

CHRISTIAN GIVING IN DIFFICULT TIMES 1 KINGS 17:8-15

We are living in economically challenging times. How do we respond to those times? How do we practice Biblical giving when we are struggling to make ends meet? The story of a widow in the city of Zarephath helps us understand how we can cope with financial crisis and even give to the Lord's work in difficult times. In order to do that we must:

I. UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF MONEY IN LIFE.

A. Money is Important.

1. We use it to provide for our families.
* Necessities and pleasures. Matt. 7:11. *
2. We use it to help others. Eph. 4:28.

B. Money Has Great Potential.

1. Great potential for evil.
 - a. Greed can destroy families and lives. 1 Tim. 6:9,10.
 - b. Riches can cultivate pride and destroy faith. 1 Tim. 6:17.
2. Great potential for good. 1 Tim. 6:18.

C. Money Has Limitations. (The phrase "Almighty Dollar")

1. Money cannot produce true happiness and contentment.
2. Money cannot produce a lasting feeling of self-worth.
3. Money cannot produce true security. 1 Tim. 6:17.

II. RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF SMALL GIFTS.

A. Biblical Examples of Giving Out of Poverty.

1. The widow of Zarephath. 1 Kings 17:8-15.
2. The widow who gave the mite. Luke 21:1-4.
3. The churches of Macedonia. 2 Cor 8:1-5.

B. Practical Plan for Giving Out of Poverty.

1. Don't assume that you can't give and simply stop.
2. If you can't tithe begin at an attainable level and increase until you reach that goal.
3. Give regularly and track your giving.
4. Give up something in order to give. 2 Sam. 24:24.

III. REALIZE OUR DEPENDENCE ON THE LORD.

A. Our Contentment is in the Lord. Phil. 4:13.

1. Remember that God is with you in your struggles.
2. Enjoy the things you have instead of longing for things you don't have. 1 Tim. 6:6-8.
* The most precious things such as family, friends, character, health and peace cannot be purchased.*

B. Our Security is in the Lord.

1. The widow and her son had adequate food through her faith and obedience. 1 Kings 17:16.
2. We can trust the Lord to meet our needs as we trust him and respond in obedience. Phil. 4:19.

Through the prophet God was calling the widow to trust him to meet her needs. God could have continued to feed Elijah with the ravens, but he wanted to bless that widow by allowing her to be a part of what he was doing. She responded in faith and obedience. Is he calling you to do the same today?