

# VOLUNTEER GIVE IN KIND

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is your service of  
love & gifts for the Lord

Special thanks to :

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Greetings in the Name above all names,  
Yeshua - who is Lord, to the  
glory of the Father  
- Philippians 2:11

This booklet is for action, debate,  
discussion & feedback. We look forward  
to hearing from you - Joe Dias

Much is required from  
the person to whom  
much is given;  
Much more is required  
from the person to whom  
much more is given.  
- Luke 12 : 48

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***They overcame Satan by the Blood of the Lamb &  
with the word of their testimony.***  
- Revelations 12 : 10 - 11

This booklet follows once again my calling, to promote giving & a deep desire for a closer relationship with **Jehovah** (our ever-loving Father), through **Yeshua** (our blessed Saviour) & with the help of (our Comforter & Strength) **God, the Holy Spirit**.

The **Bible is quoted extensively**, as people often do not easily take to it, with the Evil One always trying to keep them away from it. If you meditate on scripture, I believe God will speak to you. If you want to use a complicated machine effectively, you go through the manual/catalogue given by its maker. Same with the Bible, through which God, the creator of life & all creation, speaks to us, how to go through this world with joy & prepare for eternity with Him. Keep along, a pen to mark out what strikes you, for this is not meant to be a novel. Or read it casually once & come back to do it slowly again. **It is meant to set you thinking**. Your Bible will help, whichever the version, for though the words might differ slightly, the spirit & essence of the quotations will be the same, no matter which.

Scripture is full of **symbols** & being written in different languages (Aramaic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin...) that were used in Biblical times, we need to research & meditate, before drawing conclusions. Hence, before reading any

such material, we **must pray to God, the Holy Spirit** for wisdom & understanding. Pray now to Him, that He may speak to you through His Word.

Symbols could mean many things, as in biblical dreams e.g. **7 ears of corn, meant 7 years of plenty** in the Pharaoh's dream. . Some of them are **generally, taken to mean** as below –

**Bread** (income), **Wine** (joy), **barns** (storehouses), **seed** (contribution)... Or **Egypt** may be a place of your exploitation & difficulties, while **Israel** is the place of happiness & success. The **promised land** could be heaven, while the **Hebrews/Jews** or different **churches** (Corinthians, Colossians, Romans... ) are **God's People**, who walk in His righteous path.

Its not that I am any great authority on such subjects – one can never be. It's just that I am grateful to the **Sovereign Lord God Almighty** for using me to study & make available these thoughts for **debate & discussion**. The **questions asked often**, are meant to set your mind thinking. Stop & ask them to yourself. There may be things you might **disagree** with, **clarifications** that you may need or **suggestions** that you might want to make... **do get in touch**. *It could be God speaking through your feedback.*

Finally, even **more important**, you might decide to **tithe or increase your offerings**. You may have been **drawn closer to the heart of God**, taking Him

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## STOP THE WORLD !

Malls, gyms, fast-food, hi-fliers, call centers, entertainment... It's the jet age folks. Speed is the word. Be it home, work, school, college, business or retirement. The maximum number of things to be done, in the shortest possible time. And we have gadgets to do them all – planes, machines, computers, cleaners, etc.

Or we are simply idling away our time. Most of us work a minimum of 10 hours a day, sometimes are fortunate to draw salaries of around Rs. 25,000 per month, with weekends & holidays for fun. There are few others at home glued to TV, with the seniors in church compounds or meetings. **One doesn't know who's coming or going !** There is action at any time of the day or night. In between we manage to steal a few minutes & rush to church on Sunday. The church resembles a museum & this routine continues for years....

**We call ourselves Christians. WHY ?** Does it really matter ? Surely, we aren't serious about this religion stuff; Are we ? It seems important only for a few minutes on feast days or when we are getting married or buried. And that too can all be organized, so we won't be bothered too much ! Do we need to think about morals, values, ethics... ? Are there no other more important things to do, before we finally die ! Am I exaggerating ?

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seriously now – Let God's Givers know, that **we may together rejoice with the angels & saints**, praising God for it, as in the title above. If you genuinely **wish us to pray for any of your intentions**, do tell us. We can do our bit & **God's will be done**. You can be sure we are **storming heaven**, praying for you, that you may **truly experience God** – the Father, Son & Spirit – as is His desire.

Your Servant in His Service

*Joe Dias*

## **Stop thinking about yourself**

Psalm 41:1 says, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble." What do you do when you are in troubled times? Give. Help somebody else who is in need.

When you help somebody else who is in need, first of all you get your eyes off of yourself. Stop thinking about you all the time and start thinking about helping somebody else.

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Are we becoming inhuman, without feelings or emotions ? Is your world any different – Better or Worse ?

Are we heading to heaven or hell ? Where does God fit into all this ? What does He mean to you ? How well do you know Him ? Or His Son Jesus ? And how much do you know about God, the Holy Spirit ? **This booklet is for those who have some time to spare**, trying to find answers to some such questions. Or for those who have been seriously following their faith & are working towards a closer relationship with God. Here is what the Bible has to say –

*\* Beware that you do not forget the Lord, your God by not keeping His commandments & His ordinances & His statutes .... Otherwise, when you have eaten & are satisfied & have built good houses & lived in them, & when your herds & your flocks multiply, & your gold & silver multiplies; Then your heart will become proud & you will forget the Lord, your God....*

**- Deuteronomy 8 : 11-14**

*\* This very night your soul is required of you & now who will own what you have prepared ? So is the man, who stores up treasure for himself & is not rich towards God.*

**- Luke 12 : 20-21**

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You could be just about any Christian. You would have been brought up to **figure God** as the old man seen in pictures. Or probably Jesus to be a character from Bible stories. And you might have heard of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Person called the Holy Spirit. Sad, but true – perhaps the last time we learnt anything about God & Satan was in **Sunday School Catechism**. There we studied about the sign of the cross, guardian angels, fires of hell, purgatory, novenas, prayers, etc. These were helpful when we had problems like couldn't sleep, were afraid of the dark, fear of ghosts, wanted to pass exams, get a job...

Now we probably are doing fine & will never go back to these images, unless we are compelled by circumstances to. But do they work? Will they work? How can we be sure? To study any science we need to go to the textbook. And so if we want to know about the one true **Living God**, we are fortunate to have **His Word** – The Bible, which we should check. Unfortunately, we have perhaps not bothered to look it up regularly & carefully. If we do, we are sure to find the **answers to all life's questions & issues**.

