

Lesson 5 - Money and the Local Church

www.aubeacon.com

Introduction: The Lord has provided the local church for the growth of every Christian.

A. Elders over local churches are to *carefully feed the flock*. (**Acts 20:26-28, 32**)

Acts 20:26-28 ²⁶ "Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. ²⁷ "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Acts 20:32 ³² "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

1. A local church is a place to grow and face the challenges of life.

2. The ultimate goal is to make each one of us more like Christ. (**Rom 8:29**)

Romans 8:29 ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

B. The use of our possessions, money and time is a reflection of our hearts.

1. We can mark spiritual growth several ways. The use of our possessions can tell us some *unpleasant truths about ourselves*. (**James 2:18**)

James 2:18 ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

2. We have already seen how we can be *willingly deceived* concerning our perceptions over how we spend money! We need to see our own hearts.

I. Developing a heart and a life of giving

A. What changes are produced in us because of our conversion?

1. When we live a life of repentance then a process takes place where we move from an *"old man" to a "new man."* (**Rom 6:6-7; Eph 4:22-25, 28**)

Romans 6:6-7 ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Ephesians 4:22-25 ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, "*Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,*" for we are members of one another.

Ephesians 4:28 ²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

2. The “old man” represents the flesh and the thoughts and actions of putting yourself first. “Self-interest” has always been a powerful motivator.
3. One of the greatest marks of spiritual growth is how we learn to give. Why?

Consider the example of Timothy. **(Phil 2:4, 19-21)**

Philippians 2:4 ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:19-21 ¹⁹ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. ²⁰ For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. ²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

B. Our everyday thought process should push us towards giving.

1. The “new man” must be renewed daily as we constantly look at the image of Christ. It will direct us towards how we view our brethren. **(Col 3:9-10, 14-15)**

Colossians 3:9-10 ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Colossians 3:14-15 ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

2. Peace of mind comes when we are imitating the image of Christ. **(Acts 20:35)**

Acts 20:35 ³⁵ "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to **give** than to **receive**.' "

3. Giving people are the happiest most contented people. We are made to serve!

C. We must be careful about giving from false motives.

1. We can give to those whom we expect to give back to us. Some keep score!

(Mt 5:46-47; 6:1-4)

Matthew 5:46-47 ⁴⁶ "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?"

Matthew 6:1-4 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³ "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

2. We give because someone is in need. Even if someone will not become a Christian, we still should be giving towards them. **(Lk 14:12-14)**

Luke 14:12-14 ¹² Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. ¹³ "But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. ¹⁴ "And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

3. What does the mirror of Christ show us about our thoughts and actions?

II. Understanding the various ways of giving

A. We should seek to have a heart that seeks to give. We can give in many ways!

1. We can give in a contribution in the assembly. This involves money.
2. Consider the ways we can give our time; prayers, visits, cards and calls, meals and other acts of service. When you give of your time you give of your life.
3. It is a shame that brethren tried to explain "visit" by substituting a contribution to an institution. **(James 1:26-27)**

James 1:26-27 ²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

B. The most personal way is the best way.

1. We can "shut up our heart" and still make a contribution. God wants our hearts.

(Deut 15:7-8; 1 Jn 3:15-17)

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 ⁷ " If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, ⁸ "but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.

1 John 3:15-17 ¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

2. Note how personal attention and effort will be mentioned by the Lord in the day of judgement. **(Matt 25:35-36)**

Matthew 25:35-36 ³⁵ 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

III. How much should I give in the local contribution?

A. Do you know how much you give? Jesus does! **(Mk 12:41-44)**

Mark 12:41-44 ⁴¹ Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much. ⁴² Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. ⁴³ So He called His disciples to

Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; ⁴⁴ "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

1. How much have you purposed to give? How have you determined that?

(2 Cor 9:6-7)

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 ⁶ But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ *So let each one give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

2. God promises blessing to us because of our giving. (Lk 6:38; Mt 6:19-21)

Luke 6:38 ³⁸ "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Matthew 6:19-21 ¹⁹ " Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

3. What should a budget reveal about our giving? How may we be surprised?

B. Every Christian is to give on *the first day of the week*. (1 Cor 16:2)

1 Corinthians 16:2 ² On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

1. Some may say because they have given elsewhere that they do not need to give.

The Pharisees were good at such reasoning. (Mt 15:4-6)

Matthew 15:4-6 ⁴ "For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' ⁵ "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is a gift to God*" -- ⁶ 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

2. We should cheerfully give because we know the Lord commands us but also because we know what the money is used for. We have fellowship in the work!

(Phil 4:16-17; 2 Cor 8:4)

Philippians 4:16-17 ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

2 Corinthians 8:4 ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

3. When we love the Lord and His work *then we will give freely*.

IV. Challenges the local church faces in the collection and spending of money

A. Seek to give full accounting of all the handling of money. (2 Cor 8:18-21)
2 Corinthians 8:18-21 ¹⁸ And we have sent with him the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches, ¹⁹ and not only *that*, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and *to show* your ready mind, ²⁰ avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us -- ²¹ providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

1. There are few things that can provoke brethren as money matters. The world will be quick to run with false rumors and accusations. Some brethren will too.

2. Many churches have lost enormous sums because of a lack of common sense controls. This protects those who handle and spend the money.

B. A spiritual leadership will set spiritual priorities for how the money is used.

1. In weak churches, the issue of money is a common cause of dispute.

2. What does the Lord want? What priorities does Jesus have in light of His sacrifice?

C. How the treasury is used affects every member. This is a fellowship! (2 Cor 8:4)
2 Corinthians 8:4 ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

1. I cannot be brought into fellowship with what is sinful.

2. I should forbear in areas of judgment.

D. The local church is to decide and oversee the spending of the money. (1 Pt 5:2)
1 Peter 5:2 ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

1. Some colleges have tried to supplant the church in its work.

2. Institutionalism has often plagued God's people.

Questions

1. How does conversion affect our giving over time?
2. How does Jesus teach us by example? Show by both His teach and example.
3. How can we give by false motives?
4. What is the best way to give?
5. How much should I give in the contribution?
6. How does the spending of money affect the unity of a local church?
7. Why does the spending of money from the contribution affect every member?