

GIVING

Most of us would like to know, when giving to God, “How much is enough?” Often when taking up an offering I can see by some people’s expressions that they don’t really know how much they ought to give. It’s as if they are wanting to say, “Pastor, help me! What is the right amount to give?” If I could reply, I’d quote C. S. Lewis... “I do not believe that any of us can settle on how much we ought to give. So I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than you can spare.”

If you’ve ever been in this predicament, here is an illustration given by a Baptist minister that describes it nicely... *When you go to your doctor for a check-up, he or she will often begin to poke, prod, and press various places, all the while asking, "Does this hurt? How about this?" If you cry out in pain, one of two things has happened. Either the doctor has pushed too hard, or there's something wrong with you. So it is when pastors preach on giving; certain members cry out in discomfort, criticizing the messenger or rejecting the message. Either the pastor has pushed too hard, or perhaps there's something wrong. If the latter is the case, I'd say, "My friend, we're in need of the Great Physician because it's not supposed to hurt there."*

Yes, it's not supposed to hurt when we give! How often have you heard the saying, “Give till it hurts.” Well, my advice is, “Give till it feels good!” 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 confirms this, ***“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”*** According to this passage of scripture, we need to give until it brings joy to our hearts! Notice also that our “giving” must be a heart decision and not a head decision. If you intellectualise your giving, you will end up doing it grudgingly or out of necessity. God loves a cheerful giver. It doesn't say God “likes, admires or compliments” a person who gives cheerfully, it says God LOVES him! Wouldn't you like to do something today that causes the love of God to abound toward you? Wouldn't you like to know that your attitude when giving brings God immense pleasure?

Martin Luther said, “When I have tried to keep things in my own hands I lost them all, but what I have given into God's hands I still possess.” How true that is! When you place something into God’s hands you never lose it. In fact, it is multiplied back to you in good measure – pressed down, shaken together and running over! Luke 6:38 says, ***“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap.”*** Don't ever miss an opportunity to give to God.