

GIVE TIME

Kingdom-Minded
Stewardship

THE
SG
LIFE

GIVE TIME

**Kingdom-Minded
Stewardship**

By Diamond Tam

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When we examine the Word of God as it pertains to how a Christ follower ought to live, we see that it can be summarized into three broad words: abide, connect, and share. In our series, the 5G Life, abide represents God Time, connect represents Gather and Group Times, and share comprises Give and Go Times.

The Bible has a lot to say about our giving. Rather than it being thought of as a peripheral issue, which it often is, it is an essential and important part of the life of a Christian. In fact, our giving is perhaps arguably the most accurate, telling, and revealing expression of our understanding of God's love and grace to and for us. Our giving is a direct reflection of the depth of our gratitude to God.

While giving is often thought of, and discussed, as purely financial and material, the giving of our time in service to the Lord, as well as our unique personal skills and spiritual giftings for the Kingdom, also fall under the umbrella of Give Time.

Although we cannot address this topic in its entirety in this brief booklet, we will approach giving in the following manner:

1. The theology of giving
2. The purpose of giving
3. The means of giving
4. The eternal perspective of giving

Chapter 2: The Theology of Giving

Psalm 24:1 **The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein...**

Deuteronomy 10:14 **"Behold, to the Lord your God belong Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens, the earth with all that is in it."**

Exodus 19:5 **"...for all the earth is mine..."**

Job 41:11 **"Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole Heaven is mine."**

Psalm 50:10-11 **"¹⁰For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine."**

In order to think biblically about giving, we must first ensure that we have a proper perspective of all that we have in this life. Although we often don't think of it this way, the reality is that the entirety of our life, our possessions, our time, our skills, and our talents all belong to God! In light of this reality, when we think of giving, we ought not to ask, "How much

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of *my* _____ (money/time/talent/gifts/resources) should I give to the Lord?” but rather, “How would the Lord have me best use that which He has entrusted into my stewardship, for His glory?”

Our thinking about what we own, therefore, should shift more to a managerial mindset rather than an ownership mindset. Rather than think of our money and our time and our possessions and our gifts as things we own, we must begin with the correct perspective that we are merely managing these things for as long as God allows us to live. This is the heart behind the word “**stewardship**”. The Britannica includes as the definition of a steward, someone who protects or is responsible for money, property, etc. and a person whose job is to manage the land and property of another person. We are managers of the property, land and belongings of another - the true and living Creator and sovereign God of the universe! Furthermore, a responsible steward or manager has first and foremost the desires of the master in mind and is tasked with fulfilling the agenda and wishes of the master, not his or her own. Likewise, as stewards of what God has entrusted to us, our aim ought to be to use what we have to seek the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than our own. Thus, Christian giving is the process by which we return to God, as an act of worship, praise and faith, for His purposes and glory, what He has graciously entrusted to us to steward and manage.

In Matthew 6:2, as part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches the crowds, “Thus, when you give to the needy...” Jesus’ words are an imperative, a command. He did not say, *if* you give, but *when*. It is an essential command of every disciple of Jesus that He did not make optional. It was implicit and assumed that all of His followers would be engaged and participate in giving. So giving is for everyone - for you and for me! Giving is and has always been a core and essential part of our worship to God. Giving communicates to God a humble recognition that all we have belongs to Him, it acknowledges that everything we receive comes from His sovereign

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and gracious hand, and it places God's Kingdom rightfully over ourselves and our desires. We give in order to advance the eternal Kingdom which will never perish or fade, rather than our personal illusory dominion which is here today and gone tomorrow.

Psalm 62:9 **Those of low estate are but a breath;
those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances
they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.**

Chapter 3:

The Purpose of Giving

GIVING IS WORSHIP

Put simply, giving is worship. Returning to Matthew 6, verses 3 and 4, “But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” All of our giving is not ultimately to the poor or needy, but it is to the omniscient all seeing Father in Heaven. Later in Matthew 25, Jesus gives us a picture of the Day of Final Judgement when we will stand before the Father who will say to some, “³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” (Matthew 25:35–36). And when those who were generous in this way respond in bewilderment as to how they could possibly have fed, welcomed, clothed, or ministered to the King, they receive the answer, “...Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (v.40). What a wonderful and yet sobering thought that our giving blesses the Father Himself! Your giving is worship. Consider also James 1:27, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” When we give of our time, and our resources to the least, to the needy, God the Father sees that offering as pure and undefiled worship, a pleasing and fragrant

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aroma to Him. As Hebrews 13:16 says, “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

GIVING IS COMMANDED

1 Corinthians 16:1–2 ¹Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ² On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Giving is commanded directly to the New Testament church by the Apostle Paul. The first day of the week represented the day when the church would gather and the setting aside of giving, according to each person's prosperity and means, was considered a part of their time of worship. The corporate expression of giving is the church saying with one unified voice, “God we give to you everything because you are first and most important to us, and of all that we have, we give you our first.” Giving was considered an inseparable part of worship.