Often we see the Bible as a story-book, with little or no relevance to the situations we face in life. But that is untrue & **millions like me, who've tried it as a medicine for many ills, can guarantee it works**. You need to **check it out for yourself**, so that you can tell others too. You need to have a relationship with the

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God of the Bible, for that's how you will learn how kind, loving, helpful, generous, merciful, forgiving... He is. He wants to fellowship with you & is waiting for you to encounter & experience Him. Try it out. It works! **All you need to do is get serious about Him & He will respond**.

Here, we will deal with, what the Bible has to say about **money & the material world**, as the subject is dealt with to the **maximum extent in the bible**. This life is in fact, **addressed even more than life after death!** For instance, there are **over 2,000 references** in the Bible that deal with **money & economic affairs**, with **1 out of 10 verses** dealing with its management, besides **16 of the 38 parables** of Jesus, being related to **worldly treasures**. We are **not alone in facing such issues** & the solutions are the best until eternity. And **money & possessions** is something we think of most of the time, we are awake – **making it, where to invest it, how much to save or spend....** So why wander away aimlessly? Go to the bible. The decision is yours.

Have you noticed impulsive people who wouldn't bat an eyelid, when it comes to **blowing up thousands of Rs. making purchases**, they might repent about later. Yet these **cannot let go of a few rupees**, when it come to giving God or His work & children. A classic case is our **feasts & celebrations** – year after year, we spend thousands of rupees on food, drink, gifts, décor, clothes,

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partying... on these occasions. When it comes to giving God, we dole out a Rs. 100 only. Even that few of us do. Glance at the Sunday collection boxes to know the truth, as to how many do. You should give Rs.400 per month, if your salary is Rs.4,000 only. Sadly, for many sacraments too, like baptisms, communions, matrimony, confirmation, holy orders – which are directly related to Him, the pattern followed is the same.

The donation might go up to a Rs.1,000/- if the mood is right, while **lakhs of rupees are spent elsewhere**. If we “feel” like, then some food might be offered, to fulfill traditions.

Don't we think 10 times **before buying a Bible** or spirit-building gifts like **devotional CDs/VCDs or books/cassettes** for others or ourselves. If what is said is true, then we are seriously out of line with God's plan for our life. And facing the consequences – debt, lack, tension, problems, confusion, sickness.... Ultimately, not only are we **blocking our blessings from coming to us** here on earth, but we also **risk losing a room in the heavenly mansions**, prepared for us by Jesus.

So what then should we do? **First, repent & give yourself to the saving grace of Jesus, the endless love of the Father & into fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Then, if you have a need, plant a seed – GIVE, as God's word tells you, in tithes & in offerings.** As Able, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus,

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Apostles, early & many present-day Christians do. In this booklet, we will read that **our God is not a God of percentages. He desires you, not your money**. He wants you to be attached to Him, not to the world, for He does not want to lose even one of His children to Satan.

The idea here is to describe the manner in which giving ought to be among Christians & guide you along to a closer relationship with God, our Father. We learn to:

1. Manage money / resources & deal with the world & its compulsions.
2. Give / share as per God's plan & send riches to heaven.
3. Benefits of giving & classic examples of giving.

So read along & be blessed. **GOD'S GIVERS promote Christian giving, without asking you to help this service, that we do for the body of Christ – The Church.** And the CHURCH would be merely CH\_\_CH, if UR not into it. We therefore, encourage you to get in & help YOUR LOCAL CHURCH first, then let your contributions reach the needy in Church in the country.

Then, you can send the Good News to the ends of the earth, as commanded by Jesus. God's Givers can only, encourage you, in a small way - WHY & HOW to do it.

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\* Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much & disown you & say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor & steal, & so dishonour the name of my God.

**- Proverbs 30 : 8-9**

You might deny that God exists, in spite of all the proof, which makes it a fact. **But you certainly can't say that you are going to be here forever.** Or that you will take along all "you own" – Money, Things, Talents, Health... It will be with you only for a while. You don't even control it, given the uncertainties, which can lead you to lose it. Its all been given to you by God, who wants you to enjoy life, as He rightly said so, right at the time of creation :

\* God created man in His own image, in the image of God. He created him; male & female, He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful & multiply, & fill the earth, & subdue it; Rule over the fish of the sea & the birds of the sky & over every living thing that moves on the earth." Then God said, "Behold I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of the earth & every tree, which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you."

**Genesis 1: 27 - 29**

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### **Money – the necessary evil**

Contrary to our idea of wealth or any possession, its neither good nor bad & it certainly is a necessity. **It has always existed in some form – gold, coins, cattle, assets, grains, animals, currency, financial instruments...** However, whether you are rich or poor, **the way you use your money & possessions** will determine whether it will be good or bad for you. If you hoard it & are stingy or use it to exploit others & deny them of their share, they wealth in your hands is leading you to a sinful life. **How you use your wealth, resources & talents is also an indicator of how active God is in your life.** So if you want him to be active in you, all you need to do is serve Him with these blessings, He has given you. **Jesus Himself said "where your treasures are, there will your heart be" and the very 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment is to "love the Lord, your God, with all you're heart".**

Its not the money that is bad, but as Paul says in **1 Timothy 6 : 10**, "the love of money is the root of all evil & some by longing for it, have wandered away from the faith & pierced themselves with many griefs". Like Paul in **Philippians 4 : 11**, we need to say, "I have learnt to be content in whatever circumstances I am". **Deuteronomy 8 : 18** says, "You shall remember the Lord, your God for it is He who has given you the power to make wealth". **Thus wealth is a gift from God, with a test** – will you honour Him with your proper use of it.

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Since most of us are **employees** or at least aware of what it is to be one, we could better **understand God in the role of sole proprietor & all of us to be His managers – stewards.** It is always the employer, who has given each of us a job responsibility, who owns everything. Jehovah Jireh (**Genesis 22 : 14**) is one of the most beautiful names that refer to God & it means, **God who provides/supplies.** It does not matter to Him, whether He has given you little or more – Different managers are given differently. It is **how we use what He has given to us**, that concerns Him. **He has given each many skills, talents, resources & blessings.** It is how we use it, that matters to him. Suppose you are given money to get a job done or a budget for a project and you have some left over. Wouldn't you have to report & give back the balance to the owner ? It's not yours to keep. The money was given for some work.

God may have given each one differently, as in any company, but what matters is what do we do with what He has given us. When it comes to money, we all face the same common situations & **need to decide on spending, savings, investing, giving....** We even plan years in advance & save for the future. But do we make arrangements for eternity, which is where we will spend most of our time. **Your cheque/bank book will exactly reflect your priorities & all that you are concerned about.** Check it out & find out for yourself how much you have set aside for eternity.

