

INTRODUCTION

1. We have recently begun a new series on “God’s Plan for Giving.”
2. And in our first study, I read to you what Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 6:38. He said, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”
3. We spent our time in our first study learning what the Bible says about giving because Jesus begins this verse by saying, “Give.”
4. And we saw that the Greek word for “Give” (*didomi*) simply meant “to give” and was used in the NT, for example, of seed yielding fruit (Mk.4:7-8), of exercising diligence in giving (Lk.12:58), of giving lots (Acts 1:26), of rendering vengeance (2 Thess.1:8), of striking Christ (Jn.18:22), and of putting a ring on the hand (Lk.15:22).
5. But when Jesus uses this word in Luke 6:38, He used it in the present tense (expresses progression action that is occurring in the present / continuous).
6. He also used it in the active voice, which means, each person is to determine their giving. The active voice speaks of the subject causing the action on the verb.

7. And finally, He uses it in the imperative mood, which is a command.
8. In essence He is saying, by the use of the grammar in the word “give” (didomi), that our giving is to be continuous, determined, and the result of obedience to His command.
9. In other words, Jesus is addressing our attitude in giving.
10. Now before we look at the rest of the verse, I want us to consider a few more things that the Bible says concerning giving.
11. Not only should our giving be in response to need or in response to God's command. It should also be sacrificial, secret and humble because it is the key to spiritual fruit.
12. As we noted last time, God owns everything, and we are His stewards or managers.
13. Psalms 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.”
14. Leviticus 25:23 says, “The land is Mine; for you are *but* aliens and sojourners with Me.”
15. Haggai 2:8 says, “The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts.”

16. It all belongs to Him and it is He, according to Deuteronomy 8:18 that gives you the “power to make wealth.”
17. Our view of giving should be consistent with God's.
18. Because He is generous, so should we.
19. 1 Timothy 6:17 says God “richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”
20. Jesus even said in Matthew 7:11, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”
21. Tonight as we continue our look at the subject of giving, I want us to consider 3 things: The problem of accumulation, the antidote to greed, and the issues of the heart.
22. Let's see first *the problem of accumulation.*

I. The Problem of Accumulation

A. If You Love Money You Will Never Be Satisfied

Even though Bill Gates' net worth in 2007 was \$39 billion, he was not the richest man.

1. That honor was by God given to Solomon who said in Ecclesiastes 5:10-15, "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance *with its* income. This too is vanity. ¹¹ When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on? ¹² The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep. ¹³ There is a grievous evil *which* I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt. ¹⁴ When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him. ¹⁵ As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand."

William MacDonald says, "Wealth does not buy contentment. Profits, dividends, interest payments,

and capital gains whet the appetite for more. It all appears rather empty.”¹

2. Solomon has already noted the foolishness of loving money in chapter 2:1-11

Listen to what he says, “I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.” And behold, it too was futility. ²I said of laughter, “It is madness,” and of pleasure, “What does it accomplish?” ³I explored with my mind *how* to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding *me* wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. ⁴I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; ⁵I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; ⁶I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. ⁷I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. ⁸ Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings

¹William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Ec 5:10.

and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines. ⁹ Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. ¹⁰ All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. ¹¹ Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.”

Warren Wiersbe says, “Some people treat money as though it were a god. They love it, make sacrifices for it, and think that it can do anything. Their minds are filled with thoughts about it; their lives are controlled by getting it and guarding it; and when they have it, they experience a great sense of security. What faith in the Lord does for the Christian, money does for many unbelievers. How often we hear people say, “Well, money may not be the number one thing in life, but it’s way ahead of whatever is number two!”

The person who loves money cannot be satisfied no matter how much is in the bank account—because the human heart was made to be satisfied only by God (3:11). “Take heed and beware of covetousness,” warned Jesus, “for one’s life does

not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses” (Luke 12:15, NKJV). First the person loves money, and then he loves *more* money, and the disappointing pursuit has begun that can lead to all sorts of problems. “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10, NKJV).²

3. Psalms 62:10 says, “Do not trust in oppression and do not vainly hope in robbery; If riches increase, do not set *your* heart *upon them*.”

The key here is not to pursue it, not to acquire it by unrighteous means, and to keep your heart from being carried by it.

B. Trusting in Money is Idolatry

1. Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:17, “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”
2. When you derive your security from materialism, this is a form of idolatry. It becomes your god and

²Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Satisfied* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1990). Ec 5:10.

God said in Exodus 20:3, "You shall have no other gods before Me."

