

Let the Church be the Church: A Generous Community

Acts 2.45

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In our study of the Book of Acts, we have been looking at some of those characteristics or attitudes of the early church that allowed them to impact their world in a profound way. We have seen for the Church to be the Church, it was:

- A Believing Community, Acts 2.37-41
- A Devoted Community, Acts 2.42
- A Community in Awe, Acts 2.43
- A United Community, Acts 2.44

This morning, we want to look at the fifth of those characteristics.

- A Generous Community, Acts 2.45

It might surprise you to find out that the Bible has a great deal to say about money and possessions. In fact, there are over 1,000 references to money in the Bible second only to the topic of love. Almost two-thirds of the parables of Jesus had to do with money. It should be obvious that our use of money says volumes concerning us. It can say that we are greedy or generous, stingy or giving, corrupt or holy.

A. How We Feel About Money.

1. We are not to love it (1 Timothy 6.10).
2. We are not to trust money (1 Timothy 6.17; 3.3; Matthew 6.24).
3. We are not to seek to be rich (1 Timothy 6.9).
4. We are not to regard money as our own. Rather, money belongs to God; we are simply stewards of it (1 Timothy 6.18).

B. How We Get or Earn Money.

1. We are not to steal it (Psalm 37.21; Amos 8.5; Hosea 12.7).
2. We are not to exploit others by taking advantage of desperate people.
3. We are not to defraud others by not paying what we owe them (James 5.4).
4. We are not to gamble for it (an inference from Scripture, Ephesians 4.28).
5. We are to get money by receiving gifts (Acts 2.45).
6. We are to get money by making wise investments (Matthew 25.27).
7. The primary way we get money is by working (Proverbs 28.19; 14.23).

C. How We Spend Money.

1. We are to provide for the needs of our family and those around us (1 Timothy 5.8; 1 John 3.17).
2. We are to pay our debts immediately (Romans 13.8; 2 Kings 4.7).
3. We are to save our money (Proverbs 30.24; 21.20).

D. How We Give Our Money.

1. Giving is investing with God (Luke 6.38; Matthew 6.19-21, 24; 2 Corinthians 9.6-11; Matthew 19.21).
2. **Giving is to be sacrificial** (Mark 12.41-44; Hebrews 13.16; Philippians 4.18-19).
3. Giving is not a matter of what you have (Luke 16.10; 2 Corinthians 8.2, 5, 8).
4. Giving affects spiritual riches (Luke 16.11, 12).
5. Giving amounts are personally determined (Luke 19.1-10; 2 Corinthians 8.9, 11).
6. Giving is to be in response to need (Acts 2.43, 47; 4.32-5:11; Acts 11.27-30).
7. **Giving is to demonstrate love from a thankful heart** (2 Corinthians 8.8, 9, 12; 9.7).
8. Giving is to be planned (1 Corinthians 16.1, 2).
9. **Giving is to be generous** (2 Corinthians 8.2; 9:5, 6, 8-10; Philippians 4.10-19).
10. It is better to give than to receive (Acts 20.35).