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### **Christian MNCs**

Even in the church today we have 2 extremes. On one hand we have those who advocate a Christian form of communism, quoting **Acts 2 : 44 - 45**, "And all those who had believed were together & had all things in common; and they began selling their property & possessions, and were sharing them with all, as any one might have need". **Here, it is not meant that Christians are expected to give their all to the church for distribution.** It rather means, that if you come to **know of a need that the church has & can help, you should do it.** On the other hand we have the "Prosperity Gospel Preachers" who **target the rich Christians**, telling them that they are close to God, so He rewards them with riches. The fact is that Jesus had a preference for the poor & **cautioned the rich**, how difficult it was to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

We have so many in the **Christian media & Gospel business**, who are similar to an MNC like Coke or Pepsi, marketing their services as brands in a market place. The money collected runs into **millions of \$ with products like books, Bibles, CDs, VCDs & religious articles costing thousands of rupees.** These are certainly much over the cost price. The Good News needs to go out to many & if it's going to be costly, then even those who can afford, may not buy it. **Jesus died so that, we might be free from the clutches of Satan –**

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**Not so that publishers & AV/music label producers might make money, out of His story.**

I recently approached a reputed all India Christian publisher, to help bring out a book on tithing & giving. I was told, they would do it, but it could not be priced nominally & would be priced at least 6 times more than cost!

I decided to stop searching for a publisher & do it myself. That's how this literature comes to you FREE! And praise God – He sent God's Givers to help out. We are often told that the profits go to God's work. If so, profits need to be kept within reasonable limits & prices should not be so exorbitant that only the rich can buy the limited editions. **Publishers & producers need to price reasonably & leave it to God to bless their work, by adding thousands of patrons (volumes) to their numbers.**

Of course **we are not here to judge**, as there are many such enterprises / ministries, through which God is working powerfully. **They fulfill a role & are doing wonderful work in the Lord's vineyard.** But this is an appeal to them, to see how best prices can be minimum & draw your attention to **many smaller, but more deserving services.**

*about money, you should never have given him the responsibility... (1 Timothy 3 : 3). Some (rich & up-market) churches like to give high salaries because the pastor's standard will affect the kind of people who will attend (posh pastor, fancy congregation).*

*God is concerned with motives not with amounts. Do you resent the thought of your pastor having too much money? Then double his salary! Why? To show him you love him. But aren't there better ways of showing love? Of course there are, but why not show him love in these ways too? Do you ask me what happens if the salary is too much for him? I answer, that's the pastor's problem. He could give more money away, for instance. Pray then that he may have the wisdom in handling what he doesn't need".*

James 4:3 says, "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives."



**They need you to be a blessing to them, with your support.** Our intention is to get you to **inspect the soil** into which you are planting your seed; so that you reap many fold increase. Opportunities to give to God's work exist in & around your church, but you can be sure, there are many other options elsewhere – **the neighbouring churches or others in missions, villages, slums...**

**Instead we have city churches that are becoming bigger & grander, with fewer numbers of Christians coming to them. We have the divide between the rich & poor Christians widening. We have the priests/pastors in cities having a radically different lifestyle from those in the interiors. We have scarce church resources spent on the spiritual training of the laity – also priests in Christ.** John White, an excellent writer on the state of affairs, in the Christian church makes an interesting & radical observation, as below :

*"What would be wrong with giving him (the pastor/priest) 50% more than whatever sum seems reasonable? Are you afraid it might make him too money conscious? If so what business did you have in appointing him. If you are in a position to pick a pastor, you should also know that God expects you to discern, whether he has a weakness for money. And if he has a weakness*

### ITS ALL HIS

Look around for a while & think of all the "money & things you own" – What would happen if you lose them somehow? **God also controls what He owns. Successes & failures in life – loss, death, exams, health, employment, uncertainties, etc. reminds us of this fact.** David in the Bible speaks of this a number of times, when he says in **1Chronicles 29 : 11 - 12**, *"For all that is in heaven & in earth is Yours... Both riches & honour come from You & You reign over all"*.

Again in **Psalms 24 : 1**, he says, *"The earth is the Lord's & all it contains, the world & all those who dwell in It"*. **So why feel bad when you lose something. It was never yours & it was given to you.** As Job said when he lost his all – *"the Lord has given, He has taken away. Praise be the Lord"*. **God has reasons for giving & taking away.** While money, things, talents, etc. are with us, our best use of them (**Matthew 6 : 31 - 43**) will prove us to be good managers. And when at the end of it all, when we meet Him, He will surely say – *"Well done good & faithful servant. Come enter in the place prepared for you"*.

**Money or wealth in any form in the Bible has always been related to salvation & encountering God, rather than as a means to satisfying our temporary**

**needs in this world.** The early church members showed that they were born again by water & the Spirit, by giving as we see in **Acts 2 : 44 - 45 or Acts 4 : 32 - 37**. The book of Acts also records how the **Ephesian occultists displayed their true conversion** to the new way of life by willingly burning their valuable books on black magic. This was their source of income & in doing so, they placed their trust in the Lord to provide for their needs. All throughout the Bible, **whenever people wanted to encounter God, they were not told to say long prayers or do great works, nor even given a sermon** – rather, they were told to **GIVE**. Let us look at other examples, where we are called not to lay importance on worldly happiness, but use wealth for heavenly goals –

1. The crowds who came for baptism (**Luke 3 : 11 - 14**) asked **John, the Baptist** what the fruits of repentance included, he said those who had wealth should give it to the needy – *“The man who has 2 coats is to share with him, who has none; & he who has food is to do likewise”*. When the tax collectors wanted to be baptized & asked, “Teacher, what do we do”, he told them – *“Collect no more than what you have been ordered to”*. Again when some soldiers asked about themselves, John replied, *“Do not take money from anyone by force or accuse anyone falsely & be content with your wages”*.

2. **Zaccheus** in **Luke 19 : 1 - 10** once again

demonstrates that **the presence of God in one's life, leads you to repent, make amends & also give away generously**. He pledged to give away half of his money to the poor & to give back 4 times to those, whom he had cheated. His encounter with the Lord changed his attitude to, as much as a hatred for money, for it seemed worthless to keep it, while there were the poor & those whom he had defrauded still around. So genuine was his transformation that it led Jesus to comment, *“Today, salvation has come to this house”*.

3. The **young rich man** who met Jesus with a question - **How do I get eternal life ?** is mentioned in 3 Gospels (**Matthew 19, Mark 10 & Luke 18**) indicating how important the story was. Jesus told the young rich man, *“One thing you lack : go sell all you possess & give the money to the poor & you will have treasures in heaven. Then come & follow me”*. **Sadly the man was unwilling to do this & lost his soul forever.**

Jesus is not asking all of us to do what He asked the young man to do. But, He is calling us to follow Him. And as far as the possessions are concerned, He asks us not to have any attachment to them, rather to give as God, the Holy Spirit prompts us to. And all the rest would be added unto us.

