

# *Always Abounding*

by Charity Kay



# Introduction

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” - 1 Corinthians 15:58

*Abounding* is being full, overflowing. And it not only says to abound in God’s work, but to be *always* abounding. We can take this as a general idea of serving God, or we can take it to the fullest extent and make the most of our time and money.

As children of God, we have His love in our hearts and we are “taught of God to love one another” (1 John 3:15-16; Thessalonians 4:9). As God is love and loves to give, He leads us to want to give.

In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus gave examples of ways to give and serve. And when we do that, we are investing in our own eternal rewards as well as the lives of others.

## Chapter 1

# God's Pleasure

### Searching for God's Will

If we love God, we want to find out what pleases Him. Ephesians 5:17 says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." We need wisdom in knowing God's will.

Wisdom is found by searching—studying God's Word with our own views surrendered to Him. Being teachable is foundational if we truly want to know God's will.

### How to Please God

God is pleased when *He gives*, and He is pleased when *we give*.

Amy Carmichael said, "We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving."

On one hand, we might be concerned about God's pleasure in our earthly happiness. If we use money for the gospel when we could use it on ourselves, we might miss out on something He intended for us.

The good thing is, He promises to restore anything that we have given to someone in need. Proverbs 19:17 says, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."

There is such a thing as pointless self-denial (asceticism) as 1 Timothy 4:3-5 describes. However, we never miss out by loving others!

Ecclesiastes 5:19 says we have "power" in how we use our money; in other words, we have freedom. With that freedom we might rescue slaves, support orphans, help persecuted Christians, and see lives changed for eternity.

God gives to us in order that we can give to others. We might wonder why He would do it that way, rather than Him simply blessing others directly. The reason is that we are here to grow in love.

When we give, serve, share the gospel, or pray for others, we are growing in love. The reason God doesn't do everything directly is that He has appointed us to be the vessels of His love. It is true that we can do nothing by ourselves (John 15:5), yet it is still Him working through us, not without us.

God will find a way to make up for anything we've given; and it can be very direct even in this life, but definitely in heaven. Proverbs 19:17 says, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."

Aside from our own basic needs, *we can't give too much, because we can't love too much.*

## Promises

While we are not called to store up treasures on earth, we can know for sure that everything we do for Jesus' kingdom will be counted, and nothing will be lost!

“He that watereth shall be watered also himself” - Proverbs 11:25

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” - Daniel 12:3

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” - Matthew 6:27

“He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.” - Matthew 10:41-42

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” – Luke 6:38

“And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.” - Luke 12:42-44

“Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

- Luke 14:12-14

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” – 2 Corinthians 9:6

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate\*; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” – 1 Timothy 6:17-19

\*“*communicate*”: to share

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” - Hebrews 6:10-12

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” – Revelation 22:12

God’s pleasure when we share the gospel

God’s will is that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9), and He has put us in charge of the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 10:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Jude 22-23). Although He owns the world and He can spread the gospel, we are chosen to fulfill the task. When we point people toward Christ, He is pleased.

If we share the gospel or spend much time praying for people’s salvation, and some turn to Christ, we can share in His pleasure; we will have the joy of being with them for eternity.

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

Please God—not unbelievers

Don’t worry that unsaved people will be turned away because they think Christians are boring. They already think that way because their idea of fun is sin. If being “boring” turns them away, chances are

they will find another excuse, no matter how much fun you enjoy.

It might be why James 2 says God has chosen the poor of this world. If our co-workers don't want to donate to Christian charities that rescue orphans and slaves, and they would rather be out having fun, we don't have to join them. Our job is to focus on helping the people who really want to be helped.

Follow Jesus and live your life serving others! That is what pleases God.

## CHAPTER 2

# God's Goodness

### Physical blessings

Every good gift comes from God (James 1:17). What are His gifts? Everything God created was good (Genesis 1:31) and He gave us the earth (Psalm 115:16). God gives us richly all things to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17) and we should receive and be thankful for those blessings (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

In the Bible, God's physical blessings are almost always food. To some, He also gives land, health, marriage, and children, or family in general.

