

In the early 1700's, Benjamin Franklin and his friend, Francis Hopkinson, prepared to see the prodigious preacher, George Whitfield. Reputed for his gripping sermons and combined with the fact that he was collecting monies to fund an orphanage, Franklin resolved in advance not to make a donation; though he failed to empty his pockets of the handful of copper, three to four silver dollars and five Spanish gold Pistoles he had. Hopkinson had, by precaution, emptied his pockets before leaving home. As Whitfield preached, Franklin began to **soften and concluded to give his copper**. But another stroke of **Whitfield's oration made him ashamed** of that and he determined to give his silver, too. As Whitfield **finished so admirably**, he emptied his pocket wholly into the collection dish. Meanwhile, Hopkinson was quietly moving from person to person trying to beg for money to place in the collection plate.

Now I know last week, Larry may have moved you to give your copper. My hope today is to move you to give your silver and the charming Brenda will go next week for your Gold.

I told this story to make the point ... that your giving should not be incumbent on persuasion or by playing on your emotions.

As **Christians**, our **giving** should be a **part of us** as much as our **faith, hope and love**.

I grew up in a culture where giving was rarely talked about and an offering was usually the spare change in your pocket; perhaps the copper. I truly leaned about giving when I arrived in Texas; I was blown away by the generosity of the people here and wanted to be just like you.

The two things that stand out the most for me about my Bentwood Trail family is your sincere love and remarkable generosity. Not only have I learned from you, but my family has been recipients of your gifts for many years.

I am learning to trust the Lord more for my daily bread. Now I would like to think it all Faith, but it may be more out of necessity. With three girls, I will be working for a long time to pay for college and weddings. However, I can say to you most assuredly that it does not cause me a moment's grief nor concern. I am no more concerned about my temporal needs and responsibilities than I am about my eternal assurance. After all I am a Presbyterian and I will persevere. The Lord has provided and He will continue to do so.

I will speak to you on the WHY (Benefits of Giving), HOW and WHAT of Giving.

We are made to give.

To not suffer Loss.

Prove God

Why should we give? We are made to give.

In the natural sense - **more you give the less you will have**, but in Gods Economy the more you give of yourselves the more you will have. This is not a reciprocating relationship, much like the one you will have with a friend, but an act of obedience on our part, **exercised by Faith, and a loving Father attending our needs.**

Our Father in heaven is the **ultimate** giver. After all, John 3 tells us He **gave** His only Begotten Son. Corinthians 4 asks us what we have that has not been received. The fact that we have been given everything, we should know this better than anyone else, giving should be reflexive. It should be part of our nature. With this knowledge, I would argue that giving is monumentally of more importance to the giver than the receiver.

Without equivocating the word give when it relates to God, I should clarify that when God gives it is a gift when man gives it is a need and it should be in gratitude.

To not suffer loss - give it away. In Luke 16 Jesus tells the parable of the unjust manager, who was praised for his generosity, what you give away cannot be taken away from you.

Prove God

We are assured of Gods provision, proving Him, when we honor Him as noted in, Malachi 3:8-10...(Emmanuel reads)

What shall we give?

Firstly as King David pointed out in 1st Chronicles, something that was of cost to us. Also not just your money, while monies are critical and can do a whole lot of good, without people committing and participating in the life of the community and the life of the church no amount of resource can get anything done. **Many can give money without it being of any cost to them.**

How should I give?

Give till it hurts – the apostle Paul speaks of his life being poured out as drink offering and while *we may never mature* to this, there is no point where we should feel good or comfortable about our giving; this is dangerous and can lead to the sin of pride. Instead, despite your best efforts, **challenge yourselves** to feel poorly for not doing more. **I have no doubt that the Lord will make it possible.** After all, the Lord chooses to accomplish His wondrous work though ordinary people by ordinary means....this includes you and me.

With every virtue we are detracted by much. The problem is not so much a matter of whether

we are generous or not, but more about **our fear of God and his Holiness**. Sin lurks and diverts us, from what is good, right and acceptable. Being right with God enables us to bear much fruit. So in light of the truth of God's word, not only would **I commend you to be exemplary givers** but I would also **exhort you** to continue to grow in all **love, righteousness and holiness as prescribed** by our Lord and our God.

Thank you for your Time.

I love you, and God Bless You All.