into so vital an interest as our own religion, and an equal or greater amount for world evangelization.

Surely our children should give at least the price of a movie to the Sunday School. What kind of a comparison does it cause to be encouraged to pay 35c for a movie and to drop a nickel, or, alas, too often, merely a penny into the Sunday School offering plate.

It is suggested seriously here that a change in this matter be put into effect at once in all churches. Freely, abundantly, luxuriously, have we received. Shall we not give that way also?

IV

THE STEWARDSHIP OF PRAYER

We have seen ourselves clearly as stewards of all our good while living in our bodies on this earth. We have rejoiced in the sure knowledge of the limitless abundance of God in all areas. We have seen the welter of human need all about us and have realized our favored position with regard to our worldly goods and possessions.

In all this intricate problem, what is the place of prayer? Is there a Stewardship of prayer? Can we have instant help and illumination from the source of our being? What is prayer after all? Does anything happen when we pray?

These and a myriad other questions are being asked by our young people and by older thoughtful Christians.

Possibly we need some clearer thinking in this area. There is no question that all the great men and women of the Bible were people of prayer. There is no question that Jesus practiced prayer far beyond our exact knowledge. Nor can there be serious doubt about his teaching that all his followers are to pray.

But so long as we think of prayer only in its accepted meanings today we seem to fall far short of the prayer life lived by Jesus.

Surely to repeat a prayer, to listen and follow in thought the prayer of another, is not enough. But is our earnest desire, even the "soul's sincere desire," really a completed prayer? Is prayer simply asking God to do something for us? Should it ever become an asking for something we are not willing to do ourselves?

We agree that the whole Christian ethic is embraced in the widest possible understanding of and action upon the basis of actual love for the fellow man and for God.

We realize that loving and giving can not be separated. If I love my children, I give them things and other blessings as naturally as I breathe. No amount of protesting my love means anything at all unless I carry out my love in action.

So what about asking God to bless his work in the world unless we are actively blessing that work with our labor and our gifts? What about a prayer for blessing on a missionary in which we place the whole responsibility upon God? What do we mean when we pray that God's blessing will be upon a missionary? That she may be comforted and inspired, of course. That she may feel blessed and in close touch with God. That is a beautiful and a real blessing. But how long can she be conscious of that blessing unless she is fed and clothed and given FACILITIES for an ever greater work?

Is not true prayer much more than the thing we accomplish upon our knees as we pray in secret, or in our pews as we pray unitedly in church?

Are not our whole ACTIONS during the day a part of our prayer?

Let us look upon prayer as even more vital than this. Prayer in its larger aspect is COOPERATION with God in kingdom work. There is prayer in thought and word, and there is prayer in DEED. It is in the ever more constructive ACTION that our prayer is completed.

Granted that FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD (James 2:17).

Granted that LOVING WITHOUT GIVING IS IMPOSSIBLE.

We add now that PRAYER WITHOUT ACTION IS UNFINISHED.

Yet this is no minimizing of prayer in thought and in word, in aspiration and desire. The teaching of Scripture is plain: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and shut the door." And we are given the great pattern of prayer in words in the Lord's Prayer. And we have the long record of the prayers of Bible heroes and heroines. Have we noted sufficiently how often their prayers were regularly followed by some ACTION?

It behooves us to face frankly our present praying. Just how much time are we actually spending in prayer alone or with others each day of the week?

We are stewards of a great and vital process in prayer. Are we using it? Daily?

But are we also finishing our prayers, completing them in ACTION, for example in our gifts to missions?

Every act of our lives can be a definite, intelligent cooperation with God in carrying out his will on earth for all mankind.

Jesus was clear on the point of God's will. It is LIFE ABUNDANT here and now and throughout eternity for ALL human beings on earth.

We are allowed the inestimable privilege of COOPERATING with God in this great task.

So let us be active and conscious cooperators. Let us work each day toward the goal of loving, appreciative, generous, just treatment of all about us. Let us begin at once a much more generous sharing of all our good, of every kind. But as we work at this we do not neglect our daily exercise which we have so far called praying. According to Jesus there is no area of life, no problem, no care, no sorrow, no worry, that is not to be laid before God in prayer.

Not even a sparrow falls without his knowledge. He cares even for the lilies of the field. "Shall he not much more clothe YOU, oh ye of little faith?"

So why should we hesitate to pray about money? When, however, have we heard a prayer for more support to God's work in the world? Possibly it is because instinctively we feel our own lack of giving. Possibly we edge our minds around the whole matter, lest haply we should face our own shortcomings.

