

# "Givers and Livers"

By Allan Pole



Theme: Joy is found not in hoarding but in sharing.

Text: Proverbs 11:24-25

Here's a thought: Peter Marshall (1902-1949, former Chaplain of the United States Senate) urged, "Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving."

Brenda Pole opens with an illustration ...

I need 13 volunteers and believe me you want to be a volunteer for this object lesson.

Each person needs to pick a piece of paper. When I say what is on your paper come over to me. Please don't read what is on your paper or compare with others.

I have here a pan of brownies. These brownies are going to represent my salary. I just got hired for this awesome job and they said they would pay me \$1,000 per month. Yes, I know it's not very much, but I wanted to make it easy for the math.

Payday came and I was excited to get my \$1,000. But as you all know before you get paid the government wants its share. Who has the paper that says Taxes, EI and CPP? Come on over. Here is your portion of my income. You may be seated.

I am working extra hard to get rid of my consumer debt so I will now pay some on my credit card. Who's my debt?

Everyone needs to live somewhere. Where is my rent/mortgage person? You come and get a portion of my pay cheque. You can sit down now.

I need food to survive. Who is my food?

I need my utilities, like power, water, phone and Internet. Here is your

portion.

In order to get around I need a car or a bus pass, so transportation, please come over. Here you go.

It gets kind of cold here at times; better have some clothes to keep warm. Clothing come on over.

I might have to go to the dentist or get prescriptions if I'm sick. Health care come on over.

Can't forget about insurance. Here's a portion for you.

Al's been telling us we have to set aside some money for a rainy day. Savings come on over.

I have worked pretty hard so I deserve to have some fun; I need some of my money for entertainment.

Then there are always those things that just don't fit anywhere that come up like gifts and stuff.

Now it's Sunday and I'm off to church. I'll just check to see what I have left.

How did that happen? It's all gone except for a few crumbs. A few crumbs aren't going to help the church so I might as well get a Starbucks on the way. *Scoop the crumbs into my mouth.*

Sorry Lord, I don't have any left for you. Tithe sit down. Maybe next month? Wow, that seems pretty harsh to ask for volunteers and not give any brownie to the tithe person. Yet we can do that easily to the Lord when we don't make tithing a priority.

Tithing is something I'm passionate about because I believe it is a godly principle that He wants each of us to do. If you are currently tithing, I am sure that you have seen how God has provided for you in the past. If we don't tithe we miss out on seeing God provide for us in ways that we can't imagine - just like the person with the tithe paper missed out on the brownies.

As I was preparing this I was trying to think if there was somehow I could have another pan of brownies, take out the tithe first and still have enough for the rest. But I can't because that's the God part. It doesn't make sense that you can give 10% at the beginning and still have enough for all the rest.

Malachi 3:10 says:

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

Are you willing to trust God enough to test him in this?

Taxes, EI and CPP

Rent/Mortgage

Food

Utilities

Transportation

Clothing

Health Care  
Insurance

Savings

Entertainment

Debt

Miscellaneous

Tithe



Speaking of givers and livers, Ottawa Senators owner Eugene Melnyk and the anonymous donor who helped save his life have been released from hospital following his liver transplant.

Melnyk underwent a life-saving liver transplant on May 19, 2015.

“Mr. Melnyk’s recovery has been proceeding very well since undergoing his transplant,” said Dr. Atul Humar, the Medical Director of the University Health Network’s Multi-Organ Transplant Program in a statement released by the Ottawa Senators Wednesday.

“As with all of our transplant patients, Mr. Melnyk has been monitored closely by his transplant team and his general health has improved to the point where he can begin the next phase of his recovery. In addition, we are pleased to report that the anonymous donor has also been discharged and is doing extremely well,” said Humar. The doctor is also in good humor. ☺

Melnyk’s post-transplant recovery will require weekly follow-up with his transplant team and he has been transferred to a facility that will be providing him with daily rehabilitation services, according to the team.

Melnyk, who likely had just weeks to live without a transplant, received part of the liver from an anonymous donor after the team made a public plea on his behalf. More than 500 people applied to donate part of their liver to the multimillionaire hockey team owner. Twelve underwent intensive screening before a donor was selected.

Hospital officials said 26 people who stepped forward to donate to Melnyk said they would consider donating anonymously to someone else waiting for a liver transplant. There are long waiting lists for organs from deceased donors and every year people die while waiting. Patients waiting for a liver are told they have the option of finding a living donor, usually a family member or close friend. Anonymous living donations are more rare and some hospitals will not do them.

Melnyk is expected to speak about the transplant and the Senators’ plans to support organ donation when he is well enough. (From

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/senators-owner-eugene-melnyk-released-from-hospital>)

I am sure this liver donor has discovered the truth of Proverbs 11:24-25:

24 One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. 25 A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. NIV

King Solomon exhorts us to:

## **Freely Give**



Unfortunately, a lot of preachers and teachers have misused and abused these Scripture verses and others like them. I was in a meeting with a well-known evangelist who promised the people in attendance that if they give to his ministry God would give back to them what they gave and get them out of debt. Actually, God doesn't owe us anything (see Job 41:11)! I left the meeting angry and I would not go back to hear him again unless he repented of this false teaching. Despite the misuses and abuses, however, let us not miss the principles and promises that are in God's Word.

I am not paid on commission and I don't need your money. I say these things not for my benefit but for yours. Like the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:17, "Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account." NIV

Should followers of Jesus give 10% of their gross income to their local church? Yes. This, however, is just the beginning and this is the problem with focusing on tithing. If we make tithing our focus we can fool ourselves into thinking that we paid our "spiritual bill" and we can go on to spend the remaining 90% the way we jolly well please.