3. He says in verse 15, "You shall not steal."
4. And also in verse 17, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."
5. We need to heed the instruction found in Proverbs 23:4-5 which says, "Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration *of it*.⁵ When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For *wealth* certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies *toward* the heavens."

We are told that "only one-third to one-half of U.S. church members financially support their churches."³

If that is true, what are they doing with their money?

³ The United Methodist Foundation of Los Angeles, *Money and Religion*, rpt. in *Lifestyle Stewardship: Learning the Freedom of Generous Giving*, Alliance Life (January 2001), 13.

“In 2007, it is estimated that Americans will spend over \$40 billion on their pets.”⁴

It is also “estimated that by 2010, Americans will spend over \$60 billion on weight-loss programs.”⁵

John MacArthur writes in his book *Whose Money Is It Anyway?*, “The sin of deriving all personal joy from wealth rather than from God is so unnecessary if you just remember Jesus’ warning, ‘No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth’ (Luke 16:13; cf. Matt.6:24). To serve God, you must obey His command, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt.6:33). Inherent in both of the preceding admonitions is the truth that Jesus related one’s attitude toward money by the genuineness of his or her relationship to God. If you fully understand that, you will more than likely avoid the idolatry of materialism.”⁶

⁴ American Pet Products Manufacturers Associate, Inc., Industry Statistics and Trends, 2007.

⁵ Market Data Enterprises. US Weight Loss Market to Reach \$58 billion by 2007, 2007.

⁶ John MacArthur, *Whose Money Is It Anyway?* (Nashville, TN: Word, 2000), 18.

The attitude behind accumulation is “greed.”

And what does the Bible give as an answer to greed?

Let's consider now...

II. The Antidote to Greed

We have already heard the answer to this question. Jesus gave it to us in Luke 6:38. What did He say was the antidote to greed? Giving.

Turn to Matthew 19 and let's see...

A. The Example of the Rich-Young Ruler (Mat.19:16-26)

There are several things we can note about this individual.

1. He recognized he didn't have eternal life (v.16)
2. He believed Jesus could give him eternal life (vv.16-17)
3. He was self-righteous (vv.17b-20)
4. He was not willing to give up all that he had to have eternal life—his riches were his god (vv.21-22)

5. Jesus instructs His disciples concerning the difficulty of salvation for those who are rich (vv.23-24)

In other words, it is hard for a rich man to be saved because he trusts in his riches. To be saved, he has to be willing to abandon that trust in his possessions and trust God.

Notice also...

B. The Example of the Rich Man in Luke 12:16-21

1. Jesus tells us that his land was very productive (v.16)

Craig Keener says, "Archaeologists have found large grain silos on farms where wealthy absentee landowners lived, such as in Sepphoris, one of the largest and most Hellenized Jewish cities in Galilee. The image in the parable here is that of a

Hellenized ***Hellenistic**. Although the commentary usually uses the term "Greek," "Hellenistic" is the more accurate technical term for the cultural fusion of classical Greek culture with Near Eastern cultures carried out in the eastern Mediterranean by Alexander the Great and his successors. "Hellenistic" Judaism is thus Judaism heavily influenced by Greek culture, i.e., "Hellenized."

parable ***Parable**. Jewish teachers regularly illustrated their teachings with brief stories, similar to the use of sermon

wealthy landowner, part of the extremely small leisured class (generally estimated at less than 1 percent), who need not labor in his own fields.”⁷

2. So he decides to tear his barns down and build bigger barns and have “many goods laid up for many years to come” (vv.17-19)

William MacDonald says, “He could have saved himself the expense and bother of this tremendous construction project if he had just looked on the needy world about him, and used these possessions to satisfy hunger, both spiritual and physical. “The bosoms of the poor, the houses of

illustrations today (though often with less verisimilitude). Jesus’ parables, like those of other teachers, were meant to illustrate his points graphically, hence many details in these parables appear there only to advance the story line. Modern interpreters who read too much into such secondary details run the risk of overlooking the parable’s real point or points. The Greek word for “parable” normally means a comparison; the Jewish practice behind Jesus’ usage included a wide range of meanings (riddles, proverbs, fables, etc.).

⁷Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Lk 12:16.

widows, the mouths of children are the barns which last forever," said Ambrose."⁸

Craig Keener also notes that "Many other Jewish texts also criticize the self-sufficient person who thinks that he or she has it all and does not reckon with death."⁹

3. But God has different plans for him (vv.20-21) God says to him, "You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?"²¹ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Warren Wiersbe says, "Covetousness is an unquenchable thirst for getting more and more of something we think we need in order to be truly satisfied. It may be a thirst for money or the things that money can buy, or even a thirst for position and power. Jesus made it clear that true life does not depend on an abundance of possessions. He did not deny that we have certain basic needs

⁸William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Lk 12:16.

