

週一嗎哪 午間查經分享祈禱會

MONDAY MANNA
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ENJOY THE BLESSING OF GIVING WHILE YOU CAN'T

By Austin Pryor

Giving. This topic stirs a variety of emotions. For some, it creates great joy – even happiness – knowing the benefits it can provide for others. For others, it causes frustration; having limited financial resources, some people feel they can barely meet their own needs, let alone give to help others. But for those of us who desire to follow and be obedient to God, giving is not an option.

Commanded to do good. We are commanded in 1 Timothy 6 to “do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.” Giving tests the sincerity of our love for the Lord and others: “I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others” (2 Corinthians 8:8).

Giving also tests our willingness to trust in God’s faithfulness: “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, you can increasingly become the kind of cheerful and grateful giver who delights The Lord’s heart. He’s always been faithful to you; by your generosity, you can be increasingly faithful to Him.

Give with a sense of urgency. We should do what we can now, rather than saving up to give more later. Later may be too late. In his book, *Becoming Real*, Steven James talks about the uncertainty of life and encourages making the most of every day, every week. James’ intent is not to depress or discourage his readers; he is trying to wake them up: Because everyone dies in the midst of something.

People die in the midst of going to the dentist’s office or driving home from vacation; taking a shower or watching TV; mowing the lawn or barbecuing or enjoying a good night’s sleep. People die in the midst of arguments, grudges, dreams, plans, careers, headaches, heartaches, and courtships.

We don’t die when we expect to die – after our aspirations have all come true or we have achieved everything we intended. Most of us die in the midst of pretending we will never die, living as if tomorrow were guaranteed and this life will last forever.

Being intentional in living and giving. Life is a gift. Death is a certainty. This should prompt us to be intentional in our living – and intentional in our giving. I have often heard people say things like, “You have your whole life in front of you!” We do not have our whole lives ahead of us – we have our whole lives, up to that point, behind us. What we have ahead is a mystery, knowing it could be over at any moment.

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It may be sobering to reflect on the brevity and frailty of our lives, but it can also be beneficial for followers of Jesus Christ who want the Lord to receive the greatest glory possible from their lives. We do not want to waste opportunities to make the most of the life and gifts God has entrusted to us. As a wise man once said, “just one life, will soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Do not let the time slip by, forfeiting the blessing of living and giving boldly for God and the advancement of His kingdom. As Galatians 6:10 says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.”

Austin Pryor has more than 40 years of experience advising investors and is the founder of the Sound Mind Investing newsletter and website. He's the author of The Sound Mind Investing Handbook, which enjoys the endorsements of respected Christian teachers with more than 100,000 copies sold. Austin lives in Louisville, Kentucky, with Susie, his wife of 54 years.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What is your typical response when the subject of giving comes up, whether in a church setting or when you receive a fund appeal letter, phone call or personal visit from someone asking you to give to their cause?
2. When you read that we are commanded to give by God, does that make you feel more inclined to give – or do you remain reluctant, or even resistant at times? Explain your answer.
3. The urgency to give now, rather than waiting for a later opportunity: What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking this approach to charitable giving?
4. To what degree does confidence in God’s provision factor into your giving decisions? Do you ever hesitate to give to a worthy cause, feeling uncertain that you can afford to do so? Why or why not?

NOTE:

*If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 3:27-28, 11:24-25, 18:16, 25:14; Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15*

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