

“Study Guide “4”

“Questions that Keep People Away from Church”

“Do I have to Give if I go?”

A. Church life and Church membership discussions have always had a host of “Hot-Button” topics.

- 1. Topics that create controversy.**
- 2. Topics that tend to get our emotions in an up roar, our voices going off the rector scale, our palms sweaty, and our blood pressure rising.**
- 3. Topics that can bring out the worst in almost all of us.**
- 4. Topics, which for the most part, we avoid like the plague.**
- 5. If you are a part of the church you probably know the ones I am talking about – for instance...**

- a. Divorce and Remarriage...**
- b. The Woman’s role in the church...**
- c. Baptism – who, how, when, why, and where...**
- d. Leadership issues – qualifications, and responsibilities...**
- e. Who can teach...**
- f. Screens or hymnals...**
- g. Organs or guitars...**
- h. Spiritual gifts...**
- i. To raise our hands or not to raise our hands...**
- j. The authority of Scriptures...**
- k. Which version is the right version of the Bible to use...**
- l. Abortion...**
- m. To drink or not to drink...**
- n. Communication – when have we said enough...**
- o. Who are the elders and what are they supposed to be doing...**
- p. Who are the deacons and what are they supposed to be doing...**
- q. Just what is the role of the preacher...**
- r. What are you going to do for the people in my age group...**
- s. Issues of doctrine from visitors...**
- t. Parking, carpet, and color issues...**

- u. Heat and air as well as kitchen issues...*
- v. Who is really responsible for those decisions...*
- w. One cup or many cups for communion...*
- x. Should we have just one loaf of bread for communion...*
- y. Whose job it to clean the church...*
- z. What about moving the lawn...*

- 6. The list could go on and on, but I think you know what I am talking about.*
- 7. And in all of this I have left out the one area that has caused the most difficulty in many areas of ministry life.*
- 8. "Money!"*

- a. Just like married couples, churches have fought over money more than any other single topic.*
- b. New preachers are warned, "This congregation doesn't like to hear sermons about money."*
- c. "Preacher, you would do well to say little about the finances of your people."*

- 9. The wording of our question tells us that even people who are not a part of the church are concerned about what is going to be said about money.*
- 10. For the most part, as long as the bills are paid, and the budget is met we avoid the money issue like good little boys and girls.*

B. Avoiding the topic of giving was never the route that our Savior and Lord followed.

- 1. In fact, Jesus had more to say about money, giving, and our use of God's blessings than any other single topic.*
- 2. He had more to say about money than He did about worship, about obedience, about heaven, even about love.*
- 3. Jesus made it clear that how we relate to money defines in many ways the course of our lives.*
- 4. In His parables He had more to say about giving than any thing else.*
- 5. Someone has said that 1 out of very 10 verses in the Gospels deals with our giving and use of money.*

6. *When we begin to study what the Bible says about money, giving, stewardship, and the proper use of God's blessings we are compelled to speak about money.*

Personal Testimony: *I listened to the people who told me not to preach about money for many years and for many reasons. First I was a people pleaser and I wanted to make people happy with my preaching. (Don't talk about money, okay) We had never experienced money difficulties in the churches where I preached so I didn't think I needed to. (No problems – no sermon) I always believed that people wanted to be generous and the most generous people were those who followed Jesus Christ. (Being naïve isn't a good thing for a minister) There were so many other issues why bring up something that is sure to make people mad.*

7. *Spiritual maturity helped me overcome my own insecurities.*
8. *It wasn't just an issue of talking about money; it was an issue of helping children grow in the kingdom of God.*

Question: *Let's suppose God has blessed the union of your marriage with a new born child. What are some of the things you want to train that child to be able to do?*

What happens when we leave out one very important element?

9. *I love to preach about money and giving now.*
10. *As a matter of fact I have incorporated a giving sermon in my series of revival sermons.*
11. *Last summer at the end of the message the host minister said, "I don't think I have ever heard a sermon on giving at a revival."*
12. *I think that is a sad commentary on revival speakers.*
13. *I love to preach about money for two reasons.*
- a. *Those who are already generous givers smile more than any other time.*
- b. *Those who are tight wads squire more than at any other time.*

Do you remember our Question: "Do I have to Give if I Go?"