4. In case of the **poor widow**, whom Jesus watched giving (**Mark 12 : 14 - 44**), Jesus said, *“Truly, I say to*

*you, this poor widow put in more than all the contribution to the treasury; for they all put in out of their plenty, but she out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on”*. **The widow could have rationalized & justified, giving many reasons, not to give, for her need was great.** But, she decided to trust God to supply, as Jesus Himself said – “Seek first the Kingdom of God & all good things will be given to you”. Even today, if we believe **Jesus is risen & alive & if He still likes doing the things, He did when He was on earth; you can be sure He is looking down at how we are giving to God's work.**

### **Some ill effects of money**

Paul said (**Philippians 4 : 11**) *“I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am”*. Can we say the same or is the love for money or status, weakening our relationship with God & depriving us of our eternal home in heaven.

We need to look at a few dangers of not using money well -

- You **show-off**, extravagantly displaying wealth or indulging in its lusts. There are very few, who are misers. Most of those who have wealth, let it be seen & **become proud**....
- You are tempted to make **money at any or all cost**. The means may be illegal & you are prepared to **go to any lengths** to get, what you are after. It could even be name, fame...

- You **become less human**, not feeling the needs of more deserving others, who may require, only a little of what you have. It's difficult to **part with even your surplus**.
- **Principles, values, morals, ethics... have no place** in your material world. You treat people without love in the true sense & even worse; **you ill-treat or exploit them**.
- You **trust the false security that wealth brings**, not relying on God for your supplies. Thus, **making money, your god** & being ungrateful to God, who has given you so much.
- You could be **living in a fool's paradise**, cut off from reality & eternity, until its too late. Life is full of **uncertainties & accidents**; Are you therefore building a house on sand ?
- **Riches or lack choke the Word**, as the seeds on different soils parable teaches. So, with such attitudes, regarding money, one can't expect to **bear fruits** or have harvest time.
- Robbing God (**Malachi 3 : 8 - 10**) and man. **1John 3 : 17** says, *“Whoever has wealth & sees his brother in need, but closes his heart; How can he say, the love of God abides in him”*.

## **Jesus was upper middle-class**

Since, we are on the subject of wealth, how rich do you think Jesus was ? We are often given the picture that **Jesus was a poor carpenter's son**. But consider Israel of His day & you will notice, **this to be untrue** –

\* Joseph, His earthly father probably **did go through a bad phase initially**, because of their shifting residence, marriage, etc. but this **temporary set-back** did not last long, as Joseph obeyed God.

\* Joseph was a **professional** & carpentry was in **great demand** then. A **well-known self-employed**, Joseph made enough money to have many children, besides **children itself were considered wealth**, for their earning capacity.

\* Jesus being the **first-born was entitled to a bigger share** of Joseph's wealth, He was His **mother's pet**, He had a **trade in hand** & so He could have got on well in life, had He decided to settle down..

\* Even His **ministry was successful, flushed with funds** from rich benefactor friends. So it seems God placed Him to be in the middle, to appeal to the upper class & reach out to pull the poor up to His level.

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\* Honour the Lord from your wealth & from the first of all your produce; so that your barns will be filled with plenty & your vats will overflow with new wine.

**Proverbs 3 : 9 - 10**

\* Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth.

**Colossians 3 : 2**

**How do we do set our riches up in heaven, as Jesus & God asks us to. Of course, we can't go there for now, but we can certainly send our riches there.** How ? Its just like a Swiss deposit account ! We might not be able to go across to the bank, but **we can get someone to deposit it, on our behalf**. This is just what your giving does. **It goes to God's children in need & takes the Good News to people & place, where you can't reach.**

It opens an account for you in heaven, where you can send your wealth to, which will help you for eternity. God has always paid great dividends & gives good returns, to those who give to Him or His works. On how much each will benefit, Paul in 2Corinthians 9 : 6 gives the example of a farmer, *“He who sows a little, will also reap a little & he who sows a plenty will reap plentiful”*. It's a natural law, you cannot expect a rich harvest, by sowing little seed.

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**No matter how much money we may have or how poor we may be, we must never forget that this world is not our home.** And we are here for just a while; to do the job God has assigned us to. In His time, God always blesses His children, if we obey Him. Every giving has a many fold return of blessings, as He promises us in the bible –

\* Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the Lord, your God, being careful to do all His commandments.... The Lord will set you high above all the nations of the earth. All these blessing will come upon you & overtake you... Blessed shall you be in the city & blessed shall you be in the country...

**Deuteronomy 28 : 1 - 3...**

\* Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth & rust destroy; & where thieves break in & steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in to steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Matthew 6 : 19 - 21**

\* Give & it will be given to you. It will be poured into your lap in good measure – pressed down, shaken together & overflowing. For by the measure you give, it will be given back to you in return.

**Luke 6 : 38**

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## **Sunday Mass – a formality or ritual**

Is that what it has become ? Do you go to church for a family get-together, of all who believe in the same God, our Father ? Do you go to give praise, worship & honour to your God ? Do you go to listen to His Word & work along with your brothers/sisters in Christ ? Perhaps you are wondering - **Whoever thinks of such things when going to church ?** I could give you one good reason to go this Sunday – **THE COLLECTION**. **Now that you know how blessed it is to give, you should be looking forward to it.** Or it might be that either you are Christian by name & don't believe that God can bless you. **Or don't trust Him, to give you what He said, He would.** In fact, if we believe God, we should be eagerly awaiting such opportunities, beginning always with your local church.

Then extend it to building other churches - in the neighbourhood, missions or rural stations, helping the laity who spread the good news, providing for the needs of priests, supporting Christian media & devotional enterprises, giving offerings & support to Christians in need....

The letters to the early churches are full of passages (**1Corinthians 9 : 6 – 11, 1Corinthians 9 : 14, Galatians 6 : 6, 1Timothy 5 : 17**) that inspired those Christians to give & should be our inspiration too, if we take the Word of God seriously.

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The need for the early Christians to contribute was much greater for various reasons –

- Special needs of different Churches.
- Missionary journeys to spread the Good News.
- Persecution by the Jews, created many dependents.
- Often New converts were not accepted in their families.
- Jesus had indicated to the apostles His preference for the poor
- Widows treated as outcasts (**Acts 6 : 1 - 7**) also needed to be fed.
- Many were Gentiles, who came from the economically backward sections.
- Roman exploitation/heavy taxation & (**Acts 11 : 28**) famine/natural disasters.

