

Discipleship



Life Application: Fulfilling our responsibility to use the resources God has blessed us with to assist others and to further the Gospel.

Key verse for meditation: And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.
— Exodus 35:21

For personal study: Luke 8:1-3;
2 Corinthians 8: 1-15

Food for thought: Inventor and industrialist Robert LeTourneau was a man who built a heavy equipment business with God as his partner. In his book, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, LeTourneau tells how this partnership came about.

LeTourneau had been called upon to address the Peoria Chamber of Commerce, and he was nervous. He said, "I knew they thought I was something of a crackpot, with wild ideas about manufacturing with a welding torch, and even wilder ones about being in some kind of partnership with God." However, when he stood to his feet, the Lord gave him strength, and in the course of that address, he stated publicly for the first time the theme that he continued to repeat for the rest of his life: "The preachers can tell us that Christianity works. They are God's salesmen, selling salvation and the Christian way of life. But unless we businessmen support them, and testify that Christianity is the driving power of our business, you'll always have doubters claiming that religion is all talk and no production."

That evening, LeTourneau and his wife Evelyn sat down on the back stairs of their house. He said to her, "We claim to be in partnership with God, but we aren't really. We have a good year, and we give Him a tithe as His share . . . but when you consider what God has done for us, we ought to do better for Him out of gratitude." He went on to propose that they set up a foundation dedicated to God and His works. They would give half of the stock in their company to the foundation, and keep half for themselves. His wife agreed that this plan sounded fine, but . . . "But what?" he asked. His wife responded, "We'll have over half a million in profits this year. If we give half of that to the foundation, what can we do with a quarter of a million dollars? It's just

too much.” LeTourneau agreed, and suggested that they also give half of their own income, “to keep it personal.” God blessed that commitment, and his company continued to grow. Eventually LeTourneau and his wife dedicated 90 percent of the company stock and 90% of their personal income to the foundation, which sponsored Christian missions in South America and Africa.

Known in the industrial world as “God’s Businessman,” LeTourneau had learned the great principle that stewardship is not doing something for God with your money, but doing something for others with His money.

“The only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. Our charities should pinch and hamper us. If we live at the same level of affluence as other people who have our level of income, we are probably giving away too little. – C. S. Lewis



Think about it . . .

1. Do you think God might expect us to give Him more than 10% of our income?
2. What benefits can be experienced through giving?
3. If God is the real “owner” of your money, how will that fact be evidenced by the way you manage it?

Challenge:

Think of one asset for which God will hold you personally responsible. Are you investing it for the Gospel as effectively as you can? How could you multiply it more?

Excerpt from a sermon by Joe Bishop:

Lem was handicapped from birth and never had much income. He received a little check from Social Security and a little from the government. When I became his pastor, I found out what he was doing with his money. For one thing, he was paying tithes—and not just tithes, but double tithes. Then he would come to me and say, “Have you sent the check for Korea yet?” or, “Have you sent my offering for Africa?” An annual youth conference was started in our church in Brooklyn, New York, and Lem would ask, “Have you sent my contribution to the youth conference yet?” How did he do it? I don’t know. Many of us have a hard time giving from our abundance, but Lem had a spirit of giving.

Some children in our church wanted to play an instrument but their family could not afford music lessons. Lem asked, “Could I pay for them?” He didn’t want the family to know who was providing the funds, but when one of those young people stood up in Sunday school and played “Jesus Loves Me,” Lem had the biggest smile you ever saw. Why? Because he had a heart of giving, and the by-product was joy.