⁹Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Lk 12:19.

(Matt. 6:32; 1 Tim. 6:17). He only affirmed that we will not make life richer by acquiring *more* of these things.”¹⁰

When we look back a Luke 6:38 and compare what we have already have learned concerning the problem of accumulation and greed.

What do we see is the real issue? The heart.

What's the problem with hoarding possessions? The heart.

What's the problem with greed? The heart.

Listen what the Bible says about...

III. The Issues of the Heart

A. We Are to Give Not Hoard

That is clear from what Jesus said in Luke 6:38. That is also clear from the parable in Luke 12:16-21.

When Jesus says in Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return” what did He mean?

¹⁰Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989). Lk 12:13.

First of all, He had in mind the Middle Eastern grain market of His day.

When men and women went to the market they would pull up a large portion of their long flowing robe through their belt and use both hands to form a basket-like pocket.

The grain dealer would then pour the purchased amount of grain into the person's lap—into that huge pocket they had formed with their garment.

That concept is specifically mentioned in Ruth 3:15, "Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it. So she held it, and he measured six *measures* of barley and laid *it* on her. Then she went into the city."¹¹

Second, Jesus is giving a New Testament principle: "Generosity in giving results in a greater reward from God."

Again, the issue is the heart.

B. What You Sow is What You Reap

He says, "Give, and it will be given to you."

¹¹ John MacArthur, *Whose Money Is It Anyway?* (Nashville, TN: Word, 2000), 66.

1. Paul said it this way in 2 Corinthians 9:6, “Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

The word “bountifully” (eulogia) is where we get the word “eulogy” or “blessing.”

John MacArthur says, “When a generous believer gives by faith and trust in God, with a desire to produce the greatest possible blessing, that person will receive that kind of a harvest of blessing (cf. Prov. 3:9, 10; 28:27; Mal. 3:10). God gives a return on the amount one invests with Him. Invest a little, receive a little, and vice versa (cf. Luke 6:38).”¹²

2. Paul told the Galatians in Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

If we sow material things we reap spiritual treasures of inestimable value. It is also true that what we keep we lose, and what we give we have.¹³

¹²John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). 2 Co 9:6.

¹³William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Lk 6:38.

Looking back at Luke 6, the law of sowing and reaping is mentioned beginning at verse 36 and runs through verse 38.

3. Luke 6:36-38 says, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

Jesus says when you give generously, “it will be given to you.”

The idea of “good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over” is of a measuring container into which as much grain as possible is packed; it is then shaken to allow the grain to settle, and more is poured in till the container overflows.¹⁴

Because Jewish people sometimes used “they” as a way of avoiding God’s name, here “they will

¹⁴Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Lk 6:38.

pour” (NASB) may mean that God will do it; or the idea may be that God will repay a person through others.¹⁵

The “standard of measure” that you use in your giving “will be measured to you in return.”

In other words, the promise here given is that the person who gives generously will also receive back generously.¹⁶

And the standard that you use, will be given back to you.

So if it is a little, then little is given in return but if it is generous, God is generous in His blessings to you as well. Again this is the law of sowing and reaping.

William MacDonald says, “We should remember this with regard to agriculture—the farmer does

NASB New American Standard Bible

¹⁵Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Lk 6:38.

¹⁶William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 356.

not reap the exact amount of grain he sows, but much more proportionately. So it is in Christian giving: it is not a question of receiving back exactly what one has given but receiving back far out of proportion to the amount of the gift. Of course, the return is not so much in money as in spiritual blessings.”¹⁷

CONCLUSION

1. So what is your standard of giving?
2. It is little, nothing, or are you very generous?
3. Jesus says the blessing lies in giving not receiving.
4. Again, William MacDonald says, “It is a fixed principle in life that we reap according to our sowing, that our actions react upon us, that **the same measure** we **use** to others is **measured back** to us. If we sow material things we reap

¹⁷William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). 2 Co 9:6.

spiritual treasures of inestimable value. It is also true that what we keep we lose, and what we give we have.”¹⁸

5. Think about this as we conclude our time tonight.
6. Your giving reflects what's going on in your heart.
7. You are either stingy or generous.
8. You either hoard or share.
9. You either are laying up your treasure here on earth or in heaven.
10. What sacrifices are you making for the kingdom of God?
11. One person so adequately stated, “God prospers us not to raise our standard of living, but our standard of giving.”
12. Let's pray.

¹⁸William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Lk 6:38.