**Many of the above reasons still remain today, for us to contribute generously. In many cases, its even easier for us to do so, with the comforts of modern living.**

But do we do so ? Referring to the original of the 12 apostles (**Peter, James & John**), Paul says in (**Galatians 2 : 10 or 2Corinthians 6 : 10**), *“They only asked us to remember the poor - the very thing I too was eager to do”*.

There were **several special offerings undertaken by Paul**, beginning with that for the needs of the Church in Jerusalem, which was the seat of the faith, as we have Rome today. **Acts 11 : 20 - 30** speaks of this **first church support**, as *“And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judaea. This they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas & Saul to the elders”*.

Similarly in case of the **Hellenistic widows, the church leaders chose 7 faithful & godly men to administer the purchase, preparation & distribution of food to them**. The New Testament speaks of **Sunday Church or Fellowship time** specifically, for our contributions, and gives us some idea of how it was done, then

\* Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches in Galatia, so to you also. On the first day of every week, each one of you is to set aside & save, as he may prosper, so that no collection is to be made, when I come. When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gifts to Jerusalem; And if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.

**1 Corinthians 16 : 1 - 4**



**Thus we see that –**

- ❖ Giving to God happened weekly, at common worship time, on the first day.
- ❖ The amount was as the Spirit would lead each & it was to be a regular affair.
- ❖ Each, with no exception was to save & set aside some money to give to the church
- ❖ It was to be properly organized, to prevent any distraction, when the preacher arrived.
- ❖ The collection was to be kept safe & used with full accountability. Hence, the need for trustworthy men & Paul himself to get involved.

***This verse speaks about you***

***“The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and [grief] shall flee away.” - Isaiah 51 : 11***

***“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”***  
**- 3 John 1 : 2**

**TITHING & OFFERINGS**

There was never an issue as to how much, one had to give in the early church. Today, even if it is 1% only, a hue & cry is raised. Christians are reluctant to give. As per the Jewish law, one would have to give almost 25% annually by way of various forms of giving. God was very clear about what he wanted His people to do. Today, the amount apart, does everyone in the church give even a little ? Many assume they come to meet God & present Him with a wish list for the week or their lives. God has becoming a first-aid post or refreshing stopovers joint, where many get their needs attended. Or get re-charged for some more work ahead. **What have you done for your God, that He needs to give you all your heart's desires ?**

I have heard of a group of religious followers, who make a budget & distribute bills among their members, very professionally. Each member is expected to be a responsible believer & pays up, unless there is an emergency. The collector of the dues tells them that, if for some reason they cannot pay, they won't be deprived of the religious services or in anyway be discriminated. Can we expect such kind of maturity in our churches or can we work towards making such a situation happen in our church. Can we talk money, without being reluctant, apologetic, threatening, embarrassed.... ?

## **If we can follow rules as members of clubs, gymkhanas & institutions; Why then do we take God for granted?**

Now, let us see briefly what the tithes were & how much God's people were to give by law, though the Bible records Abraham & Jacob giving 10% long before the Law of Moses, even came into force. Many orthodox Jews still give up to 25% to Jehovah, His work & His children, as they are required to do –

\* There are at least **3 different tithes** mentioned – 2 of them annually - for the priests (**Numbers 18 : 25 - 30 or Leviticus 27 : 30**) & the celebration of feasts (**Deuteronomy 12 : 10 - 11, 17 - 18**) or temple upkeep - while the last tithe was to be once in 3 years (**Deuteronomy 14 : 28 - 29**) for the poor & the unfortunate. **Thus over 3 years, it amounted to a minimum of 30% or annually at least 23% approx.**

\* In addition, God's people were commanded (**Leviticus 19 : 9 – 10**), *“When you reap the harvest, do not reap the corners of your field. Nor shall you clean your vineyard completely or pick up fallen fruit. You shall leave them for the needy & the strangers. I am the Lord, your God”*. There were **also many offerings** to be made like those of the **First-Fruits (Numbers 18 : 12, Proverbs 3 : 9 - 10)** and other offerings for

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sins, voluntary giving, etc.

\* Further, **every 7<sup>th</sup> year, (Exodus 23 : 10 - 11)**, God's people were asked to give the soil rest & forfeit their regular earnings that year. **Also in the appointed year, according to Jewish calendar, all debts had to be forgiven.**

Thus, a minimum that a Jew might have given in those days was over 25% every year. Let us see how they contributed & responded to one such call of God for building of the tent of meeting. **There were no rules, no percentages... It was purely voluntary.** Here is what was said –

\* Moses spoke to all, saying 'This is the thing which the Lord has commanded, saying, Take from among you a contribution to the Lord; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the Lord's contribution : gold, silver & bronze. Everyone whose heart stirred him & everyone whose spirit moved him came & brought the Lord's contribution for the work of the tent of meeting & for all its services & for the holy garments. Then all .... Men & women came & brought... a freewill offering to the Lord.

**Exodus 35 : 21 - 29**

**The results are recorded in the Bible for all to see, (Exodus 36 : 5 - 6), where the leaders came & said**

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**to Moses, 'The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work, which the Lord commanded us to perform'. So Moses issued a command & a proclamation was circulated, saying, 'Let no man or woman any longer perform any work or bring any more offering' as there was more than enough.** Very rarely, if at all, do we have such a situation in our churches. So if your spirit or heart moves you to give, let it be as (**2Corinthians 9 : 6 - 7**) says, *“Each one must give, just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver”*.

### **How much do I give ?**

I am often asked to cut a long story short & tell people how much money do they have to give. I could very well do that, but I would need a lot of personal information, besides the fact that giving such formulas or percentages might stunt their spiritual growth. So it is the wrong thing to do.

But, as Paul (**2 Corinthians 8 : 10 - 12**) says, *“I give my opinion in this manner, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago, not only to do this, but also desire to do it. On with it then & finish the job ! Be as eager to finish, as you were to plan it & do it with what you now have. God will accept your gift, according to what you have, not according to what you do not have to give”*.

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We can draw our own conclusions – **We need to plan, save & give the maximum possible. Once that decision is taken, whatever amount is decided, needs to be sent promptly.** Good intentions to give must be acted upon **ASAP**, as **Satan will target any giving programme, to frustrate it, as it is intended to hit him severely.** This will be through danger, frustrations, temptations, interruptions, lack of enthusiasm... so Paul advises it is done quickly & also happily.

