

# FAITH PROMISE GIVING

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The grace of giving is one of the most amazing blessings of the Christian life. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, God reveals that He intends His redeemed people—those bought by the blood of Christ—to be the channel for His gospel to be extended to all the nations of the earth.

How, then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”

- Romans 10:14-15

It is both the privilege and the duty of the Christian to send missionaries by way of generous financial gifts. In ways beyond all human understanding of logic or of math, God takes our gifts, multiplies them, uses them, and repays the giver with blessing. As a spirit of selfless generosity is a mark of a healthy Christian, so the practice of collective benevolence is indicative of a vital church. The adage, “Show me your wallet and I’ll show you your heart,” is as applicable to the church as a whole as it is to the individual.

Funds designated for world missions are called by a variety of terms, the most commonly-used being *Faith Promise*. However, the nomenclature used is far less important than the fact that these gifts flow from the hearts of God’s people through the local congregations and denomination to the various ministries around the globe.

## **WHAT IS FAITH PROMISE GIVING?**

- 1) A method of giving which grows out of first giving ourselves to the Lord and then to His servants. “They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will” (2 Corinthians 8:5).
- 2) A method which encourages voluntary, purposeful giving. “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- 3) A method which encourages generous, sacrificial giving. “We want you to know about the grace of God that has been given to the Macedonian churches. Out of their most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability” (2 Corinthians 8:1-3). “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously” (2 Corinthians 9:6).
- 4) A method in which we trust God to provide our material needs and to give us spiritual blessings. “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus”(Philippians 4:19).

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**How can Faith Promise giving be implemented in a church which presently gives a percentage of its general budget to missions?**

### **Plan for a transition**

- Consider bringing someone in to explain Faith Promise and answer concerns
- Begin with the pastor/missions leader
- Make a list of key people
- Informally meet with key decision makers (missions leaders, finance/administrative leaders, influential members)
- Meet with elders and deacons

### **Important ingredients in bringing change**

1. Information
2. Discussion
3. Making a decision
4. Creating a plan for how to implement over a period of time

## A FAITH PROMISE CHALLENGE

If we ignore the privilege and joy of giving, who is hurt?

Remember this: *“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously”* (2 Corinthians 9:6).

During the Roaring Twenties a man named Arthur Berry became quite notorious as a jewel thief—and a good one. He only stole from the rich and famous, and it became a mark of prestige to have been hit by Mr. Berry. Eventually he was apprehended, shot three times in a gun battle with police, and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

After his release, reporters were clamoring to interview him. One insightful young man inquired, “Mr. Berry, you robbed an awful lot of wealthy people in your life as a jewel thief. From whom did you steal the most?”

Without a moment’s hesitation Berry replied, “The man from whom I stole the *most* was Arthur Berry.”

When *we* fall down in our stewardship, some say we are stealing from God. God, however, doesn’t need our money. Others indicate that Christian work will be handicapped, but God cannot and does not fail. When we fail in our giving, we rob *ourselves* of the privilege, the joy and the blessing that come to those who *“excel in the grace of giving”* (2 Corinthians 8:7).

## **FAITH PROMISE GIVING FOR YOUR CONGREGATION**

### **Where does the money come from?**

Here are three possible sources to consider for Faith Promise:

#### **1) Change your spending priorities**

Look at your expenditures and ask, “What am I willing to give up, or sacrifice, so that the Good News can be proclaimed and churches planted?” This reordering of priorities is likely to pinch, but it is fully biblical. The Macedonian Christians gave out of their poverty and beyond their ability.

#### **2) Be creative**

You might make an investment and dedicate all the proceeds to Faith Promise. You might take on a second job for a few hours, a week or month. You might use carpool income. You might make and sell crafts. The point is that if giving for missions becomes a priority, you can think creatively of ways to have more money available for the purpose.

#### **3) Through serendipity income**

Many of us receive income we didn't really expect throughout the year. It may come in the form of gifts, overtime, an investment that pays off beyond expectations, an inheritance or a tax refund. This extra income could be committed, all or in part, to missions. Instead of using it to buy something for ourselves, we commit to giving it so that we may make Christ known.

### **How Do I Do It?**

- Pray about your desire to give more to the support of missions.
- Determine what you would like to do for the Lord in the next year in support of missions, and indicate that intention by filling out a Faith Promise card.
- Give not to a particular missionary, but to the work of missionaries, looking to the missions team to give leadership in your support of missions and church planters.