- Food – Deuteronomy 1:25; 2:35; 3:7; 6:3; 7:13; 8:8; Psalm 37:25; 104:14; Proverbs 3:10; 24:13; 27:26-27; Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:13; 5:18; 9:7; Joel 2:21-27; Malachi 3:10-12; Matthew 14:19; 15:36; 1 Timothy 4:3

- Clothes – Matthew 6:30-31; 1 Timothy 6:8

- Land - Deuteronomy 1:20-21, 10-11; 8:7-13

- Marriage - Proverbs 19:14; Ecclesiastes 9:9; 1 Corinthians 7:7 (also singleness); 1 Timothy 4:3 ●

Children – Deuteronomy 7:13-14; Psalm 113:9

- Health - Deuteronomy 7:15; Mark 3:10

- Other: Psalm 68:6 (family in general); Ecclesiastes 5:19 (money); 11:7 (light); Acts 14:17 (life, breath, all things\*); 1 Timothy 6:17 (all things)

\*"All things" could possibly mean everything God created and gave directly (listed above).

I understand that many of these verses are for Israel, but this is a general idea of God's blessings.

These require *little* extra time or money for ourselves to enjoy them. For example, food is a blessing but it's also necessary for survival. Also, eating can be a time for fellowship with other people.

Outside the blessings God gives us directly, He gives us freedom to choose from activities that are morally good (Ecclesiastes 2:4-10; 5:19). When parents who give their adult daughter money for her birthday, she has the freedom to use it however she wants. She can call whatever she buys a "gift" from them, but it's not directly from them. While some parents want their children to spend it on themselves and they consider giving "throwing away," some of us would be thrilled if our children gave, and certainly our Father cares for everyone. Looking at the freedom we have, we may think that the way to enjoy God's goodness is to use that freedom for ourselves, but not necessarily. That brings us to the next kind of blessing.



## Spiritual blessing: Grace

The Bible shows that when we work for God, we have more grace.

- He gives us grace in our ability to serve. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-3, we find that the Macedonian Christians, by God's grace, gave sacrificially in their poverty, and even desired to give "beyond their power." In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul said that he labored "more abundantly" than other apostles because of God's grace. Our work is not truly ours, but His (John 15:5; Philippians 1:11). The more we work for Him, letting Him work through us, the more we have His grace to serve. The more we give ourselves to love, the more His love shows through us.
- He gives us grace to have joy as we serve. (Philippians 2:17)
- He gives us grace in rewarding as we serve. Grace is undeserved, and we don't deserve the rewards we "earn" from serving God. We always receive according to what we give (Proverbs 19:17; Luke 6:38; Revelation 22:12). It is God's grace to keep track of each choice we make, and to give it back in full. The more we give, the more we receive His grace.

## How can we be happy?

- Realize what we have.

"He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast" (Proverbs 15:15)—concentrate on God's goodness, and be thankful for all He does.

- Enjoy blessings as they come.

Remember that God is not willing to withhold any good thing from you if you are in His will (Psalm 84:11). He told the Israelites that blessings would "overtake" them if they obeyed (Deuteronomy 28:2), and He is as good to us as He was to them.

Many times, people have prayed for specific requests, or simply thought of something that would be nice to have, and they got it. How much better is it to see God's direct blessing than to get it for ourselves?

God is always willing to bless us; how much more, if we are always doing His business? If we make ourselves available for Him to love through us, devote all our energy to His service, and trust Him for His blessings, how can we fail to be blessed by Him?

- Find happiness in others' happiness.

There is something about giving to others, especially to meet their needs, that is a blessing to us. Acts 20:35 says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." You might know that "blessed" means "happy." Simply knowing that others are blessed by God's love through us is happiness in itself.

Since I love living a worthwhile life, I want every moment and every penny to count for eternity. It's so much better than holding back for myself, which feels stagnant and unsatisfying.

We can find passion in "making others rich" even when they are strangers. In the same way we love to give to our own children, we can love giving to children on the other side of the world.

- "Rejoice in the Lord"

The highest form of happiness is joy that comes from our relationship with Jesus.

