

“THAT WHICH COSTS ME NOTHING”

INTRODUCTION

A. **1st Chronicles 21:1-27**

1. David ordered a census of Israel (1-2).
2. The thing was sinful as both Joab (3, 6) and David himself (10) knew.
3. Why it was sinful we do not know for certain.
 - a. God had ordered a census previously (Numbers 1:2). Perhaps God reserved for Himself the authority to order such.
 - b. Perhaps David’s motive was impure.
 - i. Maybe he wanted to levy a tax.
 - ii. Maybe he wanted to expand his army.
 - iii. Maybe it was simple pride in comparing the number of his subjects to those of other kingdoms.
4. Regardless of why it was sinful, it was a sin that met with terrible consequences, including seventy thousand dead (9-15).
5. David accepted responsibility for his error (16-17), and was commanded by God to erect an altar to the Lord in the place where the angel had stilled his sword, the threshing floor of Ornan (18, 15).
6. King David complied with the command (19) by first asking Ornan to sell him his threshing floor (22).
7. Ornan generously offered to give David the place, along with oxen and wheat for sacrifice, as well as wooden farming implements for fire (23).
8. As generous as Ornan’s offer was, David refused to accept it, insisting that he pay the full price because he absolutely would not offer to the Lord “*that which costs me nothing*” (24).

B. **Malachi 1:6-14**

The very nature of sacrifice demands that the thing offered be of some value to the giver.

I. FINANCIAL GIVING

A. **2nd Corinthians 8:12**

Our giving is not required according to a fixed amount, but according to our desire and ability.

B. **Mark 12:41-44**

The contribution of the poor widow is commendable because it was generous in proportion to her ability. The outstanding fact in this case is not that she gave little, but that she gave **all**.

C. **2nd Corinthians 9:6-7**

God wants us to give cheerfully and **bountifully**, not **sparingly**, that is: with generosity, not stinginess.

D. **Application**

1. We know that God demands bountiful giving in proportion to our ability, but how do we apply these principles? Since no set amount is specified in the New Testament, I can only offer suggestions. Here are guidelines offered according to my judgment:

2. **Deuteronomy 14:22-23**

We know that the Law of Moses has been done away with (**Galatians 3:24-25**) but under that Law, tithing was required, which meant giving ten percent. Although this figure cannot be bound upon any Christian today, perhaps it is a fair amount to suggest as a starting point.

3. **Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-6**

Notice, further, that tithing wasn't just a requirement of the Old Law. As the Hebrew writer explained, Abraham lived and died well before the Law of Moses was established, but he gave a tenth to Melchizedek the priest.

4. **Genesis 28:18-22**

Abraham's grandson Jacob wasn't under the Law of Moses either, but he volunteered a tenth of his prosperity to God, as well.

5. If we choose to apply the ten percent rule to our giving, how will it look?

| Hourly Wage | Hours Worked | Weekly Income | Offering |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Minimum Wage \$5. ¹⁵ | Part Time 20 Hours | \$103 | \$10. ³⁰ |
| | Full Time 40 Hours | \$206 | \$20. ⁶⁰ |
| \$15 | Full Time 40 Hours | \$600 | \$60 |
| | Overtime 60 hours | \$900 | \$90 |
| \$25 | Full Time 40 Hours | \$1,000 | \$100 |
| | Overtime 60 hours | \$1,500 | \$150 |
| \$35 | Full Time 40 Hours | \$1,400 | \$140 |
| | Overtime 60 hours | \$2,100 | \$210 |

6. Compare these suggested figures to how much you spent this week on luxuries:
- a. Did you go to the movies? At \$9.⁵⁰ per ticket, that's \$19 for two before popcorn, soda, and babysitting.
 - b. Did you buy a new CD? That's anywhere from \$9.⁹⁹ to \$16.⁹⁹ each, assuming it wasn't a special edition. Of course, maybe you bought two or three CD's.

