

THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 ... "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality."

Our culture has convinced us that there are two categories of people: those who have wealth, and those who do not. We call it, "The haves and the have nots." While the Bible clearly recognizes that there are many among us who are poor (see Matthew 26:11), it does not excuse the poor from honoring God with their talents, time, devotion, service, and giving. Although a poor person may have very little money to give God compared to a rich person, he is still obligated to contribute. Everyone who calls him or herself a follower of Christ, is obligated to return a portion of their income to God.

Obviously, a very rich believer, if he is obedient to God in his giving, can greatly empower the work of God through the church and missionaries. The 10% tithe of a millionaire could be thousands of Pesos a week, whereas the tithe of a poor farmer or fisherman might be 10 Pesos or less. We might look at these two circumstances and conclude that God can use the millions from rich people, but the few Pesos of a poor person would not help the church. Many poor believers, therefore, believe they are excused from tithing due to their poverty.

God does not need the money of the rich man or the money of the poor man. But God does want both persons to find the joy that comes from sacrificial giving and living in obedience to him. Tithing, therefore, is for you, not for God. If you cheat God out of your tithe, whether it be millions of Pesos or just one Peso, you will suffer from the guilt of disobedience, and there is no joy in that state. Paul is writing in today's passage about the Christians in the church he founded in Macedonia and telling us that even though they were deeply poor and had many problems, they were generous in giving to the church and reaped joy in so doing.

When a rich man and a poor man tithe obediently, God blesses them both. They both enjoy God's blessings through their sacrificial generosity, because the importance is not in the amount, but in their attitudes.

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