He blesses us with joy as we seek Him and as we obey Him.

Psalm 34:12-14 "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord alway...." It doesn't simply say, "be happy," but "rejoice in the Lord," in Who He is.

In His presence is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11).

"How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." – Psalm 36:7-8

# CHAPTER 3

## What Does the Bible Say?

### What the Bible says about God's goodness

We can see God's goodness either way:

- Since God is good, He gives us freedom to use time and money how we choose.
- Since God is good, He is just, and will not overlook our service in love;\* if we give all our free time and money to others, He will reward our service.

\*Hebrews 6:10 "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

### What does the Bible say about sacrifice?

We know from Psalm 40:6 that God doesn't require burnt offering and sacrifice, but there is one kind of sacrifice He does value- giving. "With such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16).

We know that God desires mercy over sacrifice (Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:7-8). Sacrificing an animal on an altar is not what He looks for. He looks for mercy- *an act of compassion for someone in need*. Psalm 37:21 says the righteous show mercy by giving. In Psalm 109:16, the wicked don't show mercy but oppress the poor and needy.

Isaiah 58:5-7 contrasts these same two kinds of sacrifice. Again, God is looking for service in ways that benefit others and even ourselves for eternity.

If the sacrifice will benefit no one, it is pointless. If the sacrifice will benefit someone, it is priceless. It yields eternal results.

While God warns us about giving and serving out of obligation, He loves when we give freely and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). When our hearts are right, being zealous all the time is good (Galatians 4:18).

### Examples to follow

#### Jesus' example

##### *His diligence*

Healing a blind man, Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4) More than anyone else, He must have known how short this life truly is (James 4:14; 1 Corinthians 7:29). Having an eternal perspective, He compared life to a day's

work, implying diligence at a job. He came from heaven for one purpose, to fulfill His Father's will, and the frame of time here was like a day. Life is short, like a day of work (well, a day at work may not always seem as short as it is!), and soon "the night cometh." Some work-minded people would rather be working than having fun, because of the pleasure that comes from living with purpose and accomplishing things that are worthwhile. Jesus had to be perfectly diligent, or He would be outdone by more passionate people.

### *His story*

The fact that we have only part of Jesus' life begs a "What if?" in our minds. Some believe that Jesus spent some money and time on His own happiness. I don't believe so. He had direct blessings, but we don't have reason to believe He took more for Himself. We know what is important to Jesus by the story He left us. If it's not part of the story, it's not important in His eyes. We can't imitate what we think He might have done; we can only imitate what we know He did- and the story He left is one full of service.

- He became poor for us (2 Corinthians 8:9).
- Even when He could have been with His family on the way back to their home, He chose to stay behind for His Father's work. He had a choice of going home with His earthly family or staying for His Father's work, and chose the heavenly work. He was absorbed with His mission. It is an insight into His thoughts about life. He "must" be about His Father's business (similar to John 9:4).
- He gave up a place to live. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Luke 9:58)
- When He was teaching a crowd, He and His listeners had no time to eat- leaving the disciples thinking He was "beside himself" (Mark 3:20-21).
- Another time when the disciples said He should eat, He said "My meat..."(John 4:34) He was satisfied with the work He came to do.
- After His resurrection, He was still busy serving- He preached for 40 days.
- What about the rest of His life that we have no details about? The Bible helps us fill in that gap. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). This shows that He was busy. And since the story He left us is one full of service, we can assume that is the life He wants us to imitate.

### *His love*

- The story of Jesus' life is amazing. There is glory in sacrifice for love, and there is nothing more glorious than Jesus' love. He must have been the most giving and serving person ever to live. Jesus is God, God is love, and love means giving. If others have lived sacrificially (some out of obligation, others out of *love*), He must have outdone them because of Who He is.

- We can have love in our hearts to some extent when we are not serving, but love is a desire to give. It is the nature of love to act whenever there is an opportunity. Jesus could not have been content to see others in need and miss the opportunity to help. He would have done all in His power to meet the need. There is always an opportunity for love. Even if Jesus wasn't physically able to show love, He could still pray, and we know "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

For all these reasons, we can assume that He lived entirely for others.

