

# GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.48, November 26, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."*

## **CHRISTIAN MISSIONS in a Mammon Dominated Culture!**

**REALITY SNAP SHOT:** Black Friday is one of the busiest shopping days in the USA. The term **Black Friday** comes from an old way of recording business accounts. **Losses were recorded in red ink and profits in black ink.** Many businesses hope to start showing a profit, marked in black ink, on the day after Thanksgiving Day. Shopping for Christmas presents is popular on Black Friday. Generally, stores have special offers and lower their prices on some goods, such as toys. Some stores extend their opening hours on **Black Friday.**

**REALITY SNAP SHOT: AT THE SAME TIME—** All over the world there are **MISSIONARIES** suffering from a shortage of faithful servants of God who will 'HOLD THE ROPES' in prayer and who have a priority of **MISSIONS** in their financial giving unto the LORD. **PLUS,** there are missionaries laboring and longing to get to the field— but funds are lacking— and **some** missionaries have had to come home because funds were lacking. **Still others,** as they attempt to labor for the LORD— who is praying for them?

Praying for and **GIVING** unto the LORD for **MISSIONS** in a 'BLACK FRIDAY' **MAMMON DOMINATED CULTURE** can be a challenge— it is so easy for us to be double-minded.

**REALITY SNAP SHOT: RARE** is there an email or a FaceBook post from Christians calling for **INVOLVEMENT** in seeking to win souls to Christ and/or calling for giving

prayer and finances to **MISSIONARIES** around the world. However, in November and December many Christians send out many calls to preserve 'Merry Christmas' and 'Christmas Trees' and 'Manger Scenes' in stores and/or other public sites. **MOREOVER**, for the last several years there has been a growing 'love-affair' between Christians (including pastors) and Ben Stein, a Christ-rejecting Jew! Why? Because Stein has written pieces stating that he is not offended by all the trappings of cultural Christmas— none of which are found in the Bible! **Priorities! O what are our priorities??\_**

**REALITY STAP SHOT:** Sadly many of us are double-minded and only 'tip our hats' to Jesus, His Gospel, and His great **MISSIONARY LABORS**; and **THE PRAYER SERVICES ARE MOSTLY EMPTY OR NON-EXISTENT. MISSIONS AND THE FUNDING OF MISSIONS TOO OFTEN ONLY RECEIVE OUR LEFT OVERS.**

The Black Friday spirit of **MAMMON** and covetousness rages even in the Bible believing churches of America! I don't know about any of you, but I need to hear this:

*"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**" (Matthew 6:24)*

**GIVING TO THE LORD IN A 'MAMMON-FILLED-BLACK-FRIDAY' WORLD!**

*"Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. **They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.** For I can testify that **they gave not only what they could afford, but far more.** And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do." (New Living Paraphrase- 2 Cor. 8:1-5)*

**Romans 12:8** speaks of giving *"with simplicity"*—generously, with liberality, with singleness of mind. In other words our giving should not be connected to any ulterior motive. **GIVING** is not to silence a conscience uneasy because of the way my income was acquired. **Nor am I giving to gain something in return.**

Obviously, **I am not to give for public show**, as did the Pharisees who blew trumpets so people would be alerted to watch them bestow their gifts. **The person who will not donate unless his name is inscribed on the stained-glass window or engraved on the cornerstone doesn't understand Christ's command not to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing (Matt. 6:3).** **Giving unto the LORD permits no alloy of self-seeking in the coin of our gift!**

**GIVING UNTO THE LORD involves giving freely, with delight and with love.** Real giving is not limited to times and seasons or to a whim of the moment. It reaches from a cheerful heart that is **OVERFLOWING WITH GRATITUDE** for all God has given to us! The Holy Spirit guided Paul to tell the Corinthians to give *"not grudgingly, or of necessity"* (2 Cor. 9:7) — *"for God loveth a cheerful (hilarious!) giver."*

Sadly, much so-called giving must be an insult to God because of its smallness in proportion to our capacity to give. {Portions of this article edited from writings by Leslie Flynn}

## **A POSITIVE EXAMPLE OF GIVING UNTO THE LORD**

In the last century, **R.G. LeTourneau** was a designer and manufacturer of heavy earth-moving equipment. His machinery transformed 5,000 acres of marshland into New York's Idlewild (now Kennedy) Airport, tore open the wilderness for the Alaskan Highway, made airstrips for the landing of the first Allied fighter planes on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, and cleared the debris from bombed-out European cities after World War II.

