

Christian Giving Leader's Guide



Instructions:

1. Thoroughly read the learner lesson: "Christian Giving."
2. Read the basic and the focal text in 2 Corinthians 9:1-13 and recognize the four fundamental principles that text teaches: that Christian giving is an evidence of gratitude, an expression of love, an essential of obedience, and an example of surrender.
3. Be able to explain the meanings of the verses that lie at the heart of each of these principles.
4. Use parallel books such as commentaries or other Bible translations to make the points clearer.
5. Have the New King James Version of the Bible on hand, if it is not already in use in the class.
6. Prepare a chart, overhead cell, or simple PowerPoint presentation with the four basic points and their key verses, and display these points as the lesson progresses.
7. Bring to class an offering plate with a dozen or so envelopes made out by hypothetical worshippers. Label four of them with the four points of the lesson — "An evidence of gratitude," etc. Label some of the other envelopes with phrases such as "The best I can do," "The same as I gave ten years ago," "I came up short this month," "The smallest bill in my wallet other than a one," "I'm unhappy with the way things are going in church," "I'm thankful for all God has done for me," and "I care about lost people."

Some Stewardship Resources

Study and Training:

Ventures in Stewardship – A discipleship study built around stewardship of life

Tracts:

Christian Unity is all about Cooperation
Cooperative Program—an Inspiration from God
God's Plan for Shared Mission
Giving Together for God's Causes
How Does My Church Support Missions?

Links:

<http://www.mobaptist.org> and click on "Stewardship"

Printed materials can be ordered from the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Introduce the Lesson

Begin by showing the offering plate. Read some of the envelopes other than the four with the lesson points. Say that the labels on the envelopes would not be written by givers, but that they probably reflect what is in the minds or hearts of some people who make offerings Sunday to Sunday. Use these envelopes to start discussion about the motivations people have for what they give to the church.

Begin the Lesson Material

Review the introduction to the lesson by summarizing the opening paragraphs. Be certain to repeat the two benefits derived from biblical Christian giving.

Have someone read the first section of the scripture from **2 Corinthians, verses 6-7.**

State that one of the most important truths about a Christian's giving is that it is "an evidence of gratitude." Display the first point on your chart, overhead or presentation.

An Evidence of Gratitude

Ask if class members give cheerfully. Listen to responses without criticism. Point out that cheerful giving must rest on something other than one's life circumstances, that the goal of Christ is to produce within Christians a deep joy resulting from their appreciation of their eternal blessings.

Discuss

Discuss the joy of Christ in bringing us salvation. Use Hebrews 12:2 to explain that in spite of the immense hardship of the cross, Jesus had a joy that went beyond the circumstances and led Him to give Himself for us.

Apply

Hold up the envelope labeled with, "I'm thankful for all God has done for me." Say that without knowing if the envelope was from a child, a teen, a young adult, or a senior citizen, or whether it was from someone who barely gets by or someone who is quite wealthy; we cannot guess what amount is inside. But ask each person to imagine that he or she had written on the envelope, and to answer in his or her own mind if today's offering honestly says, "Thank you, God."

Ask a class member to read **2 Corinthians 9:9-10**, and another to follow with verses **11-12.**

Say that in addition to expressing our gratitude, Christian giving is an expression of love.

An Expression of Love

Display the second lesson point.

Discuss

Say, "Let's discuss how Jesus Christ was perfect." Ask if class members see Jesus' perfection as mostly His being moral. Ask if they believe He was "*holier than thou*." When the class says that Jesus was not self-righteous (which they probably will), ask what made Him different. Some suggestions may be that Jesus was humble or that He loved everyone. If no one suggests that love was Jesus' defining characteristic, point out that His love was the theme of His life. Explain that love is the essence of righteousness. Further explain that when the Bible describes Jesus as righteous (as in **Luke 23:47**) and says that He did no wrong (as in **John 18:38** or **Hebrews 4:15**), it is really saying that He perfectly fulfilled the law of love. Read **Romans 13:10** and explain that love has always been the heart of God's law.

