

AUGUST 10th
GOD LOVES CHEERFUL GIVERS

"The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me." EXODUS 25:1-2

Randy Alcorn cites a letter that was received by a pastor after preaching on money: "I was never so disappointed in a service as I was Sunday. I have an unbelieving friend that I got to come with me, and what were you preaching about? Money! I can assure you she was not impressed! And why money, when there are so many beautiful things to say? You'd better reconsider such messages in the future. Leave money to God, and he will handle everything, believe me. I love this church and usually like the sermons, but that was terrible." Wow, that's quite a letter! It exposes the reality that money often becomes a taboo subject in the Christian church. However, according to Phil Ryken, there are 400 Bible references to money. Here in Exodus 25, God invites a love offering to be given by His people.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 describe the heart of giving: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Believers talk about these verses often. God does indeed love a cheerful giver. Most claim that this is the New Testament model for giving, since tithes are not commanded in the New Testament. However, most believers also frequently miss the freewill offering that is given by God's people in Exodus 25. This location in Exodus is an odd place to ask for a freewill offering. Why not give the command of a tithe, since the people just received the 10 Commandments? That would make more sense to us. But God. When you take the order of what has gone on in Exodus so far, you can see that the freewill offering comes in a perfect place here in the book. God has rescued His people from slavery in Egypt. He has called a people as His own and given them His commandments. The Mosaic Covenant has been confirmed in Exodus 24. Phil Ryken is correct in stating that the only action not done as an act of worship in chapter 24 is "passing the plate." Therefore, Exodus 25 is a perfect place for God to call His people to give.

"From every heart who heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me." What a statement! God gives His people the chance to thank Him for His endless mercy and grace here. Their giving is a direct response to God's love and care for them. Men, is it any different for us? Sure, we live in a New Testament world that moves largely away from the strange customs and laws that Christ fulfilled. However, our hearts have also received God's grace. God has saved us not from the tyranny of Egypt, but from the tyranny of our sin. Does His grace move us to giving freely of our lives? Let's face it, our wallets often control us. We are what we spend. In the same way, we can also say, "You are what you give." God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Our response must be worship. A part of that worship is giving God's money back to him. How will we respond to God's grace in our lives today?

Spend some time thinking about your giving lately. How does your giving reflect the grateful nature of your heart towards God?

For Further Reading: 2 Corinthians 9:1-15