

Command of Christ #7

Give

Learner rejoices, "It says we will live with God and be His people. We will be perfect, and He will welcome us like a husband welcomes a beautiful bride! There will be no more crying, suffering, or dying. Everything will be new and beautiful! Mr. Wise, if I do not see you again, I will see you when God makes a new heaven and earth."

Mr. Wise says, "Learner, we are waiting for a wonderful kingdom. So, do not worry about building up riches and influence in this life. These are not the important things, because this life is passing quickly. If God blesses you with money, use it to help the weak and serve God. You saw my example. I was never a burden to you. Remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive, as God says in Acts 20:34, 35."

Learner and his brother Helper watch Mr. Wise leave on the bus, with tears in their eyes. "We might never see him again," Learner mourns.

Practical Work

- Memorize **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**, about giving what we can give cheerfully. Then teach it to your people.
- Plan with your flock to keep account of the money that people give as offerings and how it is spent.
- Name a treasurer and another person to count the money.
- Instruct the treasurer never to loan any money or pay for things that are not authorized by the leaders of the congregation.
- A shepherd should never make decisions alone as to how the money is spent, or take it all for himself.
- Plan with the church body for what the offerings will be used. Give help first to people who have very serious and urgent needs.

The believers leave Learner's house after saying goodbye to Mr. Wise. He stays to pray with Learner. Someone knocks at the door. A policeman says, "Mr. Wise, I have come to tell you that you must leave our area of jurisdiction at once. I do you a favor to let you leave without arresting you, because you are a good man. Leave now or I will put you in jail."

Sara quickly fills a bag with food, to help Mr. Wise on his way. He says, "You are generous. I am grateful. Learner, you must teach the rest also to obey Jesus' command to give, as Luke 6:38 says. Explain that they have received everything from God that they need to follow Christ and inherit eternal life. Just as God has given to them, they must give generously to others."



"Some of them are very poor and have almost no money."

"They can give other material goods to help those in need and to serve the congregation. Learner, serve others as I have served you. Do not be like the world's leaders who like to lord it over those they control. Do not be greedy with your authority. Share it with new shepherding elders in the new congregations. Look for opportunities to tell others the good news of Jesus Christ."

"I will," Learner assures him.

"I give this to you as a gift." Mr. Wise hands him his Bible. "When you study it, remember what I taught you."

"Please tell us another Bible story before you go. The bus is not due for another hour."

"Let us read about The Generous Widow."

Exercise

Please find now in **Luke 21:1-4**:

- How much did the widow give, of all she had?
- How did God measure the size of her gift, as compared with the gifts of the rich?

Mr. Wise explains, “See how the widow gave all that she had to live on, 100%? Although the people of the Old Testament were commanded to give to God 10% of what they received, under the New Testament that law is not what should motivate us. Our love for God motivates us to give what we can, like the widow. Paul taught the Corinthian Christians to set aside something each week for the Lord’s work, in 1 Corinthians 16:2. Ten percent of our net earnings is a good start.”

Learner agrees.

“God promises to bless those who give out of a cheerful and grateful heart, in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Everything we have comes from God. We give cheerfully because we are grateful to Him. Our generosity shows that we believe that He is the Lord over all that we have. It shows our faith in His promise to take care of us and bless us.”

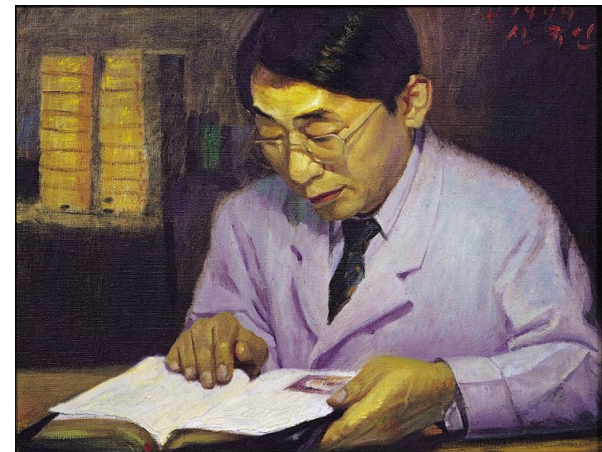
Learner reads the brief story of the widow again. “God saw into the hearts of the widow and the rich people. He saw why they were giving. The rich gave out of what they had left over, to fulfill an obligation or to impress people. The widow only gave two small coins, but God knew it was a joyful sacrifice of love. He considered it to be more than the gifts of the rich.”

Mr. Wise tells Learner some ways people in the Bible used their offerings:

- to support shepherding elders and missionaries,
- to help widows and orphans, and others in need,
- to help those who are hungry,
- to build or repair the Old Testament temple.

Mr. Wise says goodbye. Mr. Foolish is waiting outside the door and tells him, “It would be better for you to promise the authorities that you will obey them, so they will let you stay. Why do you ruin your life? Your faith does you little good in this life. Forget about teaching about Jesus and get a good job here!”

Mr. Wise sighs. “Mr. Foolish, you do not understand our blessed hope. What we give now is invested for our reward in heaven. We are waiting for Jesus to return, just like He left, as Acts 1:9-11 says. When He comes, everything will be changed. We will receive a heavenly reward. We will have riches that will last for all eternity. Now I must go. Mr. Foolish, please find in Revelation 21 What Our Future Is Like in Jesus.” Mr. Foolish merely says, “Goodbye” and walks away, but Learner reads the Scripture promise with joy shining in his eyes.



Exercise

Please read **Revelation 21:1-9** now to find:

- With whom does God live in the new kingdom?
- What happens to tears and death in heaven?
- What happens to the people who refuse to trust God and leave their lives of sin?