

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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Detroit, Michigan 48208
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“True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia”¹

Sharing Your Possessions

Goal: To learn what true community is and to practice biblical-based Koinonia.

Objective: To experience koinōnia or fellowship by sharing possessions with believers who share a common life in Jesus Christ and also sharing possessions to support needs for unbelievers.

Scripture: *“Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Hebrews 13:66)*

Overview

God provides believers with material resources and opportunities to share with others. The Word of God provides the foundation for us to be obedient to His command for sharing. God has been gracious to us and he wants us to give willingly to the needs of others. When we offer open handed help to the community, God blesses us for our kindness. We find in Acts 4:32-35 that when all the believers were on one accord they sold all that they owned and laid it at the feet disciples’ feet. As a consequence, no one was in want. This is a perfect example of sharing our possessions.

This month’s lesson emphasizes the practice of biblical-based Koinonia by sharing our possessions with fellow believers and unbelievers. The idea of sharing our possessions is often interpreted as an occasional practice among fellow believers who have a common life in Christ. However the Word of God teaches that God expects believers to share possessions with others. When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.”
–Romans 12:13 NLT

It is easy to develop a fondness for people who have a generous nature and are willing to give. Believers are expected to give a portion to others who are in need. (1 John 3:17) Upon understanding that our possessions are God’s blessings, this enables us to share with them out of joyful hearts. As the gentiles of the early church received the gospel, they became naturally inclined to share their material possessions with those in need of material substances. “This practical demonstration of care and concern for other members of the body of Christ is a very important expression of New Testament fellowship or koinōnia.”²

¹ Bridges, Jerry. True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia. Colorado Springs, CO, NavPress (2012) Print.

² Ibid, 106

Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. [1 Timothy 6:18- 19, NKJV]

SHARING: AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE

Too often, it seems, the act of giving to those in need is presented as an optional matter. Heartrending needs of homeless children and starvation in foreign lands are presented to appeal to our sense of compassion for benevolence. While such needs should stir up concern within us, this should not be our primary motivation for giving. Rather, the primary motive should be our love and obedience to God.³ What we do for Christ will last. It is what we do for Christ that is beneficial, “You Can’t Beat God Giving”. Should we always receive and never give?

*“As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.”
-2 Corinthians 9:13 NLT*

Our attitude about giving to others is very important to God. “As we consider the New Testament Scripture, two truths readily stand out. First, we are commanded to share with those in need and second, it is a *joy* to share our possessions with others.”⁴

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. [1 Peter 4:10]

The following is an important point to remember. It is because we belong to one another and are members of the same body that we are to make each other’s needs our own. If you belong to me, your needs become my needs and my needs become your needs.”⁵

A JOYOUS EXPERIENCE

“For God loves a cheerful giver.” This passage of scripture is often quoted during times of collection of tithes and offerings. This can mislead us into thinking we have personal ownership over our remaining possessions and can minimize what we are expected to share with others. God expects our giving to others in need to be a *joyous experience*. Any personal sense of possession does not acknowledge God as the source for our provisions and His right to expect us to be joyful in sharing our possessions.

We enjoy shopping for nice gifts and giving them to people who delight in the joy of this expression of endearment. As we acknowledge the *joy* of our relationship with God, we too experience a *joy* in knowing that what we do is pleasing to Him.

³ Ibid, 107.

⁴ Ibid, 107.

⁵ Ibid, 109.

GOD IS GLORIFIED

Many people do not acknowledge that their possessions are blessings from God, but instead see themselves acquiring a family legacy as earnings for self-possession. This omission of God's blessings contributes to a spirit of selfishness and self-righteousness. This attitude also undermines God's role as the provider for us which is not pleasing to God. God is the perpetual source for everyone's ability to recycle His provisional gifts through us to experience a way to glorify Him in appreciation for being His vessel. Not only that, this God-given capability to give enables the receiver in need to humbly receive the blessings from God. For those of us who are givers, we should never fail to let them know that God is the ultimate source of the blessing. The glory belongs to Him for His love, compassion, and provision. Every conscious deed and thought in obedience to God is a way to glorify Him and experience growth in relationship with Him. What a privilege it is to please Him through the fellowship of sharing with those in need.

Discussion Question #1:

Do you know how to share your God-given possessions with members of the body of Christ and your obligation to provide support for unbelievers?

Discussion Question 2:

What does this type of giving have to do with fellowship and community, during times when everyone is experiencing financial challenges?

Discussion Question #3:

Why does God want us to share with unbelievers? Can you think of opportunities that will allow you to share with unbelievers?

Points to Ponder:

In this lesson, the question was raised, "What biblical responsibility does a believer have to respond to the material needs of other people or to support organizations that specialize in meeting those kinds of needs?"⁶

Helpful Scripture Passages:

1 John 3:17, 2 Corinthians 9:13, 1 Timothy 6:18, Romans 15:26-27

Closing Prayer:

Lord we thank you for your love and providential care for each of us. We desire to share our possessions to edify the body of Christ. We understand in order to be effective in our ministry we must depend on the Holy Spirit to help us focus and to obey Your Word as commanded with our possessions. We thank you for being with us as we seek to grow in relationship with You. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray! Amen!

⁶ Ibid, 102

Month	Year	Monthly Biblical Lessons
January	2015	Communion with God
February	2015	Fellowship and Community
March	2015	Spiritual Fellowship
April	2015	Partnership in the Gospel
May	2015	Spiritual Gifts Within the Community