Tithing is actually the minimum – a good starting point. John Ortberg concluded, "Tithing is a bad ceiling but an excellent floor."

For those who argue that tithing is a part of the out-dated Old Testament Law I would remind them that Abraham tithed to the priest Melchizedek 430 years *before* the Law of Moses was given! If the debate continues I would conclude that we should be giving more than 10% anyway so there is no need to argue.

If you are wondering how little you can get away with giving you have missed the point. Someone who freely gives asks not how *little* but how *much* they can give.

During the last Sunday service that the visiting preacher was to spend at the church he served for some months, his hat was passed around for a goodwill offering. When it returned to the preacher, it was empty. The preacher didn't flinch. He raised the hat to heaven and prayed, "I thank you, Lord, that I got my hat back from this congregation."

Today is Father's Day. My father died in 2007 and he was one of the most generous people I know. His example continues to inspire me and many other family members and friends. My dad was a farmer his whole life. Farmers and gardeners know that seeds are not to be kept and accumulated; instead they are grown and multiplied by releasing and planting them.

True generosity is reflected not only on Sunday morning in a church service – it is an attitude that permeates the other six days of the week and the relationships that we have amongst our family, friends, schoolmates, employees, neighbours and business contacts. It is possible to tithe religiously without your heart being in it while you remain a stingy person. This is why God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

God has called New Beginnings Church to be a generous church. This generosity starts with each individual who calls this church home. Will you support the work of God in and through New Beginnings Church so we can and will be generous?

Freely Give  
**Really Live**



Proverbs 11:25 can literally be translated, "The liberal soul shall be made fat and he that waters shall be watered himself." There are significant rewards that come with habitual generosity.

Missiologist Donald McGavran (1897-1990) coined the term "redemption and lift" while observing poor people who came to faith in Jesus Christ and how their financial condition improved as a result of lifestyle changes. They abandoned

their lifestyles of alcoholism, sexual promiscuity and drug addiction to become honest and hard-working members of the community. I would add that generosity became a part of their transformed lives. Their poverty turned into prosperity!

God's desire for His people is expressed in Psalm 35:27:

May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, "The Lord be exalted, who delights in the well-being [prosperity] of his servant." NIV

God wants prosperity for His people! But this prosperity has little to do with mansions, limos and private jets. The Hebrew word translated as "well-being" or "prosperity" in Psalm 35:27 is "shalom", which speaks of welfare in all aspects of life: things like health, peace, safety, wellness and financial provision. So biblical prosperity has to do with well-being in every area of a person's life. That's what God desires and promises for His people. But does that mean that God wants to make every believer rich? That's not what the Bible indicates. In fact, Scripture is pretty emphatic that for a believer to seek, or even desire, material wealth is dangerous and damaging to their spiritual health. (From <https://ronfcc.wordpress.com/2012/05/12/prosperity-gospel-or-gospel-prosperity/>)

The same Hebrew word, shalom, is translated as "prosper" in Jeremiah 29:11:

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. NIV

In contrast with Satan who revels in killing, stealing and destroying, Jesus has come that we would have life to the full (John 10:10).

Something happens in my heart when I hoard or when I give. When I stockpile stuff for my own consumption greed and discontent grow like weeds in the garden of my heart. This thought pattern leads me to comparing myself with those who appear to have more than what I have.





When I give to others less fortunate than myself I take my eyes off my own troubles and take a joyful, genuine interest in people. I am reminded in these moments that I have much to be thankful for and this puts a smile on my face and a spring in my step.

Not only those who read the Bible embrace this principle of generous living but so also do those who embrace other faiths and worldviews. The current most charitable individuals in the United States are atheists or agnostics, based on “Estimated Lifetime Giving,” are:

1. Warren Buffett (donated \$40.785 billion to “health, education, humanitarian causes”)
2. Bill & Melinda Gates (donated \$27.602 billion to “global health and development, education”)
3. George Soros (donated \$6.936 billion to “open and democratic societies”)

A century ago, one of the USA’s leading philanthropists was an atheist named Andrew Carnegie. (From <http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/pellissier20111125>)

Paul taught in Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” NIV

These wealthy yet generous people are examples of how the principle of sowing and reaping is woven into creation and finances – even when they do not acknowledge the Creator of this principle.

When the liver is injured beyond its ability to regenerate itself, a liver transplant is the treatment of choice. The liver has the greatest regenerative capacity of any organ in the body. Liver regeneration has been recognized for many years, dating all the way back to Prometheus in ancient Greek mythology (from [www.mayo.edu/research/centers-programs/center-regenerative-medicine/focus-areas/liver-regeneration](http://www.mayo.edu/research/centers-programs/center-regenerative-medicine/focus-areas/liver-regeneration)). As our liver can regenerate when we give part of it away, so too can our finances when we give it away.

King Solomon said it would go either way, “One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.” Peter Marshall (1902-1949, former Chaplain of the United States Senate) urged, “Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving.”



Ebenezer Scrooge is the focal character of Charles Dickens' 1843 novel, "A Christmas Carol". At the beginning of the novel, Scrooge is a cold-hearted miser who despises Christmas. Dickens describes him thus: "The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, made his eyes red, his thin lips blue, and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice ..." His last name has come into the English language as a byword for miserliness (from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebenezer\\_Scrooge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebenezer_Scrooge)). We see in Mr. Scrooge the caricature of what results when a person lives unto himself. It is truly more blessed to give than to receive (Luke 6:38).

I have discovered it is a matter of trust. Will you trust the Lord to provide for you as you place giving at the top of your list of financial priorities?

**Freely Give  
Really Live**

Joy is found not in hoarding but in sharing.