### Paul's example

Paul labored day and night for the gospel. Not only did he preach the gospel, but he also worked a regular job so he wouldn't have to charge the people he was ministering to (2 Thessalonians 3:8).

Paul "laboured more abundantly" than other apostles through God's grace. - 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 11:23

### Anna the prophetess

She "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." - Luke 2:37

### The Proverbs 31 woman

She is a servant! She takes care of everyone in her household, as well as taking care of the poor. Verse 29 shows us that she is not only virtuous; she is excellent. "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." God looks on service as *excellent*, better than virtuous alone. We can see that obedience to God's commands is valuable, but living to serve others is even more valuable.

### Macedonian Christians

"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves" - 2 Corinthians 8:1-3

### The early church

The early church sold what they didn't need so they would be able to give. "And [they] sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts 2:45

They weren't on vacation and running out of money- God was using them right there to win souls! It also may have been a time of preparation for their calling to the world. We know they had His blessing, as seen in Acts 2:47 and Acts 4:32-33.

Additionally, they were spending their time praying, and anyone who has the dedication to pray more than five minutes for needs other than their own, has a heart to obey. Fervent prayer requires laying down our self-dependence and impatience, as well as self-denial for the needs of others (denial in the sense of saying no; denying or declining our wants).

The Bible promotes giving as much as we can.

### General principle

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” - Acts 20:35

That means that a life filled with giving must be the most “blessed” kind of life.

### John the Baptist’s message

“He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” - Luke 3:11

Even though this was said to the Jews, it’s safe to assume we can apply this too.

### Tabitha

She was “full” of good works and giving (Acts 9:36)

### The poor widow

“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.” - Mark 12:44

### Giving and receiving principle

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” - Revelation 22:12

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” - Luke 6:38

“Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” – Ephesians 6:8

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” - Galatians 6:7b

Did you know this is in the context of giving? Verse 6 says to “communicate” to those who teach us from

God's Word, and *communicate* literally means *share*. Also, verse 10 says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This tells us that however much opportunity we have, it's good to give, and as we do, we know we will reap the good that we sow.

The parable of the pounds (Luke 19:16-19) is different from the parable of the talents in that each person starts out with the same amount of money. The focus is on the man who was an unwise steward, but the least noticed character is the man who had 5 pounds. He did well, and had rewards, yet he could have done more. The man with 10 pounds was rewarded with 10 cities, while the man with 5 pounds was rewarded with 5 cities. It is possible to do a good job, yet not do all we are able to.

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first." (Mark 10:28-31) Although we should never be selfish and try to put ourselves before others, and we shouldn't aim to be higher than others in heaven, we should remember that whatever we sow, we will reap that same amount, and it affects forever. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." - Daniel 12:3

#### Encouragement to sell and give

"Sell that ye have, and give alms" (Luke 12:33). Does it apply to us? I believe it does because of verses 41-42. Let's look at the whole passage:

vv. 13-21 covetousness

vv. 22-32 worry (same context because of "therefore")

vv. 33-34 exchanging earthly treasure for heavenly

vv. 35-40 being watchful for Christ's coming

vv. 41-48 servants: apparently applies to everyone

This passage revolves around keeping a heavenly perspective and not focusing on earthly things.

While we're not necessarily covetous if we keep some, and we may not be required to sell everything, it's equated with laying up treasure in heaven (same in Matthew 19:21).

Knowing what God wants us to do

The Bible is our guide for life. If we fill our time with the most loving choices which are given in the Bible, we can be sure we are pleasing God to the best of our knowledge. Here are some examples:

- - Prayer - Luke 18:1
  - Giving all diligence to growing in Christ – 2 Peter 1:5-10
  - Witnessing/helping spread the gospel - Romans 10:14-16
  - Giving to people in need, especially orphans - James 1:27, Matthew 25:31-40 ●
- “Remembering” the Christians in adversity, as though with them - Hebrews 13:3
- Praising God – Psalm 100; 106; 149; 150
- Staying separate from the world – James 1:27; 2 Corinthians 6
  - Edifying other believers – Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4
- “Every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:21; Hebrews 13:21).