He also said (**2Corinthians 8 : 13 - 14**) that all should contribute so that it was not felt as a burden on a few, as happens in the church, sometimes, ***“I am not trying to relieve others by putting a burden on you, but since you have plenty at this time, it is only fair that you should help those who are in need. Then, when you are in need & they have plenty, they will help you. In this way, both are treated equally”***.

This was how it was meant to be. But somehow Satan managed to sabotage the plan & God has sent us on deputation to claim it back. If we succeed as his managers, we will be able to see a situation where all God's children will have no need. Rather than see churches in want.

Paul also (**2Corinthians 8 : 24**) urges God's great donors to, ***“Therefore, openly show-off before the***

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**churches, proof of your love & our reasons for boasting about you".** Finally, it is important that your contributions get in good soil. So for example more than the gloss & glamour that might surround a certain preacher or ministry, it would be necessary to **check the credentials of those in charge.**

Do the leaders walk in the Spirit? Do they have a strong grasp of the Word of God? Are they accountable to the church & the law?... so that as Paul again (**2Corinthians 8 : 20 – 21**) says, **“So that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift ;for we have regard for what is honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men”.** Presented below is a list of some questions suggested by writer John MacArthur in his book – Whose Money Is It Anyway? - which is a must read.

**Questions to ask**

- Who get the glory & credit for the ministry's work?
- Are people turning to Christ because of the ministry?
- Does its operation reflect a definite eternal perspective?
- Does it have a commitment to the authority of scripture?
- Is there anything subtle & ungodly that you might notice?

- Do the leaders devote enough time to the Bible & prayer?
- Do they have a spirit of servant hood, humility & modesty?
- Is there evidence of spiritual maturity & fruits of the Spirit?
- Is its mission or a goal a biblical one with biblical objectives?
- What is the image you have, when you hear of the ministry?
- Has success made those involved humble or proud & arrogant?
- Does the ministry recognize its responsibility to the local church?
- Does the ministry have a definite & personal commitment to Christ?
- Is there obvious love among the leaders & those who benefit from it?
- Do the leaders depend on God more than on strategies & fundraising?
- Do the leaders have accountability to the law & are people of integrity?
- Is the fund-raising enriching the leaders personally in a very visible way?
- Are the appeals desperate & made to seem that its success depends on your gift?

**THE GIVERS**

**The secular culture teaches us that by working hard & earning as much money, as fast as possible, we can be prosperous. But real wealth is much more than money. It lies in worshiping & fellowship with God, who will give us more than we need – now & forever. In times of trouble, he may not work a miracle, but He will certainly give us the strength to go through it all.**

**There are hundreds of promises & rewards in the Bible & just to mention a few –**

**Ps 16:11, 73:24; Prov 11:18; Is 64:4; Matt : 5:12, 19:21, 25:21, 34; John 14:2; Rom 2:7, 8:18; 1Cor 3:11-14, 9:25; Phil 3:14; Col 3:24; 2Tim 4:8; Heb 9:15; Jam 1:12; 2John 8; Rev 2:10, 22:12 and hundreds more.**

**Some benefits**

\* Each one should give then, as he has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves & more than enough for every good work. As scripture says, 'He gives generously to the needy; His kindness lasts forever'.

And God, who supplies seed to sow & bread to eat, will also supply you with all the seed you need & will make it

grow & produce a rich harvest from your generosity. He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times, so that many will thank God for your gifts which they receive from you. For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God' people, but also produces an outpouring of gratitude to God. And because of the proof which this service of yours brings, many will give glory to God for your loyalty to the gospel of Christ, which you profess & for your generosity in sharing with them & everyone else. And so with deep affection they will pray for you because of the extraordinary grace God has given to you. Let us thank God for (you) His priceless gift!

**-2Corinthians 9 : 7-15**

The above passage leads us to conclude that when we give:

- ✓ All pray & thank God for the precious gift of a Giver.
- ✓ We make God love us even more as a cheerful giver.
- ✓ God comes generous to us in terms of graces & material gifts.
- ✓ You will be self-sufficient & have even more to do every good deed.
- ✓ You will be a blessing to others who will benefit & give greater glory to God for you.

- ✓ We become more Christ-like, for being made in the image of God, we give, as He gave.

## 2 examples of givers

**CT Studd, the legendary 19<sup>th</sup> century English cricket star who became a Christian, left his booming sports career at its peak & decided to go to serve in the missions. His biographer here describes his story as**

*So far as he could judge, his inheritance was (Rs.21,75,000/- ) 29,000 pounds. But in order to leave a margin for error, he decided to start by giving (Rs. 18,75,000/- ) 25,000 pounds. One memorable day, January, 13, 1887, he sent off 4 cheques of (Rs. 3,75,000/- ) 5,000 pounds each and 5 cheques of (Rs.75,000/-) 1000 pounds...*

*This was no fool's plunge on his part. It was his public testimony before God & man, that he believed God's Word to be the surest thing on earth. And that the hundredfold interest which God has promised in this life, not to speak of the next, is an actual reality for those which believe & act on it.*

*He sent (Rs. 3,75,000/-) 5,000 pounds to Mr. DL Moody... who used the money to start the*

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*famous Moody Bible Institute in Chicago... (Rs. 3,75,000/-) 5000 pounds he sent to Mr. George Muller - (Rs. 3,00,000/-) 4000 pounds to be used on missionary work & (Rs. 75,000/-) 1000 pounds among the orphans.*

*(Rs. 3,75,000/- ) 5000 pounds he sent to Mr. George Holland, in Whitechapel, to be 'used for the Lord among His poor in London' and (Rs.3,75,000/- ) 5000 pounds to Commissioner Booth Tucker for the Salvation Army in India.*

*Studd gave the remainder of the (Rs.18,75,000/-) 25,000 pounds to various other organizations. The original inheritance total of (Rs. 21,75,000/-) 29,000 pounds was actually a few thousand pounds short of the real total. So he gave some of that money to additional organizations & the rest as a gift to his fiancée.*

*She in turn, also gave away her share of the money. When the Studd couple finally went to Africa, as missionaries, they had just no money. God's work they did there, is a great story in itself.*

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**Many of us, when we win a lottery, get an inheritance or a windfall gift, few remember to give to God's work or His children. Instead, we make plans how to spend it. Many more, write wills & remember all those they love, to leave them something of value. What about the Lord & His work ? After all we are all sent here by The Boss for a job & when we meet Him, we need to give an account of what, we done here. Are you ready ? Better late, than never. Begin now.**

The Corinthians were great givers & so were the Macedonians. Here we will look at how Paul encourages one about the other, promoting almost a friendly competition among God's people to do His Work. This passage describes their contributions in spite of many obstacles—