**In the early years of his business, LeTourneau went into partnership with God. By this he did not lower grace to the level of a bargain.** Rather he said, "Because I believe that God wants businessmen as well as preachers to be His servants, I believe that a factory can be dedicated to His service as well as a church." **In 1935 he irrevocably assigned over 90 percent of the company's profits to the LeTourneau Foundation, described as a "not-for-profit corporation whose income and capital can be used only for the cause of Christ".** (Moving Heaven and Earth, Donald Ackland, Iversen-Ford Associates, New York).

**In the first fifteen years**, the foundation gave over \$2.5 million to other organizations engaged in Christian work, and kept over \$2.25 million in its own program of evangelistic ministries. **Countless Christian schools** and organizations in America have been the recipients of his gift of giving. **Scarcely a mission field exists** in all five continents where some devoted worker has not been aided through money from this foundation. Altogether, millions of dollars have been given to further the Lord's work.

**LeTourneau said:** I have never been much of a preacher of tithing. My Life Verse has been Matthew 6:33, *"Give first place to the kingdom of God and what He requires, and He will provide you with all these other things."*

**MY PHILOSOPHY has been— we should serve God because we love, not because we are making a bargain with Him.** Many marriages go on the rocks because it was a bargain rather than love. You do something for me and I'll do something for you. In the same way people say, **IF I DO THIS FOR GOD** will He also do something for me? That's not love, it's a bargain.

**I often say, if you love the LORD you will serve Him and if you are not serving Him it proves you don't love Him and if you don't love Him it proves you don't know him.**

I hope you are now beginning to understand what I meant when I began by saying that I'm not much of a preacher of tithing. **If under the law the people of God gave one-tenth to the LORD, shame on us, living under grace, if we don't do better.** The tithe may be a place to begin if you are not now giving to the LORD, but it's no place to stop. **You see what I mean?**

**If you get a vision of what our salvation cost, see Christ on the cross, the cruel nails in his hands and feet, the mocking crowd and the weight of our sin... paying the penalty for you and for me—** it will put your service and giving on a different plane.

He gave himself willingly to give us salvation from sin. If this grips us, we can't help but love Him. We will say with the song writer— *Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!* Only the grace of God can save us from a superficial declaration of love for God. **True love based on an understanding of God's grace and deep gratitude for the gift of salvation through our LORD Jesus Christ— these will settle the problem of "what should I give God"** because my thinking will be turned around to consider that all I am and have belong to Him and I am a steward for Him while serving him in this life.

**It's easy to sing,** "Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold. Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise." Only God's grace in a life can make it come true. **Man, selfishly inclined, can't do it in his own power— IT TAKES GOD'S POWER!**  
 [The above is from R. G. LeTourneau's autobiography, *Mover of Men and Mountains*]

**UNCONFESSED, DEEP IN THE HEART OBJECTION:** "That's all well and good for LeTourneau— He was rich! I am NOT! IN FACT, I am VERY POOR! None of this is relevant to me. I beg thee, have me excused!"