Focusing on what we know God wants

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17). In His “name” means in His will, authority, or command. Are we accomplishing His purpose in every word and action? Are we “giving all diligence” to be in His will (2 Peter 1:5)?

Knowing God is just

We are rewarded for choosing right over wrong (Proverbs 11:18), and we can also choose the “best” over the “good.” 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 tells us we can build with gold, silver, and precious stones. (I’m leaving out the wood, hay, and stubble because I hope you are not living in sin.) What are gold, silver, and precious stones for? There could be different levels of rewards. We know that God is just, and does things logically; and He says He gives according to what we do (Revelation 22:12).

“Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). We know that doing God’s work, in His Spirit, is *not in vain*. He has promised it!



## 4 Showing God's Love

### Abounding in Love

“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more....” - 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

That was written to the Thessalonians. How were they loving the other believers? Probably by giving, because the Macedonians were poor (2 Corinthians 8:1-2).

“Increase more and more” Even if we already love others, there's room to grow in love. If we grow in love, we will naturally look for more and more opportunities to give.

How much should we give? The loving question is “How much can I give?”

### Showing the extent of your love

You can show that you've surrendered all, by giving. The greatest proof that we've given all to God is if we literally give it to what He says He is interested in. And what is God interested in? As we search the Bible, we see that He is interested in us being loving- through actions.

1 Corinthians 16:14 says, “Let all your things be done with charity.” By actively loving, doing everything in your ability to meet others' needs, you are making sure you are doing everything in love.

### **Evangelism**

It's surprising to me that all the commands to evangelize are (or seem to be) for specific Christians. I've searched hoping to find some command for the church at large, but it appears that the commands are for certain people who have certain callings. Still, we all should live in light of the need. (1) We should give. The early church gave to missionaries, as we see in Paul's letters. (2) We are called to be ready to give an answer. (3) It can be implied in loving others as ourselves. If I were in a burning building, I would want someone to warn me. And lost people are in far more danger than loss of their earthly lives.

# 5 Giving to the Best Causes

## **Loving everyone - not only some**

It's fun to give expensive gifts to the people closest to us, but it can be harder to give to people we've never met. 1 Timothy 5:8 has been used to promote giving to our families *in excess* (which negates our ability to give to other causes), but in the context it's about support rather than indulgence. Of course, I do give gifts to family members, but that budget is much smaller than our budget for donations. With \$3,000 a year it's possible to rescue and fully support 5 street children in a Christian orphanage or home, which makes a world of difference for them. We can do that while still keeping a small budget for our loved ones who have enough.

## **Choosing the best**

On GoFundMe, there are often opportunities to give that are not always best, when contrasted with the severity of other needs. Since giving to one cause means giving less to another (or nothing at all), it's important to wisely seek out the best causes. I believe it's important to have a passion for *rescuing* that is *greater than* a desire for giving in general.

## **The reality of needs around the world**

Our idea of richness tends to be cultural, and we may not think we are rich, but the majority of Americans are rich in comparison to many other countries. And when it comes to the gospel, we have an abundance of churches. There are communities of people around the world who have no access to the church and as a result, little knowledge of the gospel.

That is why I believe the main focus of our giving should be toward foreign countries.

## **Why support orphans**

Why should we be passionate for orphans, or street children? Supporting orphans in foreign countries is a way to fulfill everything in Isaiah 58:13-14, Matthew 25:35-40, and Matthew 28:19-20. When we support Christian ministries that help them, they are rescued from the streets, delivered from oppression, provided with food, given education for the future, cared for when they are sick, and most of all given the hope of eternal life through Jesus.

# 6 Becoming Passionate

## **Increasing our sense of reality**

There is a saying, “Out of sight, out of mind.” If you saw a homeless child begging on your street, you would do something. Yes, we would do things the proper and legal way by letting government agencies take care of them, but what about the ones whose governments do not or cannot help them? Although it's hard to imagine, it is real.

