

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~ Matthew 16:18



August 28, 2016

Contact Us:

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service 2:30 PM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class.10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
House to House, Heart to Heart
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

Are We Giving Enough?

It is the right question for almost all of us. Honest hearts want to do what is right. When a person becomes a Christian or matures and gains a deeper understanding of Christian commitment or experiences a newfound prosperity, it is natural to ask the very practical question of how much I should give to support the work of the church and to other charities, public and private. When we consider that our Savior taught and exemplified that self-sacrifice for others and a loving regard for those most in need lies at the heart of doing our Father's will and is essential to our salvation, it is natural for us to ask, whatever we have previously decided to give, "Are we giving enough?"

It is not a simple question of arithmetic, however much we might wish to make it so. Nearly 30 years ago, a wealthy young man with whom I was practicing law asked me whether "tithing" should be computed on a pre-tax or after-tax basis. By the world's standards, he was an exceptionally fine and decent human being, raised in privilege but also taught by his parents and church that privilege carries with it duty. He wanted advice on what his duty was, how much he needed to give.

In comparison to most Americans, my young friend was being unusually generous. Studies have consistently shown that Americans, the vast majority of whom still regard themselves as in some sense Christians, give an average of about two percent of their income to charity. However, tithing is not the New Testament answer to how much we should give. Even in the Old Testament, the Mosaic law included multiple tithes for various purposes that would have had the combined effect of requiring far more than a simple 10 percent rule for giving (Lev. 27:30-33; Num. 18:20-21; Deut. 12:17-18; 14:28-29). It also included other teachings about generosity, such as the command to property owners to be intentionally inefficient at harvest to let the poor glean after them in their fields (Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22). This was beautifully exemplified by Boaz in his treatment of Ruth.

More fundamentally, God has always called on His people to show generosity beyond compliance with any mechanical rule. Just as James teaches in the New Testament that "*religion that is pure and undefiled*" is defined, in part, by charity (Jas. 1:27), so Isaiah in the Old Testament defines the true religious observance chosen by God: "*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?*" (Isa. 58:7).

Thus God has not established for His servants a specific minimum standard of generosity. Instead, as illustrated in the parables of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and the minas (Luke 19:11-27), God has chosen to entrust us with the power to use His gifts in His service but left to us the responsibility of judging how we may best fulfill that trust.

To answer as wisely as possible whether we are giving enough, I would suggest asking ourselves three related questions that naturally involve a train of thoughtful consideration relevant to the overall question.

Are We Giving in Reasonable Proportion?

First, are we giving in reasonable proportion to our prosperity? Paul instructed that each of the Corinthians should, each first day of the week, "*put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper*" (1 Cor. 16:7). In doing so, Paul is merely applying the common sense rule of a just God that "*to whom much was given, of him much will be required*" (Luke 12:48).

Many Americans have been so rich for so long they have forgotten they are rich. Especially since the financial crisis of 2008-2009, our media reflect a pervasive sense of grievance that we are not getting richer. A dose of reality might do us good. Just to cite one example, both the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank have celebrated the recent increase in the middle class on those continents, but they define "middle class" as including those who make at least \$2 per day. In

(Continued on page 2)

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels" **Luke 9:23-26**



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Africa alone, more than half a billion people must survive on less.

We tend to regard a spacious and secure dwelling; warmth in winter and cooling in summer; a car; food that is sufficient, varied and pleasurable; clothing that allows us to fit in socially in a rich society; access to modern technology; and many other conveniences as though they were literally necessities required for us to live. Most of our fellow human beings, now as in the past, live without them.

This is not meant to make us feel guilty about God's blessings. As Solomon said long ago, "wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them ... this is the gift of God" (Eccl. 5:19). Material prosperity should not make us feel guilty, but it should make us feel grateful to God and generous to others. For those of us who have been given unusual prosperity, even by American standards, our gratitude should include not only that God has given us comfort and freedom from any rational anxiety concerning material needs but that he has entrusted us with such a powerful means of doing good, allowing us to be the instruments of His grace and partners in the gospel. When we consider how richly we have been blessed in light of the needs of others, are we giving enough?

Are We Putting Our Wealth to Use?

