

GOD CARES HOW WE GIVE

David Halbrook

Ever since the twelve apostles began spreading the gospel of Christ, Christians have regularly given money for the work God assigned to the church in that place. For example, in Jerusalem, Christians laid money at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:37). The apostles made sure the funds were given to disciples in need (Acts 2:45; 6:1). I recently was told of a church giving televisions away for "perfect attendance"! That is sinful for the same reason instrumental music in worship and cannibalism are sinful (read Bible articles on these subjects at our website, WWW.QVCOC.COM).

Christians were taught to give as they prospered and purposed in their heart on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7). The New Testament does not record even one Christian tithing. Tithing, like incense, animal sacrifices, and Sabbath, was taught to Israel, not Christians. Churches who demand tithing are binding laws God does not bind.

Do you notice churches constantly asking for money or engaged in business (selling food, CDs, t-shirts,...)? You will never notice that in the Bible. In God's way, churches are equipped for their work by Christians who give as they prosper. God teaches us about giving—have you learned?

-- *Editor's Note:* While the economy of our country is a hot topic, look for a way to bring up God's way for the "economy of the church." One way to do that is to find, clip, hand-out, and ask others about our article in *Arkansas Weekly* this week. If you aren't teaching your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors, who will teach them?

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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BEARING GRUDGES

Kyle Pope

As I grow older I have noticed a tendency in character that I wish I did not see: the tendency to very easily hold a grudge. When I was younger, if someone did something against me, or did something that in some way hurt my feelings, I found it relatively easy to let the matter "roll off my back" and forget about it. Yet, now as an older man, with a few more hurt feelings "under my belt," and a few more situations that I wish I could forget, what once might have easily been viewed as "water under the bridge," now tends to pool together, damn up and linger a little too long "under the bridge" (so to speak).

Understanding why some thing may happen doesn't justify or excuse its occurrence. Bearing a grudge is wrong because it reflects a lack of forgiveness. Jesus taught in both the model prayer and His comments immediately after the prayer, how important forgiveness is. He declared: **"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."** (Matthew 6:14,15, NKJV). To some degree, this forgiveness is to occur whether the person who has "trespassed" against us ever repents of the wrong they have done. Jesus also taught: **"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."** (Mark 11:25). Clearly, if we want to be forgiven by God we must be forgiving of others.

Bearing a grudge is a very unattractive quality. It is ugly to see in one's self or in others. It makes the one who feels it bitter, resentful and distant. Forgiveness, on the other hand, and the sweet disposition that accompanies it are qualities that are appealing, admirable and approachable.

(continued inside)

CHILDREN AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Joe Price

In June of 2004 the nation mourned the passing of its 40th president, Ronald Reagan. Among the many touching testimonials that were made about this man, one struck me more than any other. Shortly after he was shot in 1981, Reagan records in his diary that he found himself struggling with how he could go to God in prayer for himself while he harbored hatred in his heart for the disturbed man who had tried to kill him. To address this, Reagan first prayed to God for the soul of the man who shot him, then he prayed for himself. Imagine, after having someone explode a weapon in your direction that lodged a bullet inches away from your heart taking the time to first pray for them.

As impressive as this example is, it is nothing compared to the example of our Lord. He, who was God in the flesh, as life was slipping away from His fleshly body, considered those who had torn His body to shreds, slammed a thorny crown on His head and pierced His hands and feet with nails, appeals to heaven - **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”** (Luke 23:34). If Jesus could ask for the forgiveness of those who carried out His crucifixion, what wrong could anyone ever do to us that would justify bearing a grudge against them?

Bearing a grudge requires that we maintain a disposition and an attitude towards the other person that can hinder our very worship of God. Before the model prayer, in the same sermon Jesus taught, that harboring anger towards our brother can place us in danger of judgement, and that holding them in contempt can place us in danger of hell fire (Matthew 5:22). Jesus taught that before we bring our **“gift to the altar”** we must first do what we can to make things right in our relationships with others (Matthew 5:23-24). If we hold on to a grudge it may be that the very spiritual sacrifices we offer in worship to God become unacceptable. Let's strive to prevent this from happening to our relationship with God. (<http://ancientroadpublications.com/Studies.1.html>)

PSALM 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Accountability means taking responsibility for one's actions. It is answering for one's conduct. In a spiritual usage it implies that one has the mental and moral capacity to make decisions that affect one's standing before God. When a person has the mental and moral capacity to make decisions, God holds him accountable for those decisions (Rom. 14:12; Ezek. 18:20). Conversely, when one does not have the moral or mental capability to make decisions we necessarily conclude God does not hold him answerable in spite of that inability (2 Cor. 8:12). Therefore, we judge infants and small children are not morally accountable to God. They are innocent of sin because their moral capacity has not yet developed to the point of discerning good and evil and in turn, of choosing sin (Matt. 18:3; 19:14).

There comes a time when children become morally responsible before God for their attitudes and actions (Rom. 7:9). There is no magic age in the Bible assuring us that from that moment on a child is morally developed and therefore accountable to God for his or her attitudes and actions. Every child develops at a different rate. Still, the Bible gives us a picture of young people who understood their accountability to God and who decided to obey God in their youth. Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold into Egyptian slavery. As a youth he faced tremendous challenges to his faith (Gen. 37:2). Josiah became king of Judah at the age of eight, and at sixteen years of age he began to seek after God (2 Chrn. 34:1-3). From an early age he recognized his responsibility to and his accountability before God. Jesus was twelve years old when he said that he must **“be about my Father's business”** (Lk. 2:42, 49).

These Bible examples of young people teach us several things, including:

1. *Young people can and should think about God.* We must encourage them to remember God in their youth (Eccl. 12:1).
2. *Children can and should be learning about God.* Early instruction from God's word is invaluable to their spiritual development (Eph. 6:4).
3. *Parents, grandparents and concerned brethren are the ones who must teach children to prepare for their accountability before God* (2 Tim. 1:5).

If we wait until they are close to the age of moral capacity and accountability, we have waited far too long (Psa. 78:4-8).

Unless we teach our children about God and Christ, about moral responsibility, accountability and living by faith, no one else will. Then, they must choose whom they will serve. (www.bibleanswer.com/2012_Vol_15_No_31_23Sep.htm#Children)