

How Do You Contribute?

Exodus 35 and 40

May 9, 2010

I. Are You Willing to Contribute? Exodus 35:4-9

Each His Share A doctor in a small village was planning to retire. The people wished to do something in honor of his services. They proposed that on a given day each person would bring a pitcher of wine and pour it into a barrel on the village square and present it to him as an expression of their gratitude. The day arrived, and all day long the people came with their pitchers. Then they presented the gift to the doctor. At evening time the doctor was left alone with his memory of love. He drew off a bit of wine and sat comfortably by the fire to enjoy it. The first sip was a shock. It was water! He called the mayor and the people together. After a hurried consultation, the truth was revealed. Each one had reasoned, "My little pitcher of wine won't be missed; I have so little for myself. The others will take care of it." It is a tragic story. It may never have happened. Yet it is happening every week in the church. Don't expect someone else to carry your share. Remember, God said, "The tithe is the Lord's." —*Copied*

How to Give Less Years ago a young man knelt with his preacher and prayed as he committed himself to give a tenth of what he earned to the Lord. His first week's pay was \$10.00, and the tenth was \$1.00. As he grew older he became more prosperous, and his tenth was \$7.50 a week, then \$10.00. He moved to another city and soon his tenth was \$100.00. Then it grew to \$200.00 per week, then to \$500.00 per week. He sent for the preacher. The preacher arrived at the man's beautiful home. They had a good time talking over old times. Finally, the man came to the point. "You remember the promise of the tenth that I made years ago?" Then he said, "How can I be released?" The preacher asked why he wanted a release. The man told him that when he made the promise he only had to give a dollar, but now he had to give \$500.00 per week, and he couldn't afford to go around giving money away on that scale. The old preacher looked at his friend and said, "I'm afraid we cannot get a release from that promise, but we can kneel here and ask God to shrink your income so you can afford to give a dollar again." Would you be willing for God to shrink your income so that your present giving would be a tenth?

Sacrifice Visiting in Korea, a lawyer and a merchant, both wealthy church members, were being shown around by a missionary. Seeing a boy pulling a plow while an old man guided it, the lawyer, amused, took a picture. "I suppose they are very poor," he said. The missionary replied, "Yes, that is the family of Chi Num. When the church was being built, they were eager to give something. As they had no money, they sold their only ox and gave the money to the church. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves." Both men were quiet. Finally the merchant said, "That must have been a real sacrifice." "They did not call it a sacrifice," said the missionary. "They felt it was fortunate they had the ox to sell."

RADICAL GIVING At a church meeting a very wealthy man rose to tell the rest of those present about his Christian faith. "I'm a millionaire," he said, "and I attribute it all to the rich blessings of God in my life. I remember that turning point in my faith. I had just earned my first dollar and I went to a church meeting that night. The speaker was a missionary who told about his work. I knew that I only had a dollar bill and had to either give it all to God's work or nothing at all. So at that moment I decided to give my whole dollar to God. I believe that God blessed that decision, and that is why I am a rich man today." He finished and there was an awed silence at his testimony as he moved toward his seat. As he sat down a little old lady sitting in the same pew leaned over and said to him: "I dare you to do it again."

II. Do You Have Skills to Use? Exodus 35:30-36:1

Mop Bucket Attitude I got my M.B.A. long before my G.E.D. I even have a photograph of me in my M.B.A. graduation outfit—a snazzy kneelength work apron. I guarantee you that I'm the only founder among America's big companies whose picture in the corporate annual report shows him wielding a mop and a plastic bucket. That wasn't a gag; it was a case of leading by example. At Wendy's, M.B.A. does not mean Master of Business Administration. It means Mop Bucket Attitude. It's how we define satisfying the customer through cleanliness, quality food, friendly service, and atmosphere. — Dave Thomas, founder of Wendy's hamburgers, *Well Done* (Harper Collins, 1994), p. 159.

Service The objectives of our firm Service Master are not just carved in stone on the lobby wall. You can see them working every day in the lives of our people. As this process of doing and becoming has been subjected to the litmus test of the marketplace, I have learned (1) to value each person as an individual with unique skills and talents; (2) to recognize the benefit and reality of diversity; (3) to harness the power of a common purpose; (4) to celebrate work, productivity, and profit; (5) to encourage empowerment, ownership, and accountability (6) to recognize that learning is a lifelong experience; (7) to demand of leadership, service by example; and (8) to accept and build on the abilities of ordinary people and expect extraordinary performance. —C. William Pollard, *The Soul Of The Firm*, Zondervan, 1996, p. 22.

III. Is the Lord Calling You to Serve? Exodus 40:12-15

Call to Leadership

What Type of Servant Are You? There are three types of Christians who respond to the call of service: 1. Rowboat Christians—have to be pushed. 2. Sailboat Christians—always go with wind. 3. Steamboat Christians—make up their minds where they ought to go and go there regardless of wind and weather.

Why Choose Me? A Sunday School teacher was teaching a group of teenage boys one Sunday about Christ's disciples; about their abilities, their attributes, and why Jesus might have chosen them. Toward the end of the lesson a teen-aged boy who was particularly enthralled about the whole concept of calling, chosen by God, said, "Teacher, why did Jesus choose Judas?" To which the Sunday school teacher replied, "Son, I don't know. But I have a harder question. Why did Jesus choose me?"

Posthaste The term *posthaste* goes back to the time of Henry VIII. Postmasters were given relays of horses to carry messages for the king to important cities in England. Because some couriers were irresponsible and wasted time in taverns and inns on the way, a drastic law was put into effect demanding that every dispatch carrier should "ride for his life." The king's edict meant that anyone caught delaying his messages would be publicly hanged. Often there was drawn upon important letters the figure of a man suspended from a gallows. Beneath was this ominous warning: "Haste, post, haste! Haste for thy life!" A number of men did suffer death because of their inefficiency, but in the 19th century the practice was discontinued. However, the old expression still remains as a reminder that the utmost speed and urgency is required when the king's business is involved!