**EXAMPLE FROM THE POOR:**

"Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. **2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor.** But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that **they gave not only what they could afford, but far more.** And they did it of their own free will. **4** They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. **5** They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do." (New Living Paraphrase- 2 Cor. 8:1-5)

**REALITY SNAP SHOT: MY ATTITUDE ABOUT GIVING IS ROOTED IN MY ATTITUDE TOWARD MONEY!**

Jesus said Luke 16:10, "*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.*"

If a person is faithful to God on financial issues— which is the *least* issue, then they will also be faithful and scriptural with the *greatest* issue— faith in God and passion for His kingdom labors. <sup>11</sup>*If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon,[deceitful riches; or in 'money matters'] who will commit to your trust the true riches?* If we will not be faithful in financial matters, and if we will not allow God to be *first* concerning money issues, how can He trust us with the true riches of His grace? WE CANNOT serve God and mammon! (Luke 16:13) **All stingy giving is rooted in love for mammon... and/or love for what mammon buys!**

**GIVING PRAYER: BECAUSE ONLY GOD CAN DO THE WORK OF GOD—** the congregations in the Book of Acts often gathered for united congregational prayer! (Classic example: Acts 4:23-33) **WHAT ABOUT MY ATTITUDE TOWARD "GIVING TIME AND PRAYER?"**

**REALITY SNAP SHOT:** For most churches, the church-wide prayer meeting is the LEAST ATTENDED meeting of the church. Many no longer have Prayer Meeting. Those who do— it's just a few who show up. **RADICAL CONTRAST:**

**"THEY WILL ALL BE THERE!"**

{**"STOP!** What follows, was sent out just a few weeks ago. In fact, this whole article was sent out a year ago— what goes? Give us something new!" **RESPONSE QUESTION:** "AM I ALREADY ACTING IN LOVING OBEDIENCE TO JESUS ON THE MATTERS DEALT WITH IN THIS NEWSLETTER? IF SO, WONDERFUL!! IF NOT— O HOW DESPERATELY I NEED THE TRUTH OF THIS ENTIRE ARTICLE!"} ... SO,

**"THEY WILL ALL BE THERE!"** I remember the astonishment that Dr. David Gibbs of the Christian Law Association experienced one Wednesday. His background is Baptist. **Few Baptists are faithful to church-wide prayer meetings.** So, a pastor of a Mennonite church had scheduled Dr. Gibbs to speak during a Wednesday night Prayer Service. **The church family DID NOT KNOW that a guest speaker was coming.** The Pastor was driving Dr. Gibbs from the airport to the church building. Dr. Gibbs was trying to prepare himself for what he is about to face, so he asked: "**Pastor, what do you expect tonight** in the way of who might show up for the meeting? Pastor, I know it's Wednesday night... and folks do not know I'm coming... I just want you to be at ease, because I'm happy to come and the size of the crowd does not matter..."

**The pastor simply said, "They will all be there!"** So, Dr. Gibbs translated that 'response' into his Baptist experience and figured that a few would show up for a holy huddle. They arrived. The building was a plain, unattractive block building. **The parking lot was full.**

Dr. Gibbs entered and found bare concrete floors and bare metal folding chairs— **OVER 400 HUNDRED metal folding chairs.**

And they were all filled with the **REGULAR PRAYER MEETING CROWD!** As the pastor had earlier stated, "They will all be there!" **And they were! These were farming people, with crops to plant, or tend or harvest. Their days were always long and their work was never done. HOWEVER, EVERY WEEK on Prayer Meeting Night— THEY WERE ALL THERE!**

**Stunned,** Dr. Gibbs turned to the pastor and asked, "Please explain this to me?" "Well, Bro Gibbs, we are all family and—

1. **We are responsible for one another.**
2. **We are commanded to pray for one another;** and we also realize that;
3. **We need God's wisdom and power** if we are to make a difference in our community in reaching others for Christ—
4. **THEREFORE,** we have just as many for Prayer meeting as we do for other Church-wide services...
5. **At our Prayer Meeting, the main agenda is PRAYER. We actually spend most of the time praying—**
  - (a) **PRAYING for each other and**
  - (b) **PRAYING for those in the world we seek to reach and minister unto!"**

**CHURCH-WIDE PRAYER SERVICE REALITY SNAP SHOT:**

**The issues are not a lack of time, nor how tired we are, or a thousand other excuses— the issues are LOVE for Jesus, VISION of our calling, and EMBRACING our DEPENDANCE UPON GOD!**

**It's a matter of PRIORITY AND FOCUS!**

Grace to one and all! James Bell