- *“Our brothers, we want you to know what God's grace has accomplished in the churches in Macedonia. They have been severely tested by the troubles they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they are very poor. I can assure you that they gave as much as they could & even more than they could. Of their own free will they begged us & pleaded for the privilege of having a part in helping God's*

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*people in Judaea. It was more than we could have hoped for ! First, they gave of themselves to the Lord & then, by God's will, they gave themselves to us as well. So we urged Titus, who began this work to continue it & help you complete this special service of love.*

*You are so rich in all you have : in faith, speech & knowledge, in your eagerness to help & in your love for us. And so we want you to be generous also in this service of love. I am not laying down any rules. But by showing how eager others are to help, I am trying to find out how real your own love is.*

- **2 Corinthian : 1 – 8**

Macedonia was under Roman exploitation for 200 years, when the Good News was preached to them. A long series of wars & great persecution, in the midst of much poverty, made it only worse – Acts 17:1-15; Phil 1:29; 1Thess 1:6, 2:14-15, 3:3-10; 2Thess 1:4. Yet they made the best sacrifice for the other churches, like those in Jerusalem, in order that the Good News was proclaimed far & wide. **What can we learn from the above passage ?**

- God's grace is active in us & accomplishes much, when we give.

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- ❑ Situations will be no obstacle, as God will provide for you to give.
- ❑ Giving comes from giving ourselves to God first, then to His people.
- ❑ Excuses & reasons were not found, but every effort was made to give.
- ❑ Look for opportunities to contribute to God's work & benefit with blessings.
- ❑ By displaying your intention to give, you show how much you love your God.
- ❑ Adopting a giver's lifestyle will enable you tackle life's struggle, as God works in you.

"If anyone sees his brother in need yet closes his heart of compassion, how can the love of God be in him?"

**- John 3 : 17**

'Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin'

**- James 4 : 17**

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Finally, let us now come to some of the devious means, Satan uses to change our focus from God & on to this world. **These are some traps that he sets to lure us away, by distractions like lust, media, waste, habits, money, things, desires, advertising, inequality, consumerism, superficiality, finance options, credit cards & markets that have crashed....**

If we are to survive and win the battle in a world where Satan is king, we need to remember a few things, besides watching for the above, such as –

- ✓ Advertising greatly increases price & creates false wants, so use only those advertised products that are necessary.
- ✓ Check for whether what you are buying you really need. Don't buy features, you may never use.
- ✓ Earn your income from hard work or honest business. Avoid laziness & get rich quick schemes.
- ✓ Avoid loans except perhaps on housing. Use credit or debt cards only to facilitate payments.
- ✓ Avoid negative feelings/emotions, walk in love, think positively, have faith...

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- ✓ Pray, Plan, Save, Tithe, Invest, Read the Bible, Praise & Thank God.
- ✓ Be diligent. Maintain in files your accounts, receipts, bills...
- ✓ Control expenses by keeping a watch on every outgo.
- ✓ Don't get attracted to size, image, glitter & glamour.
- ✓ Get involved in God's work for His children.
- ✓ Check for alternative purchases & prices.
- ✓ Train yourself to sacrifice in some way.
- ✓ Delay purchases, as far as possible.

The following scriptures are again just a few of the hundreds that speak of the need to work, save, rest, invest & not be slave to anything, but serve your Master – the LORD.

\* God said, "Six days you shall labour & do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord, your God; in it you shall not do work".

**Exodus 20 : 9 - 10**

\* He who steals must steal no longer, but rather labour, performing with his own hands, that which is good...

**Ephesians 4 : 28**

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\* He who tills the land will have plenty food, but he who follows empty pursuits will have poverty in plenty.

**Proverbs 28 : 19**

\* The lazy man does not plow after autumn, so he begs during the harvest & has nothing.

**Proverbs 20 : 4**

\* The rich rules over the poor & the borrower becomes the lender's slave.

**Proverbs 22 : 7**

\* You were brought with a price; do not become a slave of men.

**1 Corinthians 7 : 23**

**The Book of Proverbs is excellent when it comes to guidelines for life. Read only a couple of lines, along with a couple of lines from Psalms – God will speak to you.** The example of an insect that teaches us much, is well illustrated in (**Proverbs 30 : 25, 6 : 6 - 8**) as, "*Go to the ant, O lazy man, observe her ways & be wise. Having no chief, officer or ruler, she gathers / prepares her food in summer & gathers her provisions in the harvest*".

The apostle Paul is quoted (**Thessalonians 3 : 10**), as saying "**For if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either**". He again said, (**1 Timothy 5 : 8**), "**If anyone does not provide for his own & especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith & is worse than an unbeliever**". Could there be a stronger

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statement than that ?

Joseph advised the king to save during the 7 years of plenty & use the food for the 7 years of famine. The Bible lays much importance on savings, (**Proverbs 21 : 20**) as we note, *“There is precious treasure & oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man swallows it up”*. While some religions do not believe in Interest on earnings, Jesus in the parable (**Matthew 25 : 27**) on the different talents given to 3 men, says the one who did nothing with his talents, *“Then, you ought to have put my money in the bank & on my arrival, I would have received my money back with interest”*. So if you can't increase your talents by doing business, then at least invest it wisely, to get a safe & high rate of interest.

Incidentally, the Lord ordered the third man out of His sight, to be punished. **The Lord also watches & gives real riches to one who is faithful in the little things of the world, which He calls unrighteous wealth, as below.**

*He who is faithful in very little things is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in very little things is also unrighteous in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust true riches to you ?*

**Luke 16 : 10 - 11**

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## GOD'S GIVERS OBJECTIVES

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## **Finally, Paul repeats the same advise, to workers/managers/employees in 2 letters, as below & we can conclude with it to share on how we should do our jobs**

\* Bondservants, (workers/managers/employees) be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; Not with eye-service, (because you are being held responsible) as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.  
**- Ephesians 6 : 5 - 7**

\* Bondservants, (workers/managers/employees), obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, (because you are being held responsible) as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ  
**- Colossians 3 : 22**



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\* By raising the quality and effectiveness of Christian non-profit / NGO management and relief to the largest number of deserving causes and candidates. Thus maximizing the impact of their gifts.

\* By producing & distributing media, besides maintaining a library of publications and audio-visual aids. Resources would include kits, forms, guides, drafts, newsletters, databases, legal / managerial / accounting assistance, etc

\* By making all understand that their 'business / service / practice' is not merely a job, but rather a ministry in which the Lord has chosen to place them. They are therefore expected to integrating biblical principles in their work.

\* By serving a limited number of high-capacity givers, who desire greater impact and satisfaction in their charitable giving. These clients are serious about their stewardship and are looking for leveraged opportunities to serve God, in building His kingdom.