Second, are we putting our wealth to its wisest and best use? Worldly wisdom teaches the folly of wasting wealth. Consumers naturally seek the greatest value for the money they spend. Investors naturally seek the safest and highest return on the money they invest. Christians differ from the world in their judgment as to what is valuable, but they still would rationally wish to maximize the value achieved by every aspect of their lives, including wealth. As the parables of stewardship imply, this natural and sensible desire to put valuable resources to valuable use is made more urgent when we realize that all such resources belong to God and are intended to be valuable in His service.

The Bible warns us against using wealth in ways that simply do not make sense. Isaiah asks, "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" (Isa. 55:2). When Jesus warned us not to lay up treasures on earth, his reasoning included the inferior security of any such treasure (Matt. 6:19-21). Paul warned that the greedy have "pierced themselves with many pang[s]" (1 Tim. 6:10).

In the words of William Law, the foolish use of wealth is like refusing to buy medicine for the poor so that we can buy poison for ourselves.

On the other hand, if we trust our Savior's promise that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), it is apparent that generous giving can bring great value to the giver. Indeed, a central

paradox of the Christian life is the pleasure for self that unselfishness brings: the more we focus on others, the more we find ourselves. Many older Christians and even many worldly people, looking back on their lives, would agree that the greatest happiness wealth ever brought them was a joyful satisfaction in helping others.

Perhaps this psychological truth derives, in part, from a physical truth. Money has greater value meeting needs than in supplying luxuries and finds its greatest value in meeting the most important needs of those who would otherwise be destroyed by ignorance and want. Money that would make no discernible difference in our lives if spent on some incremental luxury can make the difference between life and death, spiritually and physically, for those with no resources of their own.

Even beyond the joy that giving directly brings to the giver, Jesus teaches a more profound effect on lasting happiness. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21) is often taken as a warning, but it is also a promise. When we invest ourselves in the gospel and in other people, we change our own hearts, directing our affections in a way that leads home to the source of every good and perfect gift.

When we consider how much good for others and happiness for ourselves can be made possible by our giving, are we giving enough?

How Much Do We Love God?

Finally, what does our giving say about how much we love God? Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give for the relief of the churches in Palestine by telling them of the generosity of other churches, and explains that he does so "to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine" (2 Cor. 8:8).

Every command of God tests whether we love Him, for if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15); but surely love does more than just obey. Paul described how the churches of Macedonia had surprised him by the wealth and character of their generosity: "For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints" (2 Cor. 8:3-4). He exhorted the Corinthians to follow this example and "excel in this act of grace also" (v. 7). At the end of the chapter, he exhorted again, "So give proof before the churches of your love" (v. 24).

Virtually all Christians say to themselves and not just to others that they love God, and they do so without conscious dishonesty. We understand that Christianity without love for God would be a meaningless contradiction. Every time we decide how much to give to the church and other charities, we affirm our decision to love God and reflect the character of the love we feel. Considering what every gift we give says about how much we love God, are we giving enough?

James Gardner (gospeladvocate.com)

Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord's Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God's Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

August 28 Galatians 1-3

August 29 Galatians 4-6

August 30 Ephesians 1-3

August 31 Ephesians 4-6

Sept. 1 Philippians 1-3

Sept. 2 Phil. 4—Colossians 2

Sept. 3 Col. 3—1 Thessalonians 1

Sept. 4 1 Thessalonians 2-5

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
(2 Timothy 2:15)*



Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Each Sunday night immediately before the evening worship. Last week **28 contacts** were made.

Announcements

- ◆ We need a count of all who plan to attend the teachers workshop on Sept. 10th—please let Cindy Proud know. All teachers (men and women, present and future) are encouraged to attend. All expenses are paid.
- ◆ First Sunday Fellowship Meal next Sunday.

Upcoming Special Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ October 16-19—Fall Gospel Meeting with Jacob Rutledge. *“The Christ Centered Church: The Beauty of Christianity from the Book of Ephesians”*
- ◆ October 29—Ladies’ Day with Becky Blackmon. *“Making Christ the Lord of Your Life in Every Situation of Your Life”*
- ◆ March 26-29—Spring Gospel Meeting with Russell Bell.