We need to find ways to increase that sense of reality. Jeremiah said, “Mine eye affecteth mine heart” (Lamentations 3:51). When we see and hear about people in need, we are naturally stirred with compassion. Watch testimonies of people who found hope through Jesus, because of those who sacrificed to help them - including children who were sold into trafficking. [\*Tending Clouds\*](#) is a moving story of a woman in Cambodia who was trafficked as a young child, but rescued.

Yet don't let those stories remain on the level of imagination as if they were fictional. Take a moment to realize that they are real people, and there are others that are still in desperate need, waiting for someone to care. They are as real as your own family members. They are living right now at this moment.

We don't see the homeless children on the other side of the world— but it's still a reality, and distance doesn't mean less opportunity to support them. Even though we are so far away, we are still able to give.

As you make these things a part of your life, the reality will sink in, and you will find motivation to serve to your fullest potential, changing lives— even for eternity.

## **Loving others as ourselves**

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” – Matthew 7:12

The orphans who now have loving Christian families are probably thankful for the sacrifices people have made for them. If I were in their place, I would want people to give what they could.

## **Focusing on eternity**

This life is not a place to settle down— when we think of the future, what comes to mind? Heaven is our home.

Today counts for eternity, and all our time and money have potential for love! Think about how you can invest the most in eternity and in the lives of other people.

# 7 Working and Resting

## Doing His Work

It might seem like there is too much focus on what we are doing. I hope you won't come away from this book thinking of all you should do. The life that is most pleasing to God is one of faith and love. Rely on Him, and accept His love so you will have love to give. Don't serve out of feelings of obligation, but out of the desires He gives you. The desires God gives us will always be love for Him and others.

We need Him. Without Him we can do nothing. We need to serve in His strength. We are not able to do anything worthwhile apart from God. We don't serve independently, but dependently.

## Resting

While we do need rest, we can still actively show love to God and others. Resting can be a variety of things. In the Old Testament, Jews were to help the needy and oppressed on the sabbath day (Isaiah 58:13-14). Jesus followed this by healing on the sabbath. Even today it is still a good principle to have a day of rest, and it's implied that on rest days, the best use of time is loving others or spending quiet time with God.

Here are some ways we can rest in ways that are worthwhile:

- Reading God's Word

Mary sat at Jesus' feet, hearing His Word. At the time, it was better than physical work she could have done to serve Him (Luke 10:39-42).

- Praying/waiting on God

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”- Isaiah 40:31

“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.” – Psalm 27:14

“Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.” – Psalm 105:4

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee” – Psalm 55:22

- Praising God

Many verses tell us to praise God, especially through music (Colossians 3:16; Psalm 100; 149; 150). Singing, playing, or listening to music that glorifies God will help us stay joyful, and the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

- Writing to persecuted Christians

Writing to people is an easy way to show love, one that we can do even if we are sick and can't go anywhere. For example, you can write to persecuted Christians to encourage them to keep serving God.

- Time with family

Spending time together is good for married couples, and children understand love by the time their parents spend with them. Set a schedule for quality time with your family when you are not distracted by anything else.

- Church

Hebrews 10:24 shows the purpose of church is to provoke (stir up) others to love and good works. We're called to edify others. Don't simply come and go, but pray that God will show you how to be a blessing, and that He will show His love through you!

# 8 Sacrificial believers

Being sacrificial is sometimes considered so unusual that it's strange, but it was actually not unusual for Christians in the past.

## **Andrew Murray**

Rev. Andrew Murray, author and missionary to Africa, wrote a book on the use of our money. He used the story of the widow's mite as an example for giving all:

How different our standard and Christ's. We ask how much a man *gives*. Christ asks, how much he *keeps*. We look at the gift. Christ asks whether the gift was a sacrifice. The widow kept nothing over, she gave all; the gift won His heart and approval, for it was in the spirit of His own self-sacrifice, who, being rich, became poor for our own sakes. They--out of their abundance--cast in much: She, out of her want—all that she had.

