



DEVOTION: February 19

Giving (Life Realities)
ROBERT SIMMS

Both a spirit and a discipline of proportionate giving are necessary to keep life from being an exercise mostly in self-indulgence.

One of the most powerful outgrowths of biblical stewardship of life is proportionate Christian giving. Founded in the ancient practice of tithing, inculcated in God's people through the law, and gloriously given inward motivation by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, proportionate giving is necessary to the success of the church's ministry and essential to the church's extensive outreach.

Jesus taught us that, in the matter of giving, a generous proportion of our living is more important than the actual sum. Paul said that we should give as God blesses us, and that our giving should grow as God blesses us more. If we honestly and thankfully assess the wonderful blessing of God in our lives, we will increase our motivation for giving and set challenging and worthy goals for ourselves.

Giving proportionately to the Lord through your church is vital to our strategy of missions. Our participation in missions ventures in our state, our continent, and in the rest of the world, is largely a function of our financial contribution to the labors of others, who go in our stead.

Baptist conventions and boards do not conduct games or run outside businesses to fund our part in the Great Commission of Christ. They depend directly and completely on the giving of individual church members to send the more than 10,000 missionaries we now have serving throughout the world, and to make possible the ministries of many hundreds of others who support and train missionaries or do the myriad tasks essential to reaching and teaching people at home and abroad about Jesus Christ.

Proportionate giving also has a profound effect on our own lives. The sinful nature is self-centered. Not surrendered to the mastery of a loving and giving Christ, our lives tend toward self-indulgence. Giving freely washes away this me-ism and orients us toward others, and toward God.

The committed Christian will make giving an important part of his growing faith.

SCRIPTURES

Mark 12:43-44, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9:6-10



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