

“Giving To God!”
Nehemiah 10:32-39

Introduction:

1. We Have Already Seen The Great Impact God’s Word Had On His People!
 - They Became More Devoted To:
 - The Lord / His Work / His People!
 2. This Commitment Continues Till The End Of Chapter 10!
 - 10:1-31 - A Commitment To Holiness!
 - 10:32-39 - A Commitment To Giving!
 - Instead Of Just Giving “Lip-Service” To God!
 - They Started Putting Their Money & Material Things Where Their Mouths Were!
 - For Many, Giving Is The Greatest Expression Of Commitment!
 - As Jesus Said In Luke 12:34 - “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!”
 3. Where Is Your Heart?
 - Look At Your Treasure!
 - **Where** Your Treasure Is!
 - Even **What** Your Treasure Is!
 - **You Take Care Of Best What You Value Most!**
 - Bank Accounts / Houses / Cars / Collectibles / Hobbies!
 - Remember: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!”
 - You Will Take Care Of Best What You Value Most!
 4. The People Of God Recognized This As Well!
 - They Had Stopped Being Generous / Giving To God!
 - When They Renewed Their Commitment & Devotion To God:
 - One Of The Most Notable Things To Change Was Their Giving Habits!
 - And Instead Of It Being A Drudgery, It Became A Delight!
 - They Learned The Goals For Giving To God!
 5. We Find 4 Ways In Which They Gave To God!
 - Show The **4 Goals For Giving To God!**
 - When We Renew Our Commitment & Devotion To God:
 - Our Giving Will Also Change!
 - Not Just The Activity Of Giving!
 - But The Attitude Of Giving As Well!
- 1. Giving To God Is An Act Of Service!**
- The First Way They Gave - The Temple Gift / Tax!
 - In Exodus 30:11-16, A Special “Temple Tax” Was Instituted By God - “Half A Shekel” For Every Man!
 - This Was To Be Given Whenever A Census Was Taken! Probably Had Been A While Since This Happened! So, The People Voluntarily Wanted To Give More! More Frequently - More Funding! Their Goal For Giving Was Service!
 - 10:32-33 - “Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God; / For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God!”
 - The Key Reason For Their Giving Is Found In Both Of These Verses!
 - “For The **Service** Of The House Of Our God!”
 - “For All The **Work** Of The House Of Our God!”
 - **Service For God Is Work!**
 - And The People Were Committed To Helping The Work Of God Continue!
 - What Did They Commit To The Service Of God?
 - A Personal Commitment!
 - “We Made Ordinances For Us, To Charge Ourselves!”
 - A Personal Responsibility / A Personal Commitment!

- Everyone Was Involved In This!
- They Knew: “Where Their Treasure Was, There Will Their Heart Be Also!”
 - So They Committed Their Persons As Well As Their Possessions!
- Isn't This What God Wants?
 - He Wants You! All Of You!
- A Financial Commitment!
 - “The Third Part Of A Shekel For The Service Of The House Of Our God!”
 - The Work Of God Does Take Money!
 - But What Better Way To Make Use Of Your Money!
 - Pay Taxes - Who Knows What They Go For!
 - God Has A Place / Time / Purpose For His People To Give!
 - Then: Temple!
 - Now: The Church! 1 Corinthians 16:2 - “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come!”
- A Material Commitment!
 - Verse 33! Not Just Your Money - But Your Materials!
 - Some Feel That They Have “Paid Their Dues” When They Write A Check Or Put Some Money In The Plate!
 - It Is Clear, That God Desires **ALL** Of You!
 - After All, Everything You Have / Are Comes From Him / Belongs To Him Anyway! Just Giving Back!
- Giving To God Is An Act Of Service!
 - This Is How We Are To Give! How Do You Give?
 - With A Servant's Heart!
 - Not: “What Do I Get In Return?” / But “What Can I Return To God?” He Deserves It All!

2. ***Giving To God Is An Act Of Sharing!***

- Josephus, The Jewish Historian Who Lived Just After The Life & Ministry Of Jesus, Wrote About A Special Feast:
 - The “Chulophoria” Feast - Some Time In Our Month Of August - Where The People Would Bring Gifts Of Wood To The Temple - In Order To “Keep Alive The Sacred Fire!”
 - Leviticus 6:13 - “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out!”
 - A “Wood Gift!”
 - This Probably Started Here!
- 10:34 - “And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law!”
 - A Simple Gift Of Wood! With Great Importance!
 - We Don't Have An Altar With Sacrifices!
 - But We Still Need To “Keep Alive The Sacred Fire” In Our Hearts / Homes / Church!
 - How Do We Do This?
- Share The Labor!
 - It Wasn't Just The Priests / Levites – But **ALL** Of The People!
 - Everyone Was Included! Noone Was Excluded!
 - This Is How The Church Should Give!
 - Again 1 Corinthians 16:2 - “Let every one of you lay by him in store!”
 - Everyone Has A Part!
- Share The Load!
 - “For The Wood Offering!”
 - A Very Ordinary Gift! But Anyone Could Do This!
 - The Church Needs Something - Give It!
 - Or Someone In The Church Needs Something!
 - Even Something You Have / Something You Get!
 - Not Just Anything – See The 3rd Goal!