But if our Lord wanted us to do as she did, why did He not leave a clear command? How gladly then would we do it. Ah! there you have it. You want a command to make you do it: that would just be the spirit of the world in the church looking at *what* we give, at our giving all. And that is just what Christ does not wish and will not have. He wants the generous love that does it unbidden. He wants every gift to be a gift warm and bright with love, a true free will offering. If you want the Master's approval as the poor widow had it, remember one thing: you must put all at His feet, hold all at His disposal. And that, as the spontaneous expression of a love that, like Mary's, cannot help giving, just because it loves.

All my money giving--what a test of character! Lord Jesus! Oh give me grace to love Thee intently, that I may know how to give.<sup>1</sup>

## **Arthur T. Pierson**

Rev. A. T. Pierson, the pastor of Metropolitan Tabernacle after Charles Spurgeon's death, wrote about the "hundreds" who willingly lived in poverty for Christ's sake:

It can scarcely be said by any careful student of the New Testament that our Lord encourages His disciples to look or ask for earthly wealth. Yet it is equally certain that hundreds of devout souls who have chosen voluntary poverty for His sake have been entrusted with immense sums for His work. Instance George Müller...William Quarrier and Hudson Taylor, and D. L. Moody and Dr. Bernardo. Such servants of God, holding all as God's, spending little or nothing for self, were permitted to receive and use millions for God...<sup>2</sup>

**Clement of Rome** (1<sup>st</sup> century) wrote about some Christians who made themselves slaves so they could give to others:

"We know that many among ourselves have delivered themselves to bondage, that they might ransom others. Many have sold themselves to slavery, and receiving the price paid for themselves have fed others." (1 Clement 55:2)<sup>3</sup>

**Shepherd of Hermas** (2<sup>nd</sup> century) wrote,

“Therefore, instead of fields buy you souls that are in trouble, as each is able, and visit widows and orphans, and neglect them not; and spend your riches and all your displays, which you received from God, on fields and houses of this kind.”<sup>4</sup>

**Charles Finney**, a preacher in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, said:

“He who grows in grace...seeks wealth and honor only as instruments of glorifying God and of doing good to men.”<sup>5</sup>

“Life is short. Time is precious. We have but one life to live. Much is to be done. The world is in darkness. A world of sinners are to be enlightened, and, if possible, saved. We are required to work while the day lasteth. Our commission and work require dispatch. No time is to be lost. If our hearts are right, our work is pleasant. If rightly performed, it affords the highest enjoyment and is itself the highest amusement.”<sup>6</sup>

**John Wesley**

Famous author John Wesley said, “Gain all you can; save all you can; give all you can.” At first glance, it looks like “save up and enjoy life, and be generous,” as success teachers and money counselors say. But knowing John Wesley’s lifestyle, we know what he was really saying; gain in order to save, *in order to give*. He believed in sacrificial living, and wrote about how believers can find happiness apart from seeking their own pleasure:

(1.) They need none of these things to make them happy; for they have a spring of happiness within. They see and love God. Hence they rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks. (2.) They may use them, but they do not seek them. (3.) They use them sparingly, and not for the sake of the thing itself.<sup>7</sup>

**William Law**

William Law (not the Mormon, but a pastor and author in the 1700s) wrote about using our time, money, and everything else for serving God, and finding happiness in that kind of life:

Let me now only add this one word more, that he who has learned to pray, has learned the greatest secret of a holy and happy life. Which way soever else we let loose our hearts, they will return unto us again empty and weary. Time will convince the blindest minds, that happiness is no more to be found in the things of this world, than it is to be dug out of the earth. But when the motions of our hearts are tending to God in constant acts of devotion, love, and desire, then have we found rest unto our souls, then is it that we have found out a good suited to our natures, that is equal to all our wants, that is a constant source of comfort and refreshment, that will fill us with peace here, and eternal happiness hereafter. For he that lives in the spirit and temper of devotion, whose heart is always full of God, lives at the top of human happiness.<sup>8</sup>

## Examples

Fanny Crosby chose to live in the poorest part of town, and gave away all her extra money to others.<sup>9</sup>

George Müller owned very little, and used all the money that was given to him for only the purposes that people intended for their donations.<sup>10</sup>

Hudson Taylor lived on very little and ate inexpensive food, while giving his money to those that really needed it, even before he was sent as a missionary.<sup>7</sup> When in China, he had nearly nothing, because he gave most of his money to feed people who were starving (which he used as an opportunity to share the gospel).<sup>11</sup>

Jonathan Goforth couldn't buy an engagement ring for his wife-to-be, because he needed every cent for mission work.<sup>12</sup> Although I wouldn't say this particular idea is necessary, still it shows that his values were eternal.