Apply

Apply this truth with the following observation: When it comes to Christian giving, the goal is not to be limited to a dollar amount or even a percentage, but to love God with your gift.

Ask the class to respond to the statement: Love meets needs. After discussion, ask if the need of ministry and missions is something that Christian love must meet.

Ask if anyone can explain "the Cooperative Program." If no one does so satisfactorily, explain how it works. Then ask, "Since Baptists are meeting needs wonderfully through the Cooperative Program, are we showing our love through giving through CP to ministry around the world?"

An Essential of Obedience

Have a member read **2 Corinthians 9:13**. If the member does not have the New King James, repeat the phrase "obedience of your confession" from the NKJV and discuss what that phrase means.

Use your display to show the third point.

Discuss

Use the lesson material to point out that obedience to one's confession essentially means to "practice what you preach." Add that this familiar phrase is

not limited to ministers who preach in the pulpit, but to every believer, since we preach (or "proclaim") we are obedient to Christ when we say, "Jesus is Lord" (as in **Romans 10:9**).

Ask if anyone has ever heard someone say, "What I give is my business and no one else's." Acknowledge that while this is usually a comment on church procedures about envelopes and records, the deeper truth is that what God knows is more than the amount, but the spirit, the motivation, and what each of us is capable of doing for His kingdom.

Apply

Ask what it means to obey. Does God expect us to obey in everything? Does that mean how we manage our money at home? Does that mean our giving to God through the church? Does that mean whether or not we use our talents to serve God? Does obedience include being witnesses on the job and at school? Does obedience apply only in public or does it include private life that nobody but God and we know about?

Hold up the envelope marked, "I'm unhappy with the way things are going in church." Ask if anyone thinks that sentiment is an appropriate way to decide what to give to God.

Emphasize that our church participates in supporting more than 10,000 missionaries, and that we can do that best when we first *obey* God by giving, and then *combine* our gifts to support all our missions.

Stress that giving is the believer's way of obeying God. Encourage members to trust the vision of church leaders and the decisions of churches to support the ministries and missions they do. State that every Christian should be a member of a church whose mission he or she can support, and then should support that mission through obedient giving.

Use the displays previously prepared to introduce the fourth point:

An Example of Surrender

Point out that what is finally demonstrated by our giving is whether or not we are surrendered fully to the Lord.

Have a member read verse 13 again. Emphasize the phrase, “*professed subjection*,” in the KJV. Explain that the Greek word for *subjection* means submission, and that obedience is really acting out our submission.

Discuss

Read **Malachi 3:10**. Admit that many people debate whether or not Christians “have to” tithe. But state that Jesus must have tithed, because He obeyed the law perfectly, and that He told the Pharisees they should be concerned about justice and mercy while not failing to tithe. (**Luke 11:42**). At the very least, the example of Jesus was tithing. Conclude that tithing is a model for Christian giving, and that it really is more like a starting point.

(Avoid becoming bogged down in a discussion of tithing at this point. Members may want to take issue; but the point of this part of the lesson is not to debate tithing, but instead to hold up the larger goal of submission.)

Apply

Have a member read either **1 Corinthians 10:31** or **Colossians 3:17**, and ask if members believe their own giving glorifies God—no matter what they think about tithing.

Hold up the envelope saying, “The best I can do.” Suggest that when a Christian is truly surrendered, including his money, these words would tell the truth about his giving.

Close the Lesson

Ask if anyone has ever been on a mission trip. Acknowledge those who have. Ask what made them want to go. Ask if they gave anything in order to go. Suggest that they gave time, effort, talents, abilities, other resources, work, and simply gave themselves. They probably also gave a good bit of money. When others financed them, others gave their money. The bottom line is that for people to go, people have to give.

Say that the bottom line for Christian giving is that believers need to develop the giving mentality. They have to grow in the Lord to the point that they think of how much they can give rather than how little they can get by with.

Lead in prayer

As you close the class session in prayer, make your expressions personal, as you ask God to lead you and the class together to grow spiritually and to dream of how much you can do to grow the church and spread the gospel.