In the Old Testament, specific laws were given as to the amount of giving required of the Israelites (see Leviticus 27, Numbers 18, Deuteronomy 12, 14, 26). However, nowhere in the New Testament is there a command to adhere to a legalistic tithing system. Each believer should pray for the Holy Spirit to lead them in wisdom, and only then we are to give generously and cheerfully according to the principles we have discussed. Followers of Jesus have freedom in this area of worship, but according to the Lord's gracious provision, we ought to actively consider how we can be increasingly rich toward God.

GIVING KILLS IDOLATRY

Perhaps one of the greatest idols in our hearts is material possession. Too often the insatiable desire of the natural human heart is for the bigger house, the more robust bank account, the more luxurious car, the fancier clothing, the more extravagant jewelry, etc. Ecclesiastes 5:10 diagnoses the human heart for us, “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.” The one who loves money will never have enough. Jesus warned, “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matthew 6:24). Let us pause and ponder this verse for a moment. Nothing kills our love and service for God more than love of material possessions! What do you love in your life? What does how you are using your resources say about your heart? “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). Anything that we put above the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts as the object of our affection and worship, is an idol. When we do not give, and rather choose to withhold from the Lord, we are effectively saying that we love that thing we are holding on to, more than we love God.

Joyful and worship-filled giving is in direct opposition to idolatry. When we willingly and with a cheerful demeanor give to the Lord, His Kingdom and His work, we are communicating, “Lord, I love you more than the stuff that you have given me.” Giving builds the spiritual habit of not being attached to the things of the world, but to hold them loosely, use our gifts wisely, and to give them away. Giving kills idolatry, reinforces the knowledge that we ought not hold tightly to anything but the promises of God. Giving puts this belief into practice regularly.

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GIVING REVEALS OUR HEARTS

In Luke 7, there is a beautiful illustration of the heart of giving,

Luke 7:36–38 ³⁶One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table. ³⁷And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

In this account of the sinful woman and the Pharisee named Simon, the woman brings a very costly and expensive ointment to wash the feet of Jesus. In the verses that follow, the Pharisee responds in a disdainful manner that this woman would be so rash in “trivially” wasting such an expensive item to wash Jesus’ feet.

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.”

Jesus responds with a parable:

Luke 7:41–47 ⁴¹“A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

⁴³Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” ⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

The reason that the woman gave so lavishly and extravagantly to Jesus, was because she understood the depth and breadth and scope of the forgiveness and grace that she had first received from Him. This understanding led her to express her love in return by giving her most valuable possession to the Lord without hesitation or second thought. She realized that she had been forgiven much, so she loved much. Simon the Pharisee, however, on the other hand, he was an educated man of high social status, and demonstrated with his attitude how very little he understood the grace of God or his own need for it. Our giving is a reflection of our heart. It is in many ways, a tangible indicator of our understanding of the grace of God.

GIVING REWARDS THE GIVER

Luke 6:38 “...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

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Proverbs 11:24–25 ²⁴**One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. ²⁵Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.**

Proverbs 19:17 **Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.**

Malachi 3:10 **“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of Heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”**

1 Timothy 6:18–19 ¹⁸**They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.**

The Bible is full of passages that promise reward and blessing to those who are open handed and who give generously. Although we must believe God for blessing and provision, and He does on occasion provide super-abundant material wealth and possessions, we must not interpret Scripture to mean that if we are generous in giving of our finances that we are promised material wealth in abundance in return. This interpretation is inconsistent with the whole counsel of the Word of God. Although much can be said about this topic, the sin of this type of prosperity teaching is that man is at the centre of the universe, rather than God. The sovereign God of the universe is never to be seen by us as an entity that we can manipulate

or transact with in just a certain formulaic way as to gain or accumulate wealth or comfort or possessions. God is in the place of authority and does not answer to man, and does not exist for us to use as merely a means to achieve our own ends.