- c. Perhaps you download your music from Napster instead. That's 99 cents each, multiplied by five, ten, or twenty downloads maybe?
- d. Maybe you bought a new game for your Nintendo Wii, Playstation 3, or X-Box 360. That would easily set you back \$50-\$60.
- e. Your cable bill might be \$40 per month. Divided by four weeks in an average month, that's \$10 each week.
- f. How many times have you dined out this week when you could have eaten in? A meal for two consisting of appetizers, entrées, desserts, and drinks can easily amount to \$50 at Chili's, Olive Garden, or Applebee's.

II. ATTIRE

A. A young lady once approached me wanting to convince her boyfriend to dress more appropriately for worship. She asked, "Where's the verse that says you have to dress up for church?" Although I appreciated her motive, I had to tell her there is no such verse. I don't know of a single "*Thou shalt*" style command associated with dressing for church.

B. **Psalm 89:7**

The person who dresses appropriately for worship doesn't do so because he's found a direct command for it in the scriptures, but because his disposition toward God is one of reverence.

C. **Examples**

1. **Genesis 41:14**

Before presenting himself before the king of Egypt, Joseph shaved and changed his clothing. Beards certainly aren't forbidden (**Psalm 133:2**; **1st Samuel 21:13**; **Isaiah 50:6**), but a neat appearance shows respect.

2. **2nd Samuel 12:20**

When David went to worship he changed his clothes first. Why?
Because respect demands that one's everyday garments are just not good enough when we present ourselves before God to worship Him.

3. John 21:1-7

Most swimmers remove clothing to go into the water, but notice that Peter put on his outer garment before plunging into the sea. Why?
He was on his way to meet Jesus the Lord.

D. Application

It may well be that the particular jeans and t-shirt worn on Saturday cost more than the slacks, shirt, and tie worn on Sunday, but the value emphasized isn't just monetary. The effort matters, too. No matter how much you paid for them, pulling on some Levi's and throwing on a t-shirt costs very little in terms of effort and forethought. Any shirt you pull out of the closet will match blue jeans. However, spending time matching a dress shirt to slacks, ironing both, and tying a necktie require effort and consideration.

III. TIME

A. Ephesians 5:15-16

Time must be redeemed, rescued, saved from loss.

B. 2nd Corinthians 6:2

Time should not be wasted, but spent on being saved.

C. 1st Peter 4:1-3; Romans 13:11-14

Time should not be wasted on sin, but spent on the Lord's will.

D. Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25

Time should not be wasted on sin or in laziness, but spent on mutual encouragement.

E. Hebrews 5:12-14; 2nd Timothy 4:2-5

Time should not be wasted in ignorance, but spent gaining knowledge.

F. James 4:14

Time is running out! How will you spend what you have?

IV. REPENTANCE

A. **Galatians 5:16-24**

“The works of the flesh are evident” (19) and knowing “that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (21), “those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh” (24).

B. **1st Corinthians 6:9-11**

With this knowledge, the brethren in Corinth changed.

C. **Application**

1. **1st Corinthians 15:33; 2nd Corinthians 6:14-17**

Repentance from worldliness will sometimes cost friendships with worldly people.

2. **Matthew 19:8-9; Ezra 10:1-3, 10-12, 44; Luke 18:29-30**

Repentance from sexual immorality will sometimes cost family.

3. **Acts 19:18-20**

Repentance from many sins will cost whatever one may have invested in that practice. In the case of these Ephesian converts, it was fifty thousand silver pieces worth of books.

a. For the thief, the cost may be ridding himself of all his ill-gotten gain.

b. For the drinker, the cost may be pouring out all the bottles of booze in the fridge or emptying the wine cellar.

c. For the drug user, it may be the cost of rehab.

d. For the smoker, it may be the patch or hypnotism or whatever it takes to quit.

CONCLUSION

A. **John 3:16; 2nd Corinthians 8:9**

The gospel cost the Lord dearly. God gave up His Son and the Son gave up the riches of heaven to live among men and die among thieves.

B. What does the gospel cost you?