Let's examine reasons why giving is needed in the body of Christ...

1. One of the most obvious reasons for our giving is to glorify God.

"This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine." (Proverbs 3:8-10, NIV)

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. 'But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' 'In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,' says the Lord Almighty. 'Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,' says the Lord Almighty." (Malachi 3:8-12, NIV)

- a. Giving isn't about who puts the most in the offering plate.**
- b. Remember the "Widow's Mite?"**
- c. Giving is about honoring the One True Living God who has given us the greatest gifts of all!**

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1:17, NIV)

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." (1 Timothy 6:17, NIV)

"Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God. He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart." (Ecclesiastes 5:19-20, NIV)

- d. To give back to God is to acknowledge His blessings in our lives.**
- e. To give back to God is to acknowledge that He is the giver of every good and perfect gift.**

- f. **To give back to God makes a bold statement about who we believe in and why.**
- g. **When we give back to God we are saying opening, "Thank you for everything you have done for me!"**

"We need to give in order to glorify God."

2. Giving is one of the ways we let the world know just who is the Lord of our life.

- a. **Are you aware of the story of the Rich Young Ruler?**
- b. **He came to Jesus with a legitimate question, but the answer he received was not the one he was looking for.**

" As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "**what must I do to inherit eternal life?**" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. **You know the commandments:** 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" "Teacher," he declared, "**all these I have kept since I was a boy.**" Jesus looked at him and loved him. "**One thing you lack,**" he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." **At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.** Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:17-24, NIV)

- c. **When Jesus Christ becomes Savior and Lord of our life we give back to Him all that is already His.**
- d. **We are good at giving back our time, our talents, our energy, and our service.**
- e. **However, we have a tendency to keep back our finances for our own.**
- f. **When that happens we need to admit who the real lord of our life is, and in this cast it isn't Jesus.**

"Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life."
(Proverbs 22:4, NIV)

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Matthew 6:24, NIV)

"Our giving helps to identify the Lord of our life."

3. Generous giving is an inspiration to other believers.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38, NIV)

"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." (Proverbs 11:25, NIV)

"He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done." (Proverbs 19:17, NIV)

Chuck Swindoll: *"The distinguishing mark of the Christian is love, but the silver medal – the red ribbon – the first runner up is generosity..."*

Dr. Carl Meninger said: *"Giving is good criterion of mental health. Generous people are rarely mentally ill..."*

- a. Christians are people who live by example.**
- b. Christians are also people who lead by example.**
- c. No trumpets or fanfare just giving to help.**
- d. When we give people notice it is just that simple.**
- e. The opposite is also true, when we don't give people notice.**
- f. There is a true about generous giving that can only be lived it cannot be caught in teaching.**

"No one can out give God..."

"Generous giving is an inspiration to other believers."

**4. There is a simple pattern to follow in answering the question:
"How do I give?"**

a. Our giving is a matter of our ability to give.

"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you." (Deuteronomy 16:17, NIV)

"Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." (Matthew 5:42, NIV)

"According to their ability they gave to the treasury for this work 61,000 drachmas of gold, 5,000 minas of silver and 100 priestly garments." (Ezra 2:69, NIV)

"The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea." (Acts 11:29, NIV)

"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have." (2 Corinthians 8:12, NIV)

b. Our giving should be a matter between God and us.

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing," (Matthew 6:3, NIV)

c. We should be willing to give not shamed into giving.

"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:8, NIV)

- 1.) Guilt giving works for a little while, but no body likes to always be motivated by guilt.**
- 2.) Grudge giving works for a little while, but the effect is short lived.**
- 3.) When I give freely I just naturally feel better about myself.**
- 4.) In Stewardship sermons I have told people if they really didn't want to give today then before you leave get your money back.**
- 5.) It sounds bold but it really isn't because nobody has the courage to go and asked for their money back.**

d. For our giving to glory God it needs to be regular.

