

PASSION-DRIVEN GIVIN'
Message One: Giving Passionately for Service

INTRODUCTION:

Here are some examples of how confusing life can be. Consider these actual signs posted in actual places:

- In a restroom:
 - TOILET OUT OF ORDER- PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW
- In a Laundromat:
 - AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT
- In a London department store:
 - BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS
- In an office:
 - WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN
- In another office:
 - AFTER TEA BREAK, STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD
- Outside a secondhand shop:
 - WE EXCHANGE ANYTHING - BICYCLES, WASHING MACHINES, ETC. WHY NOT BRING YOUR WIFE ALONG AND GET A WONDERFUL BARGAIN?
- Notice in health food shop window:
 - CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS
- Spotted in a safari park:
 - ELEPHANTS PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR
- Seen during a conference:
 - FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE IS A DAY CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR
- Notice in a farmer's field:
 - THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE, BUT THE BULL CHARGES.
- Message on a leaflet:
 - IF YOU CANNOT READ, THIS LEAFLET WILL TELL YOU HOW TO GET LESSONS
- On a repair shop door:
 - WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING (PLEASE KNOCK HARD ON THE DOOR - THE BELL DOESN'T WORK)

Yes, we sometimes get “mixed messages” about stewardship, too. What does the Bible really say about money? How am I to give to the church? Why should I give to the

church? These are just some of the questions we will answer in this series, *Passion-Driven Givin'*.

Our giving to the Lord's work should...

- Be done through the local church
- Be driven by purpose and passion
- Be from grateful hearts
- Result in great expectations

The passions (or purposes) can be easily remembered by the acrostic "S.W.O.R.D."

- Service
- Worship
- Outreach
- Relationships
- Discipleship

In this first message, we shall consider why we should give passionately as "service" to the Lord, the community, and the world.

PROPOSITION: Passionately giving to my church accomplishes five vital purposes.

I. PASSIONATELY GIVING TO MY CHURCH IMITATES THE SERVICE OF MY CHRIST. Matt. 20:28.

...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

A. Christ Gave His All That I Might Live. John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

B. Christ Gave His All That I Might Give. 2 Cor. 8:9.

(Interpret this verse in light of its context- a call for an offering.)

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

ILLUSTRATION:

Paul Harvey tells the story of an eight-year-old named Ben who won a contest at the local McDonald's. His prize was a brand new bike. When Ben got home, he told his parents that he already had a bike and that he didn't need two. Ben decided to give the new bike to a friend who didn't have a bike and whose parents were unable to buy one for him. When the manager of McDonald's heard about this, she invited Ben and his family to dinner and presented him with a \$100 gift certificate. The next day Ben used the gift certificate to buy a crash helmet for his friend. For some people, giving is just second nature.

(I. PASSIONATELY GIVING TO MY CHURCH IMITATES THE SERVICE OF MY CHRIST.)

II. PASSIONATELY GIVING TO MY CHURCH DEMONSTRATES MY SERVICE TO MY CHRIST.

A. I Cannot Love Christ Without Giving to Him. 2 Cor. 8:8.

Someone has said, "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

(Paul said to the Macedonians concerning financial giving...)

I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.

ILLUSTRATION:

The pastor of a local church decided to take drastic action on stewardship: he hired an electrician to wire the pews. The next Sunday he said, "Today is Stewardship Day. We will be making our pledges publicly, in church, this morning. Who will pledge fifty dollars a week?" As he said this, he motioned to the electrician to pull the switch, and about half the congregation jumped to their feet. The church treasurer quickly began recording names. As the pastor called for those willing to give seventy-five dollars per week, he once again motioned to the electrician, and the switch was pulled. This time, however, the voltage was increased, and as the dollar amounts increased, so did the voltage. Needless to say, it was a tremendously successful Stewardship campaign. As they were totaling

pledges after the service, an elder came to tell the pastor that there might be a problem: four members were so stubborn about their pledges that they remained in their seats the whole time, and were now seared to the pew.

B. I Cannot Love Christ Without Living for Him. John 14:23, 24.

²³Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

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III. **PASSIONATELY GIVING TO MY CHURCH VALIDATES MY SERVICE TO MY CONGREGATION.**

A. I Have Relationships that Mean Something. Matt. 25:40.

And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

B. I Have Responsibilities that Mean Sacrifice. 2 Cor. 8:1-5.

¹Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ²that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ⁴imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

ILLUSTRATION:

One of the design engineers for the F-117 was giving an introductory presentation for the newest fighter aircraft. During a question-and-answer session, a young Air Force officer asked, "Is that an F-117 tie tack you're wearing?" "Yes, and only two hundred of these limited-edition tie tacks were made," the engineer replied. "Here, you can have this one." The young officer gratefully accepted the gift. After a pause, another young man stood up and asked, "Isn't that an F-117 wristwatch you're wearing?"

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IV. PASSIONATELY GIVING TO MY CHURCH FACILITATES THE SERVICE OF MY CHURCH.

A. When My Church Receives More It Can Give More. Luke 16:10a.

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much...

B. When My Church Gives More It Can Receive More. Ecc. 11:1; Luke 6:38.

Ecc. 11:1:

Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

Luke 6:38:

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

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V. PASSIONATELY GIVING TO MY CHURCH MOTIVATES OUR SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY. Acts 1:8.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

A. Immediately: We Reach Our Community (Church's Sphere).

B. Locally: We reach Our County (Jerusalem).

C. Regionally: We Reach Our Commonwealth (Judea).

D. Nationally: We Reach Our Country (Samaria).

E. Globally: We Reach Other Countries (Uttermost Parts).

APPLICATION:

Many years ago, a 10-year-old boy walked up to the counter of a soda shop and climbed onto a stool. He caught the eye of the waitress and asked, "How much is an ice cream sundae?"

"Fifty cents," the waitress replied.

The boy reached into his pockets, pulled out a handful of change, and began counting. The waitress frowned impatiently. After all, she had other customers to wait on.

The boy squinted up at the waitress. "How much is a dish of *plain* ice cream?" he asked.

The waitress sighed and rolled her eyes. "Thirty-five cents," she said with a note of irritation.

Again, the boy counted his coins. At last, he said, "I'll have the plain ice cream, please." He put a quarter and two nickels on the counter. The waitress took the coins, brought the ice cream, and walked away. About 10 minutes later, she returned and found the ice cream dish empty. The boy was gone. She picked up the empty dish—then swallowed hard.

There on the counter, next to the wet spot where the dish had been, were two nickels and five pennies. The boy had had enough for a sundae, but he had ordered plain ice cream so he could leave a tip.

Questions to consider:

1. What does my giving to the Lord's church say about my love for Christ?
2. Between the "two masters" who do I seem to serve more; my Savior or material things?
3. I say I love my church; does my giving reflect this claim?
4. If everyone in the church gave the same way I do, how much ministry would get done?
5. Do I have a "global" mindset when it comes to giving?
6. How can I be a more passionate and generous giver today?