\* By equipping special interest groups, as children, women, youth, adults professionals to become confident and competent in investing their treasures, time and talents for the kingdom by providing a network for them to discuss stewardship, gift assessment,

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philanthropy and ministry

\* By hosting fund-raising activities & events meet the aims and objectives of the organization.

***Just 2 out of 2350 Scriptural References***

**Luke 6:38**— "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."

**1 Timothy 6:17-18**— "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. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds & to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

**SOME CATHOLIC BISHOPS FROM INDIA**

**Quote – Unquote**

I have been following with interest your work in the last couple of months. I congratulate you on this initiative. I wish God's blessings on you and your collaborators. I am sure that you will continue your dedicated service for the spread of the Gospel and the good of the Church.

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has an inspiring effect on many people. Praying for you, your family & all your endeavours.

+ Bishop Bosco Penha  
Bombay Archdiocese

You have given of your best as Secretary of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. You have been efficient, hardworking and interacting positively with everyone. The experience will certainly make you appreciate the Church, both divine in origin & goal, yet so human in its membership. I am sure you will continue to be of service to the Church. My prayers & kind regards.

+ Bishop Ferdinand Fonseca  
Bombay Archdiocese

I fully agree with your concept and also support you in whatever way possible. Ours is a missionary diocese in the North East of India bordering Myanmar. In fact I have just come back after a visit to a village along the border to receive and to baptize 19 families into the Catholic Church. We have many more such villages inviting us to visit. The people belong to a Naga tribe called Yimchunger. They are found also in Myanmar. Yes, if all of us are generous, we can surely help our poor people and the poor churches in the far-flung areas of the different dioceses in India.

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With kind regards and best wishes,  
+ Archbishop Oswald Gracias, Agra

The booklet has been well brought out with practical guidelines. Well done ! With love & respect !

+ Bishop Percival Fernandez  
Secretary General, CBCI  
New Delhi

I write to acknowledge with thanks the copies of your booklets on tithing. I think it is a very appropriate theme for today. Somehow people are slow in our church to tithe but when they join one of the newly emerging sects, they at once begin to tithe. Lets hope your booklet

The Bible says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..."  
**- Hos. 4:6**

**Jeremiah 29:11** says: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

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In fact some generous people from Mumbai send me

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Yours in Our Lord  
+ Bishop Patrick D'souza  
Varanasi

Ours is a newly formed mission diocese & hence, we support the God's Givers team, through our valuable prayers. We wish you every good success in making known Christ to the ends of the earth. We also feel the support of your prayers for our diocese.

+ Bishop Robert Miranda  
Gulbarga

I started praying for this from the very first day I read your first letter. I will continue this & will encourage all our priests, religious & faithful to pray & propagate this practice. God bless all your attempts dear Joseph. Though I am not able to support you in the way I would have loved to, will support you with my encouraging words & my sincere prayers.

There is nothing impossible with the Lord & Jesus has promised - "You have not asked any thing so far. Whatever, you ask of the Father in My Name, He will grant to you". I look forward to the day when you & your initiative become the great support of the Church. I wish you all success.

+ Bishop JG Mundadan

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Bijnor

INTERNET – Blessing Or Curse

### ***A Weapon Used By God & Satan***

Like money, the Internet is neither good nor bad. It is a medium that can be used for the better or for worse. There is a view that with the Internet taking much of our time, it has become our god. More time, particularly in cities where access to it is a lot easier & cheaper, more time is spent on the Internet than perhaps in personal prayer. The benefits of using this medium for God's glory & communicating with God's children are plenty. We encourage you to –

### ***Free downloads & surfing to build you up***

- Search the Internet for spiritual resources – [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- Don't buy, until absolutely necessary
- Visit Christian websites regularly.
- Subscribe to free email bulletins.
- Send feedback through email.

### ***Free bible versions online.***

Did you know that the bible is also available online ? In fact, if you are a lover of the Word, there are many versions, also available. The TEV (Today's English) is what we have commonly seen or know as the Good

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News bible, while the RSV (Revised Standard) is what we have heard in churches. The NKJV (New King James) is similar to the KJV (King James), except that it does away with the old English, with its - thou, thy, etc. It's also closer to the original in many cases, so I prefer it. But in essence & spirit, all reputed version are the same. So, you can pick & chose, a version you are comfortable with.

And what's better is that for those like me, who want to find scripture or compare versions & then lift them up to make a booklet, like this one, the Internet also provides free websites to do this. To name a couple of them :

**[www.olivetree.com/bible/Frames/SearchEnglishVersions.htm](http://www.olivetree.com/bible/Frames/SearchEnglishVersions.htm)**

**<http://etext.virginia.edu/frames/bibleframe.html>**

### ***Free Email Daily***

I would like to suggest 5 websites that have faith-building material, which I have found useful & which are trans-denominational & appeal to various churches or Christians in general. These are :

***"...For God is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." - Hebrews 11 : 6***

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[www.generousgiving.com](http://www.generousgiving.com)  
[www.christianitytoday](http://www.christianitytoday)

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over my Passion and entered most deeply into My spirit. They are living images of My Compassionate Heart. These souls will shine with a special brightness in the next life. Not one of them will go into the fire of hell. I shall particularly defend each one of them at the hour of death.

#### "Eighth Day

"Today bring to Me The Souls Who Are Detained in Purgatory and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy. Let the torrents of My Blood cool down their scorching flames. All these souls are greatly loved by Me. They are making retribution to My justice. It is in your power to bring them relief. Draw all the indulgences from the treasury of My Church and offer them on their behalf. Oh, if you only know the torments they suffer, you would continually offer for them the alms of the spirit and pay off their debt to My justice."

#### Ninth Day

"Today bring to Me The Souls Who Have Become Lukewarm and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy. These souls wound My Heart most painfully. My soul suffered the most dreadful loathing in the Garden of Olives because of lukewarm souls. They were the reason I cried out: 'Father, take this cup away from Me, if it be Your will.' For them the last hope of salvation is turned to My mercy."



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#### *Your Prayers for ...*

*In conclusion, I take this opportunity to request your prayers for this service of love. Your prayers are also needed for my immediate & extended family, who have tried their best to make it easier to serve. Not forgetting the nameless friends, who have stood by us, in our need.*

*We need your prayers also pleading with God to send more workers into the mission fields & for all those who struggle with debts & loans - for deliverance ASAP.*

*Kindly also pray for the Church & the Laity - that more resources might be released in the fight against Satan. So that the Lord's Kingdom comes soon. Praise the Lord!*

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