Just as the Scriptures are filled with promises of blessing to the one who gives generously, they are equally, if not more, filled with warnings for those who are greedy for personal gain, or pursuing the riches of the world. “Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5). ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs” (1 Timothy 6:8–10).

As disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, our true reward is eternal, in “knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward” (Colossians 3:24). “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will” (Ephesians 1:11). What is this inheritance that these passages speak about? The inheritance that awaits the follower of Christ is the totality of all that God has promised us in salvation! We have an eternal treasure that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept securely in Heaven for us (1 Peter 1:4), sealed and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13–14). The best of the best financial institutions in the world can’t offer that! We will be in the physical presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Loved one, this

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reward is an unfathomably, infinitely, unimaginably, immeasurably, greater blessing that any amount of earthly material blessing you can conjure up in your most exaggerated and bloated moment of imagination! Although the sovereign God of the universe who owns everything may, in His wisdom, choose to bless you with great material wealth and possession in this life, this must never be our aim and motive when we give.

Chapter 4: The Means of Giving

WHAT DO WE GIVE?

What we give as an offering to the Lord matters. In Genesis 4, two brothers Cain and Abel both bring offerings to the Lord, “In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard” (Genesis 4:3–4). In Leviticus 22, God says to Moses, “You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you.” (Leviticus 22:20) In the beginning of the book of Malachi, the LORD, speaking to His beloved Israel, expresses anger and disgust at the way that they have profaned His name by offering polluted food and blemished animals, “Cursed by the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations” (Malachi 1:14). In fact, the LORD is so displeased that He even expresses that it would be better for the people to not bring any offering at all! “Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand” (Malachi 1:10).

Whilst in our modern day context, our giving may not take the form of polluted food and blemished animals for sacrifice, the principle that we ought to draw from Scripture is that what we bring in our giving to the

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Lord matters! Consider Proverbs 3:9–10, “⁹ Honour the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.” While the New Testament does not contain a specific and direct command about giving of our firstfruits, we see from examples throughout Scripture that doing so illustrates the grateful heart that understands the stunning and unspeakable gift of God the Father giving us His one and only begotten Son as a sacrifice to save and redeem us. “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). In our cultural context, giving of our firstfruits may be represented in many ways, such as, giving of the earnings of our first day of work, giving the first hours of our day to the Lord, or giving the best of our gifts and talents to the building up of the church, whether physically or otherwise.

HOW DO WE GIVE?

We must understand clearly that our giving, either in quantity or quality, does not earn us any special favour or merit with God. Our motivation to give must be undergirded by the understanding that we give generously to the Lord because of what He has already given to us. And while the profound generosity of God through Jesus Christ ought to motivate us to give generously ourselves, as outlined above, we are likewise commanded in Scripture to give according to our means. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul writes “¹² For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness” (2 Corinthians 8: 12–14).

Some may read this and breathe a sigh of relief and think privately that because of a lack of financial wealth, they are pardoned from giving. Far be

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it to think that way! The idea of giving as a follower and disciple of Christ extends beyond the realm of material wealth. We all have the gift of time and talents that we must also steward properly for the Kingdom!

Whether one is rich or poor, the Scriptures teach us that each person has been given gifts to be used in the body of Christ. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..." (Romans 12:4–6a).

1 Corinthians 12:14–20 ¹⁴**For the body does not consist of one member but of many.** ¹⁵ **If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.** ¹⁶ **And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.** ¹⁷ **If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?** ¹⁸ **But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.** ¹⁹ **If all were a single member, where would the body be?** ²⁰ **As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.**

While some may be gifted with the means to generously give financially, we all have the stewardship of time, unique gifts, and talents that we will also be held to account for. What are you giving your time to? What are you giving your talents and gifts to? Are you using your time and your giftings to further your own comforts or to accumulate possessions for yourself? Or are you stewarding these things to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ and the eternal Kingdom? As previously discussed, how we choose to spend

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not only our wealth, but our time and our giftings also is a reflection of our hearts, and where our treasure is.