- Share The Liability!
 - The Wood Was Necessary To “Keep Alive The Sacred Fire!”
 - So There Was A Regular “Appointment” For This Gift!
 - Sometimes There Needs To Be A Special Opportunity To Give – For Things That Are Needed To “Keep Alive The Sacred Fire” In The Work / Service Of The Lord!
- Giving To God Is An Act Of Sharing!
 - Are You Doing Your Part?
 - Sharing The Labor / Load / Liability! God Will Use Your Gifts To Get Things Done! Everyone Needs To Share!

3. ***Giving To God Is An Act Of Sacrifice!***

- It Is A Form Of Worship!
 - This Is The Kind Of Heart From Which Our Gifts Come!
 - Third Kind Of Gift: “Firstfruit Gift!”
 - Shows *What* We Ought To Give! What God Deserves!
- 10:35-37a - “And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: / Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: / And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God!”
 - What Should We Give To God? The “Firstfruits” Of All That We Have!
- The Priority Of What We Give!
 - God Deserves The “First” Of Our “Fruits!”
 - Then: Of The Ground / Of The Trees!
 - Now: Of What God Has Given To Us!
 - Do You Give To God First?
 - Of Your Time / Of Your Energy / Of Your Income / Of Your Bonuses / Of Your Profits?
 - God Deserves Your First!
- The Price Of What We Give!
 - God Deserves The Best!
 - Even The “Firstborn Of Our Sons!”
 - They Would Then Have To Redeem With A Special Tax Given To The Temple!
 - It Cost Them Something! It Was A Sacrifice!
 - He Is Worth It! God Deserves Your Best!
- The Passion Of What We Give!
 - They Gave From All That Was Given To Them!
 - Even Their Herds / Flocks / And Dough!
 - 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 - “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. / Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver!”
 - God Deserves Your Heartfelt Gift!
- Giving To God Is An Act Of Sacrifice!
 - Worship! He Deserves Your First / Best / Heartfelt Gift!
 - What Do You Give & Why?

4. ***Giving To God Is An Act Of Submission!***

- God Uses The “Tithe” (Which Means “Tenth”) As A Test!
 - Of Our Submission To The Lord & His Work!
 - Malachi 3:10 - “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it!”
 - 10:37b-39 - “And the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. / And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take

tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house. / For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God!"

- The "Tithe" Did Not Start With Moses & The Law! Abraham Tithed To God Through The Priest Melchizedek! It Is A Continuing Principle That God Uses To Teach Us:
- Submission Through Support!
 - "That The Same Levites Might Have The Tithes!"
 - God Has Designed That The Support Of His Work & Workers Comes Through His People!
 - "If Christians Do Not Support The Lord's Work, The Lord's Work Will Not Be Supported!" (Jonathan Stobbs)
- Submission Through Stewardship!
 - 10:38-39a! We Need To Realize That Our Money Is God's Money – Not Just 10% – All Of It! (Levites / Priests)
 - We Need To Be Good Stewards / Managers Of What God Has Given!
 - Part Of Good Stewardship Is Giving To The Lord / His House / His Church!
 - For The Church To Use In Carrying Out Its Mission!
 - The Primary Storehouse Of Our Giving!
- Giving To God Is An Act Of Submission!
 - To The Authority Of God & Others He Has Placed Over Us!
 - The "Tithe" Is A Test!
 - Not A Legalistic Requirement, But It Is A Principle & A Guideline To See Where Our Hearts Are!

Conclusion:

1. Where Were The Hearts Of God's People?
 - 10:39b - "We Will Not Forsake The House Of Our God!"
 - They Were Committed To God Personally!
 - They Were Committed To God Financially!
 - What They Gave To His House, They Gave To God Himself!
2. Their Treasure Followed Their Hearts!
 - Where Is Your Heart? Where Is Your Treasure?
 - Remember: Giving To God:
 - Is An Act Of Service / Sharing / Sacrifice / Submission!
 - So Give To The Lord With All Of Your Heart!

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