We have faced them in this booklet, and so far we have survived. We agree that money is merely a tool with which we accomplish our tasks. It is neither spiritual nor secular. It is no more secular nor unspiritual than a hundred other matters we never hesitate to pray about.

The praying about a matter is a first step in illumination in new action about it. Let us not hesitate to pray for money for God's work.

Let us realize and practice the STEWARDSHIP of prayer, in the church and in ACTION.

Practical Matters

1. We form a prayer league. The members are persons who will engage to take time (fifteen minutes or so) — DAILY — for prayer. In addition, the members meet for an hour once a week for united prayer.

2. We change the type of our so-called DEVOTIONALS at our meetings by cutting out the talk, and using the time for prayer. We actually pray together, silently at times, and orally for a generous part of our program time.

3. We start a movement in our church to have once more a mid-week service that is really a PRAYER MEETING.

4. We include in our prayers thanksgiving and worship, desire for the coming of the kingdom, petitions of grace and blessing for our missionaries. But let us not stop there. Let a united wave of keen desire go out to the Father, for more laborers in the vineyard, more support for the work, more MONEY consecrated to Kingdom work. Let us dare to be definite. To set new goals and to lay them before the Lord in secret and united prayer.

As we strive to double our per week per member giving, one vital part of it all is our prayer part. Let us faithfully ask God for help in this matter. Let us really desire and pray for such a wave of missionary giving as shall quicken every area of kingdom work.

But let us make no mistake about it. Prayer without ACTION is UNFINISHED. God can answer that prayer only out of OUR OWN POCKET-BOOKS. We can not ask him to make others more generous unless and until we are GENEROUS IN DEED OURSELVES.

So let the close of our prayer service be an actual pledging and paying of our own increased gifts.

We start this great wave of giving in our own church and for ourselves.

"Laying aside every weight, and the sin (selfishness, fear) that doth SO EASILY beset us," let us perform the WHOLE STEWARDSHIP of PRAYER, on all four planes, THOUGHT, DESIRE, WORD and ACTION.

V

THE LAW OF RECEIVING

All will agree that Stewardship, to mean anything at all, must include all areas of life. So long as we live in the body on this earth our relationship to God seems inevitably that of a Steward. We own nothing by ourselves. We accept and use any or all of God's bounty TEMPORARILY while living in the body.

Willingly or grudgingly everything we have must sooner or later be passed on to others. The attempt, therefore, to HOLD anything for our exclusive use always leads, in the long or the short run, to some type of disastrous experience.

Again, we may say that even in this limited sense of personal ownership nothing can be "ours" unless we can share it.

Picture the home of your dreams. Go as far as you like in drawing up plans, in investing in the property, in the actual building, until the home is complete, beautiful and perfect beyond your wildest dreams. However, this house must be built on a tropic island set in the midst of a huge ocean. Every utility, all supplies, are there. But there is one condition. You must occupy that house alone. You can never share its hospitality with another person even for a moment. No one but you can ever see it. How much do you care to "possess" that home? How long will you even try to remain in it?

And so it is with all "possessing." Nothing can really belong to any one of us unless and until it is being shared with others. This is the law and no one can alter it.

We can not even put to use a single dollar of "our" money without putting it in the hands of some other person for *his* use! While we live on this earth we are by law, and hence by necessity, in one huge cooperative enterprise. We OWN literally NOTHING. We simply accept, use and ultimately pass on the materials of this world.

And thus it is that the PASSING ON of our material resources is of crucial and vital importance.

But there is something more and deeply vital yet to be realized. It is concerned with the way things act, the manner in which things respond to our treatment of them. We have learned a great deal about this, but apparently not enough. Moreover, our learning has run far ahead of our ACTIONS. Possibly that is one reason why we are so often bored and listless or even downright uncomfortable. We need to learn and to ACT UPON the law of cooperative and reciprocal sharing.

The Bible calls it the law of sowing and reaping. We have applied the parable all too often by way of threatening against the

sowing of tares. We've thought and acted all too little upon the good seed-sowing aspect of the law.

Briefly stated, it is this. If we want a harvest we must sow the seed. We must abide by the law completely. We can not "save" the seed and sow it. As long as we save it there can be no harvest. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty."

But the Bible has much more to say upon the matter than this. We have innumerable passages all teaching the same truth.

"Give and it shall be given unto you."

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

We find ourselves upon this earth the recipients of the Father's amazing and limitless bounty. We open our channels for receiving new and fresh abundance only by GIVING OUT of the supplies we already have.

In so far as we hesitate to give we close our channels of receiving. Look all about you! In stores, in business, in the professions, he that is receiving abundantly is the one that is giving abundantly.