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." (1 Corinthians 16:2, NIV)

- 1.) **There is a three-fold plan for sound financial management in our everyday lives.**
- 2.) **10% to God...**
- 3.) **10% in savings...**
- 4.) **Live on the remaining 80%...**
- 5.) **You will be amazed how far God's generosity will lead you.**

e. Our giving needs to be cheerfully done in God's name.

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV)

- 1.) **I am not giving up I am giving back.**
- 2.) **I have the opportunity to use God's blessings wisely.**
- 3.) **I have the privilege of showing God how I have invested His confidence in me.**
- 4.) **I can rejoice because I have been obedient to His Holy Name.**

"It is a simple pattern but it will work in any life."

5. Tithing plays a major role in our stewardship to God.

"And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Genesis 14:20, NIV)

"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord." (Leviticus 27:30, NIV)

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:10, NIV)

- a. ***“A tithe...” a tenth of all that God has blessed me with I return to His store house.***
- b. ***Why in the world would I want to do such a thing?***
- c. ***The main reason is because God said we are to do it.***
- d. ***In fact God tells us to give a tithe then we are to see just how He can open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that we will not have room enough for them.***
- e. ***God has always proven that He is faithful, the test of giving belongs to you and me.***

Joel Belz says: “Most evangelical Christians in America could double their giving and still fall short of the tithe God instructed his people in the Old Testament to consider the starting point of their giving...”

I Timothy 6:17 from the Message says: “Tell those rich in this world’s wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever imagine...”

- f. ***Someone will be quick to point out, “I cannot afford to tithe...”***
- g. ***If I am a follower of Jesus, I can’t afford not to tithe.***
- h. ***Every generous giver I have met said they started giving when they could not afford to.***

“Tithing plays a major role in our stewardship to God.”

6. Giving that frees us has always been and will always be sacrificial in manner and content.

“Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.’” She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.” (1 Kings 17:13-15, NIV)

“a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.” (Matthew 26:7, NIV)

"All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." (Luke 21:4, NIV)

"There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales" (Acts 4:34, NIV)

"For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints." (2 Corinthians 8:3-4, NIV)

- a. **What constitutes a sacrifice when it comes to my giving back to God?**
- b. **For some it is just the thought of giving – the pain is so great they can't imagine giving more.**

Stories: Giving is sacrificial because we are still throwing buffalo nickels.

The family returning home from church complaining about everything that went on that morning. The choir, the music, the preaching, the attire of some of the people, who was sitting with who...the littlest boy finally said, "I thought it was a pretty good show for just a nickel..."

"The \$20 bill talking to the \$1 bill..."

"Giving that frees us has always been and will always be sacrificial in manner and content."

7. We give our money willingly when we have first given our life obediently.

" Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:1-2, NIV)

- a. **The only problem with being a living sacrifice is that we sometimes climb down from the altar.**
- b. **When we have sacrificed fully giving isn't an issue.**
- c. **The world will not understand, but that is okay.**
- d. **When we are transformed amazing things can happen.**

8. One of the major reasons we use for not giving is that we don't trust the people who are in charge of spending the money.

" Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on." (Mark 12:41-44, NIV)

- a. Do you remember this event that took place in the last week before Jesus was crucified?**
- b. What was the gift the woman gave?**
- c. How did Jesus respond to her giving?**
- d. Who was in charge of the Temple when she made this offering?**
- e. What was the character of those who were in charge?**
- f. What was going on in the Temple during their time in the office of leadership?**
- g. And Jesus still encouraged the people to give.**
- h. He also held the leaders accountable for what was going on in the Temple at that time.**
- i. He still holds leaders responsible for the way we use the money His children have entrusted to us.**

It really is a great question: "Do I have to give if I go?"

The answer depends on who is Lord of our life...

If we are still in control then the answer is, "We do as we please."

But if Jesus is Savior and Lord of our lives then He decides if we give.

And you know what, "His answer is really easy for us to find."

"I gave, I gave my life for thee; what hast thou given for me..."