Other Opportunities to Learn and Grow

- ◆ Sept. 10—**Teacher’s Workshop @ Cleburne** (flyer on board—**all teachers strongly encouraged to attend**)
- ◆ Sept. 16-18—5th & Grape Lectureship
- ◆ Sept. 18-22—Gospel Meeting @ San Angelo with Omari French
- ◆ Oct. 1—Ladies Day @ Dublin.
- ◆ Oct. 1—Developing Church Leaders Conference—Baker Heights (Abilene).
- ◆ Oct. 6-8—Texas Ladies for Christ Retreat (info on board)
- ◆ Oct. 9-12—Lubbock Lectures
- ◆ Oct. 9-12—Homecoming Lectureship @ Rising Star
- ◆ Oct. 22—Ladies Day @ San Angelo with Cathy Iverson
- ◆ Oct. 27-29—ACS Class: *“The Bible and Archaeology”* (Dewayne Bryant)—Dripping Springs, TX

Bible Lacking Sinner’s Prayer Returned For Full Refund

WILSON, NC—After purchasing a defective Bible that seemed to omit the sinner’s prayer—apparently due to some kind of printing error—local woman Gayle Dunsby reportedly returned the incomplete book to her local LifeWay Christian Store for a full refund Tuesday.

“It was really strange,” Dunsby told reporters gathered outside the Christian bookstore after she had received back her \$36.99 plus tax in full. “I searched that Bible through and through and couldn’t find anything about a magic prayer I could lead people to say in order to instantly get them into the Kingdom and have them be forevermore secure in their eternal salvation no matter what their life looks like afterward.”

A LifeWay representative confirmed that the misprint may be part of a widespread issue after store associates were unable to locate a suitable replacement Bible for Dunsby, as none of the Bibles on their shelves seemed to contain the biblical sinner’s prayer either.

“We’re facing what is possibly an unprecedented, industry-wide misprint of the Word of God,” the representative said in a brief statement to the press. “As we work diligently to locate the source of this error, let us be comforted by the words of Scripture: ‘This too shall pass.’”

Babylonbee.com (Christian News Satire)

Celebrate

“Rejoice with those who rejoice...” (Romans 12:15)

September Birthdays: Roy Dodson (8/29), Jean Hamann (3), James Fuller (6), Emily Ochoa (11), Gene Bannister (16), Frank Alexander (19), Matthew Ochoa (19), Allen Bland (23), Glenda Milam (24), Cindy Proud (26), Garrett Barnum (27), Matthew Howell (28).

September Anniversaries: Don & Darlene Smith (8/29).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Aug. 14, 2016	Aug. 21, 2016
Bible Class	40	31
AM Worship	58	56
PM Worship	45	49
Wednesday PM	43	37
Contribution	\$1,724	\$1,894

This Week: 8/28/16		Next Week: 9/4/16		August 2016 Make Announcements: John Barnum Prepare Communion: Randy & Laura Huckaby Clean Building: Joe Dennis Family Hostess Committee: Laura Huckaby's group September 2016 Make Announcements: James Fuller Prepare Communion: Maninger Family Clean Building: Fuller / Stultz Hostess Committee: Laura Huckaby's group
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister		
Greeters	Tom & Carol Wilcox	Allen & Linda Griffith		
Opening Prayer	Tom Wilcox	Allen Griffith		
Communion	John Barnum*, Larry Petty Allen Bland, Don Smith	Ken Maninger, Chase Churchwell Joe Dennis, Caleb Dennis		
Closing Prayer	Gene Bannister	James Thomas		
Attendance Cards	Chase Churchwell	Ian Barnum		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Joe Dennis	Song Leader: James Fuller		
Opening Prayer	James Fuller	Don Smith		
Scripture Reading	Ken Maninger	Tom Wilcox		
Communion	John Barnum	Ken Maninger		
Closing Prayer	Hank Wheeler	Randy Huckaby		
Wednesday Devotionals:	August 31 Allen Griffith	September 7 Prayer Night	September 14 Tom Wilcox	September 21 Don Smith

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of August 28, 2016

Sunday Class **Romans 1:29ff**
 Wed. Class **How can we identify the NT church today?**

The Meaning of Discipleship – Luke 9:23-26 (Part 1)

Few nouns appear with greater frequency in the NT than the word *disciple* (274X in the NKJV). Mainly in the Gospel accounts. The remainder in Acts. The Son of God issued many invitations to men to become His disciples – none more comprehensive and challenging than the one in Luke 9:23-26. Notice that these requirements as stated by Luke are not for any one class of people (i.e. elders, preachers, deacons, Bible class teachers, etc.). Let us all measure our own quality of discipleship by the Lord's standards.