Watchman Nee believed in spending all his money on his own needs, other people's needs, and Bible study books.<sup>13</sup>

John William Fletcher was frugal, eating little besides vegetables, and fasting one day a week. He spent his time always doing things that were useful.<sup>14</sup>

John Wesley lived on as little as he could and gave away the rest.<sup>15</sup>

Near the end of her life, Harriet Tubman lived sacrificially for others, and had an "open-door policy for anyone in need."<sup>16</sup>



# 9 One Chance

## Life is short

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short” - 1 Corinthians 7:29

“For what is your life? It is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” - James 4:14

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” - John 9:4

## Our Future

Once we are in heaven, the only things from this life that will matter are the choices we've made in this life. If we spend our lives serving God and pointing people closer to Him, we will be rewarded forever (Daniel 12:3). When we look back at this time on earth, we will see all the opportunities we had that could have made an eternal difference.

To live sacrificially for the cause of rescuing others, for their temporal and eternal benefit, is a life with no regrets. That is an absolutely infallible guarantee from the Word of God, that He will repay anything we have given, so that there is *no possible chance of missing out*. God's promises cannot fail.

Be always abounding in the work of the Lord!

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable,  
always abounding in the work of the Lord,  
forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 15:58

# Bibliography

1. Murray, Andrew. *Money: Thoughts for God's Stewards*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/41994/41994-h/41994-h.htm>.
2. Pierson, Arthur T. "Our Lord's Teaching's About Money." *Missionary Review of the World* 28 (1905): 243. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://books.google.com/books?id=AFQ4AQAAMAAJ>
3. Clement of Rome (1 Clement 55:2) <http://www.earlychristiandictionary.com/Offerings.html>
4. Shepherd of Hermas <http://www.earlychristiandictionary.com/Offerings.html>
5. Charles Finney, "Growth in Grace." <http://www.charlesfinney.com/finney/finney.php?op=276#0>
6. Charles Finney, "Innocent Amusements." [http://www.charlesgfinney.com/1868\\_75Independent/721107\\_inn\\_amuse.htm](http://www.charlesgfinney.com/1868_75Independent/721107_inn_amuse.htm)
7. Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley*. N.p.: unknown, 1872. Ed. Thomas Jackson. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/perfection.ii.iii.html>.
8. Law, William. *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901 (original 1726). Ed. L. H. M. Soulsby. Accessed November 29, 2013. <https://archive.org/stream/apracticaltreat02lawgoog>.
9. "The Life of the Beloved Hymn Writer Told in Her Own Words." November 29, 2013. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.hendrickson.com/html/product/562811.trade.html>.
10. "George Mueller: Faith." Accessed May 5, 2024. <https://blog.traillifeusa.com/christian-worldview-mueller>
11. "Worldwide Missions: Missionary Biographies: Rosalind Goforth." November 30, 2013. Accessed November 30, 2013. <http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bgoforthmrs.html>.
12. "Watchman Nee's Life and Ministry." November 30, 2013. Accessed November 30, 2013. <http://www.watchmannee.org/life-ministry.html>.
13. "John William Fletcher" Accessed June 30, 2022. <http://www.uplook.org/1995/10/john-william-fletcher/>
14. "Happy Birthday, John Wesley" Accessed June 30, 2022. <https://www.desiringGod.org/articles/happy-birthday-john-wesley-two-silver-spoons-and-thousands-of-souls>
15. "Harriet Tubman: Facts, Underground Railroad, & Legacy." Accessed May 5, 2024. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/harriet-tubman>