

Genesis, part 24 – Giving to God, part 1 (Genesis 14)

When we look into the Bible, we find that God talks more about money than any other subject.

Here in Genesis 14, we see money being used for the very first time in the Bible as a tool for worshiping God.

One of our primary goals at McLean Bible Church is to help you become a mature, seasoned follower of Christ – and there is no way you and I can reach that goal without having a biblical worldview on money.

The purpose of this series is education – not fund-raising.

For the next two weeks, we are going to talk about money – but I'm not going to ask you for a dime.

“It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.” Philippians 3:1

“Spiritual growth does not always involve learning something new. Our most important growth often is in regard to truth we have already **heard**, but have not fully **applied**.” John MacArthur

“Abraham recovered all the goods that had been taken, as well as his relative Lot, and all Lot's possessions, along with all the people.” Genesis 14:16

“Then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. Now he was a priest of the Most High God [El Elyon].” Genesis 14:18

“El Elyon” is the exact same name for God that Abraham uses in Genesis 14:22 – which means – that Melchizedek **knew** and **worshiped** and **was a priest of** the very same God as Abraham!

“And Melchizedek blessed Abraham, saying, ‘Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.’”

Genesis 14:19, 20a

“Then Abraham gave him a tenth (“tithes”) of everything (i.e., of all the material wealth he'd captured).” Genesis 14:20b

Melchizedek:

- **“A priest of the Most High God”**
- **Blessed** Abraham
- **Reminded** Abraham that **God** deserved the glory for Abraham's victory

“Then Abraham gave him a tenth (“tithes”) of everything (he'd captured).” Genesis 14:20b

This is the **very first time** in the Bible that we see **“money”** used as a tool for worshiping God.

The Bible **repeatedly** teaches that using money to express worship to God is a **cardinal principle** of “giving to the Lord.”

“But I have received everything you sent in full and am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gift you sent . . .” Philippians 4:18a

“. . . Your gift is a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.” Philippians 4:18b

The imagery here (“a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God”) comes from the Old Testament sacrificial system.

In the Old Testament, the Bible prescribed **two categories** of animal sacrifices.

Category #1 – Sacrifices that dealt with the issue of sin

When a person realized they had sinned, they would bring a sacrificial animal to the Temple in Jerusalem.

The priest would kill the animal and apply its blood to the altar – and in response, God promised to **forgive** the offerer’s sin and to **repair** the breach in their relationship.

This was only a **temporary fix** – because every time a person sinned, they had to repeat the procedure.

Today – under the New Testament (Covenant) – there is no longer any need for these sin sacrifices
That need has been eliminated forever because of what Jesus did on the cross for us!

“He (Jesus) offered one sacrifice for sin for all time [on the cross] . . . and by His one sacrifice, He (Jesus) has made perfect for all time those of us who believe in Him.” Hebrews 10:12, 14

“Now, where there is forgiveness like this, **no further sacrifices for sin are needed.**” Hebrews 10:18

Our sin has been “paid-in-full” – **once and for all** – by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross!

Category #2 – Sacrifices that were brought for worship

These were sacrifices that were meant to express loyalty, love and thanksgiving to God.

Here too – the worshiper would bring a sacrificial animal to the Temple

Here too – the priest would kill the animal

Instead of putting the animal’s blood on the altar – the priest would burn the animal’s meat and the **smell** would ascend into heaven as (Philippians 4:18) “a fragrant aroma” to God.

As followers of Christ, Category #2 (worship sacrifices) are still around – it’s just that their **format** has changed.

“. . . we are to offer up **spiritual worship sacrifices**, which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5

As followers of Christ under the New Testament (Covenant), we express worship to God

- Not by **animal** sacrifices
- But by “**spiritual**” sacrifices of worship

In Philippians 4:18, the Bible tells us that “**giving to God**” is **one** of these “**spiritual**” **sacrifices of worship**.

“Worship” simply means doing those things that tell God He is **#1** in our lives – and **there’s no better tool to do this with than money!**

“Lord, I might love this money . . .”

“And I might love what it could buy me . . .”

“But Lord – **I love You more!**”

“When they saw the Child with His mother Mary, they bowed down and **worshiped Him.**”

Matthew 2:11a

“They opened their treasures and presented Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:11b

“While Jesus was in Bethany . . . a woman came with a vial of expensive perfume; and she broke the vial and poured it over Jesus’ head.” Mark 14:3

“But some of those present were saying, ‘Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for a year’s wages and given to the poor.’ And they rebuked her sharply.” Mark 14:4, 5

“But Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? For she has done a beautiful thing for Me. For the poor will always be with you, and you can help them whenever you want. But you will not always have Me here.’” Mark 14:6, 7

Jesus: “She’s **not wasting** – she’s **worshipping!**”

For many of us as followers of Christ – this is a **whole new slant** on giving.

When we give like this, there’s no joy in it – because we’re giving all wrong!

Six times in Exodus 35: “an offering for **THE LORD**”

“Lord, I’m giving this to You – as an act of worship – as a way of telling You that You are #1 in my life – and that I love You more than even money itself.”

When we’re giving like this – as an act of worship – there’s true joy in it!

So What?

“By telling us how they would spend their money – these people have just told us a lot about where their heart is.

How we spend our money reveals where our priorities in life are.
Money is like a “barometer of the heart.”

In all these other areas, it’s easy to “paste on the plastic.”
But the level of our financial giving to God is the one area where we tend to “fake it” the least.

“**Show me a Christian’s financial statement** – and within about five minutes – I can pretty well tell you where they really stand in their love and devotion to the Lord.”

“If the IRS were arresting people and putting them in jail for being deep and dedicated followers of Christ – would there be enough evidence on Schedule A of your 1040 to convict you?”