- I. **A Disciple Is One Who Diligently Learns The Teachings Of Another.**
 - A. The Greek word *mathetes* (from which *disciple* is translated) literally means "...a learner (from *manthano*, to learn, from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor)...." (Vine).
 - B. The word implies an earnest and serious attitude in the learner.
 - C. The beginning point of becoming (and remaining) a disciple of Jesus is being an earnest, avid student of His life and teachings.
- II. **A Disciple Is One Who Follows Another.**
 - A. Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him...follow Me."
 1. *Mathetes* denotes not only a learner, student, or pupil, but "one who follows one's teaching" (Vine, Thayer), an "adherent" (Bauer).
 2. To be a disciple of Jesus necessarily involves faithfully following the One whose teaching we have studied and learned.
 - B. Following Jesus involves two elements.
 1. First, we must follow the example of the life He lived (1 John 2:6).
 2. Second, following Jesus involves following His Word – His teachings (John 8:31).
- III. **A Disciple Is One Who Denies Himself.**
 - A. Jesus' next requirement of discipleship is, "Let him deny himself."
 - B. The Greek word *arneomai* means "to deny by way of disowning a person" (Vine), and is "...used of followers of Jesus who, for fear of death or persecution, deny that Jesus is their master, and desert his cause [to disown]" (Thayer).
 - C. Jesus used an intensified form: "Let him utterly deny himself."
 - D. Jesus requires us to dethrone self.
 - E. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." (Gal. 2:20a).

Didactic Psalms – Psalm 119

- I. This is the grand Psalm praising the magnificence of the word.
 - A. The "delight" in the law of the Lord (Ps. 1) is fully illustrated.
 - B. An acrostic Psalm – an alphabet of praise to God for His Holy Word.
 1. Each Hebrew letter receives its turn in 22 rounds of 8 verses each.
 2. The purpose of acrostic poetry was ease of memorization.
 - C. Words most often used.
 1. *Law* [תּוֹרָה *towrah* or *torah* – 25X] – "to teach" or "direct," and coming from God it means inspired revelation. It can be used of the entire Pentateuch or of just one law.
 2. *Testimonies* [עֲדוּת *eduwth* – 14X] – the direct and bold high standards set by God.
 3. *Precepts* [פְּקֻדֹת *piqqud* or *piqud* – 21X] – office or overseer, items that are concerned with every detail.
 4. *Statutes* [חֻקִּים *choq* – 21X] – the binding force and permanence of Scripture.
 5. *Commandments* [מִצְוֹת *mitsvah* – 22X] – emphasizes the direct authority of what is said.
 6. *Ordinances* [מִשְׁפָּטִים *mishpat* – 21X] – judgments and decisions of the all wise Creator.
 7. *Word* [דָּבָר *dabar* – 43X] – general word embracing all of God's truths.
 8. *Promise* [אֵמֶת *'emer* – 19X] – God's directives that, if followed, have the hope of future blessings.
- II. The benefits of God's Word.
 - A. Keeps one's way pure. (9, 101)
 - B. Keeps one from sin. (11, 101)
 - C. Encourages. (14, 16, 25, 28, 35, 70, 77, 92, 93, 149)
 - D. Produces reverence. (38)
 - E. Gives hope. (43, 49, 50, 74, 81, 114, 147)
 - F. Promotes gratitude. (62)
 - G. Gives wisdom. (98, 100, 104)
 - H. Gives direction. (24, 105, 130, 155)
 - I. Gives life. (25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149)
- III. Getting a flavor of the psalm: א ALEPH & ב BETH.