

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“every one of you”

Giving grudgingly or the lack of giving at all to the Lord’s work is a common problem among some of the Lord’s people. Some seem to think you should give only if you have some extra funds. Some have the idea that the “well-off” brethren are to do the giving. Some have the idea that giving is necessary only on the Lord’s day that is near their pay day; claiming that if you only get paid once a month, then you should be expected to give only once a month. Some have the idea that if you suffer a job loss or some financial difficulty you are excused from giving all together. But, what do the scriptures teach about giving? Are the above stated ideas good *reasons* or are they just *excuses* some make because of their lack of love for God, the church and brethren in need? Which?

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 the apostle Paul commanded, ***“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”*** In this passage Paul gives the *why*, the *who*, the *when*, the *where*, the *what*, and the *how much*. (1) *Why?* – for the poor saints according the Divine order (command) of the apostle Paul. (2) *Who?* – ***“every one of you.”*** This means ***“every one of you.”*** When Peter and the apostles preached on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Peter answered the Jews by saying, ***“repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins”*** (Acts 2:38). So, the *Who* in our text included every member in all the churches of Galatia and the church at Corinth. And, it is the pattern for all Christians today. (3) *When?* – ***“on the first day of the week.”*** *“When”* – means the first day of every week since every week has a first day; (4) *Where?* – during the assembly of the saints on the ***“first day of the week”*** when they ***“come together”*** on this day (1 Cor. 11:17; 18, 20, 33; 14:23, 26; Heb. 10:25). The assembly necessitated the saints coming together ***“into one place”*** (1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23). (5) *What?* – a portion of the physical blessings under our individual control that the Lord as blessed us with (Acts 4:32-37; Rom. 15:25; (6) *How Much?* – ***“as God hath prospered.”*** This means in proportion to what you have been blessed with—and ***“every one of you”*** have been blessed. In the words of the song we sing ***“count our many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done”*** (Song # 742 – ***Songs of Faith and Praise***).

In the first paragraph of this short article I posed the question – *are the above stated ideas good reasons or are they excuses some make because of their lack of love for God, the church and brethren in need?*

Since the treasury of the local congregation is to be used for the Lord’s work, then failing to give to this great work is a lack of love for God. Case in point, Paul used the example of the liberal giving of the churches of Macedonia when he wrote to Corinth. The Macedonians were exceedingly poor. Paul describes their situation – ***“How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality”*** (2 Cor. 8:2). Notice that Paul said they gave ***“in a great trial or affliction”*** being in ***“deep poverty.”*** But they gave ***liberally*** even though they were in poverty themselves. Also, they gave ***joyfully***; not making excuse or bemoaning their situation of ***“deep poverty.”*** They gave ***abundantly***. That is, their giving exceeded the expectations of the apostle himself. In other words, they gave until it hurt (cf. Luke 21:1-4). They looked not on their own poverty, but one the needs or poverty of others (Phil. 2:4).

But there is a reason why the ***“riches of their liberality abounded,”*** as Paul told the Corinthians, and which is recorded ***“for our learning”*** in this text of scripture. Here is the reason why the Macedonian brethren gave as they did—because they ***“first gave their own selves to the Lord”*** (vs. 5). They did not make excuses we hear some brethren make, such as but not limited, *“I’m just as poor as they are”* or *“I have bills to pay too”* or *“I can’t afford to give”* or *“times are tough for me too”* or *“I have a family to care for.”* No, these brethren gave liberally because they ***“first gave their own selves to the Lord.”***

You see, many brethren have not given themselves over to the Lord! This evidenced by not giving liberally and cheerfully (or not at all!), but by giving grudgingly or out of necessity (2 Cor. 9:7). Other manifestations of a lack love for the Lord are, forsaking the assembly of the saints (Heb. 10:25), not studying to show yourselves approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15), walking after the lusts of the flesh and not after the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25; Rom. 8:1-14), etc. Need I list more? I could.

Having said all of the above, now we know the *pattern* to follow concerning scriptural giving! But this process starts with the first important ingredient, that being, ***“every one of you” giving our own selves to the Lord?*** When this is done by ***“every one of you,”*** then the excuses we hear some make for not giving and failing to be faithful to the Lord will fade away and the Lord’s church and His cause will prosper abundantly.

Remember, ***“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich”*** (2 Cor. 8:9). Have ***“every one of you”*** first given your own self to Him? – **tgmc** ■

God’s Position On Same-Sex Marriages

By Jesse Flowers

Earlier this month a great deal of controversy was stirred up about same-sex marriages. On May 9, 2012 Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. President to declare his support for the legalization of same-sex marriages. In fact, a recent Gallop Poll says that half the country agrees with the President’s position.

But what is God’s position on this divisive issue? Well first of all it is important to understand that the Word of God defines marriage as being between a man and woman. ***“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate”*** (Matt. 19:4-6).

Thus God made them male and female, not male and male, and not female and female. God joins together a man and woman to be husband and wife. Never do we read in the Bible where God joins two men or two women together in a marriage relationship.

Also in the beginning, God commanded men and women to: ***“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it”*** (Genesis 1:28). It’s impossible for homosexuals to be fruitful and multiply. Our bodies simply were not created for homosexuality.

We know what God’s position was on it when He destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19). The inhabitants of these ancient cities were described as being ***“exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD”*** (Gen. 13:13). The sin that is given special emphasis in Scripture is homosexuality (Gen. 19:4-11).

God position regarding homosexuality in the Law of Moses was that it was an abomination to Him and a sin punishable by death (Lev. 18:22; 20:13).

God’s position on homosexuality in the New Testament is that it: (1) is vile passions, against nature, and shameful, Romans 1:26-27. (2) Will keep those who practice it out of heaven, 1 Cor. 6:9-10. But it is a sin that can be repented of and forgiven (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30-31).

Man’s position on this issue will change. Polls will go up and down. But God’s position will always remain the same. Why? Simply because He does not change (Mal. 1:6), and His Word ***“lives and abides forever”*** (1 Pet. 1:23). – **BibleWork.com**, August 11, 2013. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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