There is no other way. All things in the world are moving, changing, altering, moment by moment. It is impossible that we can live deeply and joyously the while we withhold.

But now if we give ONLY to GET we are living by the little tail-end of the law and our very selfishness brings its inevitable results.

We are to step out of the area of self into such a deep and abiding INTEREST in others that our love opens the channels and leads us to give. We are to think of human need with a great yearning to help. Then we are to open our pocketbooks and make our love ACTIVE in human affairs.

We can not separate loving and GIVING. If we love we have to give. By our lack in giving we show our poverty in loving. "For God himself so loved that he GAVE."

But how much shall we give? There are innumerable answers. The Hebrews found a great blessing in giving the first tenth, the tithe of all their increase. They became too meticulous about it, till in the days of Jesus they tithed each little atom of spice in the house and "neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith."

We seem to have forgotten that the Master added, "THESE OUGHT YE TO HAVE DONE, and not to have left the other undone."

But is not the whole teaching of Jesus an instruction in the art of giving and sharing? How can we love the neighbor as the self, DO GOOD to them that spitefully use us, and go the second mile, unless we habitually indulge in ever more generous sharing of our money? For is not our money the tap root of it all?

In following the Master do we want to stop with the tithe? After all, that was only the standard of Jacob, who saw not and knew not the sweep of the cooperative love taught by Jesus.

But what a disgrace it is that Christians in present day giving are so far, so very far below even a fraction of the tithe. Yet throughout the ages, all those who have loved their fellow man enough to share gladly a tenth of their income with others, have found deeps of joy and blessing that are marvellous to see.

It puts them in cooperation with the law of receiving. Action and reaction are EQUAL and in opposite directions! By the law of sowing and reaping one gets back MORE than he gives. We sow a peck of seed. We expect to get back bushels of grain!

Why not begin today to enter into the joy of generous giving? Especially to the great missionary enterprise, for in this we have an almost ideal set-up in which to carry out the Master's teachings. Our gifts are to be made to those who cannot thank us, from whom we can receive no reward.

Then there is the vital NEED all over the field. There are the sick and the afflicted, the blind and the lame, many individuals who will never see the light unless our Christian doctors and nurses can care for them. The money we give that feeds and clothes the missionary, that gives her transportation to the field, that cares for all these practical details, gives to us who supply it a vital part in every soul brought into the kingdom of light!

Isn't that a marvel of joy? Our missionary gifts of "mundane" money are transmuted into the new birth of souls into the kingdom! Our money enables us literally to obey the Master's instruction, "Go YE into all the world and preach the gospel."

Practical Matters

Let us gather up and review our work so far.

There can be no inspiration without expiration, no inflow without outgo.

We are choked with the THINGS we try to keep. Let us begin a thoroughgoing change in this whole area.

1. We continue until we SUCCEED in clearing our homes of unused things needed by others. We keep unused articles continuously on the outward path.

2. We get the figures for "per week per member" giving in our own church. We lay these before our young people, our Sunday School, our adult church membership.

We begin the joyous task of actually DOUBLING our "per week per member" giving.

3. We begin to conquer our "poverty complex." We think joyously of our amazing material blessings. Truly we are the RICH. We REJOICE in ALL church offerings as we think of them in terms of a dollar or more for adults, half dollars and quarters for young people and children. We change the ideas of our fellow church members.

4. And now to a further step. We face personally this matter of proportional giving. The first thing is to set down our annual income as accurately as we can figure it; our second, to set down our actual giving to the church. Then we divide the one by the other to find whether we are giving one per cent or five or ten.

Possibly a glance at our income tax sheet might be enlightening. The Government sets 15% for contributions, which need not be taxed. What part of that 15% did we GIVE last year to help to meet earth's gruelling NEED?

If we have so small a sum as \$100.00 a month, the ten per cent or tithe would be \$10.00. At \$300.00 a month it would be \$30.00, and so forth.

Too long have the channels of receiving from God been choked by our lack of giving! We have prayed for a blessing over and over, while all that was the matter was that "there was not room enough to receive it." Let us today by our increased and intelligent GIVING of money begin to make room for new life, new joy, new abundance of all good to flow to us.

Thus and thus only shall we enter into an entirely new experience of ABUNDANCE.

Thus and thus only shall we become CREATIVE STEWARDS.

EDITOR'S NOTE: It would be a great help to all of us if we could know about the success of these plans in individual churches. It is suggested that some one from your Society write a brief account of your successes and failures and especially of the increased giving in your church, and send it to the author, Jessie Burrall Eubank, 123 Hosea Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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