At Hope Bible Church, this may take on many forms. In a church of this size, there are so many areas where we can give! We can use our spiritual gifts to serve the church in various ministries, such as leading groups, serving in The Market, volunteering in Hope Kids, being a cheerful encourager on

**What are
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to? What
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gifts to?**

the parking team, or joining an intercessory prayer team. We can give of our finances to the church to support its mission, enable ministries in their work, send missionaries, or equip teams for both local and global initiatives and projects. Or perhaps the Lord has blessed you with specific expertise, knowledge, and ability that can be used in the Deacon care ministries to build up the body of believers and encourage or support those in need. For those who are reading this who are unsure what your gifts and talents

are, oftentimes, the mere act and process of giving your time in service is the avenue by which you discover what your area of gifting is, by both internal calling and external confirmation from other believers in the body. There is no shortage of opportunity and, ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24). "You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:11).

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Paul also writes, ⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

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Under the umbrella of how we are to give to the Lord, we must also address the heart posture of giving. We are to give not only generously, but also cheerfully and joyfully. Giving ought not to be a cumbersome task filled with dread and apprehension, but with praise, thanksgiving, and freedom. In Genesis 4, we are not told precisely why the Lord rejected the offering of Cain, but we do hear the Lord addressing Cain in Genesis 4:7a, “If you do well, will you not be accepted?” and then in 1 John 3:12, “We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous.” The LORD is clear in His Word that, “For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7b). Cain’s heart posture in bringing his offering to the LORD rendered his offering unacceptable. The LORD is not merely concerned with what we give, but *how* we give.

The Bible also tells us that our giving ought to be done quietly, without drawing attention to ourselves. As referenced previously in Matthew 6, “³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:3-4). So whether we are giving of our finances, or our time, or our talents, we ought to do so with humility, always bringing and directing glory to our Father, and never to ourselves.

WHERE DO WE GIVE?

At times the question arises of how a follower of Christ ought to decide whether to give to the local church, versus giving to other Kingdom minded causes, such as a parachurch Christian ministry. The Bible does not contain explicit instructions on how we are to divide our resources, but merely that giving itself is commanded. However, in keeping with 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, a logical line of reasoning can be argued that priority in our giving

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should be placed on the needs of the body to which a person chooses to be connected to and participate in - in other words, the church! In an analogous and similar manner on our physical bodies, each part first is obligated to participate in the well being of the body to which it belongs before it can be effective in helping others. Although this is not a perfect illustration, and certainly has exceptions, it may be helpful to aid our thinking in the area of how we are to see our giving. It is by the giving of individual members, to the body to which each member belongs, that gives rise to the mutual building up and encouragement by which the local church is blessed. As is the case where there is lack of explicit instruction in the New Testament regarding the exact amount of giving required, in the same way, disciples of Jesus ought to pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them in wisdom as to how they are to best steward their resources, while abiding by the principles outlined above.

Chapter 5: The Eternity of Giving

Matthew 10:42 **“And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”**

Hebrews 6:10 **For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.**

Jesus' words to His disciples in Matthew 10:42 remind us that every act of giving, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is seen in Heaven and will be rewarded. What a great comfort and encouragement this is to us as believers! We have already seen that the Father rewards giving that is done in secret, and now we are assured by the Lord Jesus that even a cup of cold water given to a child will be rewarded. In the accounts kept in Heaven, our investments will yield for us an eternal reward of return. Likewise, the giving of our time and gifts to the work of the Kingdom and in service to the saints of God will not be overlooked and will be remembered and divinely rewarded in eternity.

Let us therefore heed the words of Christ, ¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal”

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(Matthew 6:19–20). The reality of earthly investments and temporal riches is that they are fleeting and volatile. Markets and economies rise and fall. As the Psalmist says, “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).

The wise disciple of Jesus Christ understands that we are merely stewards of our material possessions, our time, and our giftings and that with this serious responsibility to serve the Master’s Kingdom, we ought to be generous unto the Lord and look “to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in Heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

I pray that this overview of Give Time has served to renew and refresh your attitude and posture, as well as address some practical issues regarding this critical and important aspect of the Christian life. Although not exhaustive in scope, I pray that you have been convicted that giving is an integral part of our worship, that it is in fact a command, and that it not only reveals our hearts, but the posture of our hearts matters a great deal to the Lord.

Romans 8:32 **He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**

I pray that as you ponder and reflect on the incredible and astounding gift of the Son for you and for me, that your response to God is one of adoration and worship with cheerful generosity back to the One who gave us all things, and owns all things.

