



# FINANCIAL AND GENEROSITY ILLUSTRATIONS, STORIES, HUMOR & QUOTES

Collected by Brian Kluth, National-International Generosity Speaker & Author

## **STORY: PRAYER THAT YOUR INCOME WILL EQUAL WHAT YOU'RE WILLING TO TITHE:**

Leighton Farrell was the minister of Highland Park Church in Dallas for many years. He tells of a man in the church who once made a covenant with a former pastor to tithe ten percent of their income every year. They were both young and neither of them had much money. But things changed. The layman tithed one thousand dollars the year he earned ten thousand, ten thousand dollars the year he earned one-hundred thousand, and one-hundred thousand dollars the year he earned one million. But the year he earned six million dollars he just could not bring himself to write out that check for six-hundred thousand dollars to the Church. He telephoned the minister, long since having moved to another church, and asked to see him. Walking into the pastor's office the man begged to be let out of the covenant, saying, "This tithing business has to stop. It was fine when my tithe was one thousand dollars, but I just cannot afford six-hundred thousand dollars. You've got to do something, Reverend!" The pastor knelt on the floor and prayed silently for a long time. Eventually the man said, "What are you doing? Are you praying that God will let me out of the covenant to tithe?" "No," said the minister. "I am praying for God to reduce your income back to the level where one thousand dollars will be your tithe!"

**JOHN WESLEY STORY:** When John Wesley visited his congregations he would question his assistants as to their progress in the faith. He would often ask if their Christianity had affected their pockets? That can be an acid test of our values.

**GIVING STORY:** A steward is like a manager of a local McDonald's Restaurant who carries out the aims of the owners, maximizes profits, while handling all the problems. Dr. Towns teaches a stewardship lesson in the Pastor's Bible Class at Thomas Road Baptist Church which is the most requested lesson of all he has taught. "Who Owns Your French Fries". It is the story of a man who buys his little boy some french fries. Then the father does what all fathers do, he reaches over and takes one french fry to taste it. The little boy slaps his father's hand and says, "Don't touch my french fries." The father thinks that his son is selfish. The father knows that he bought the french fries and they belong to him. The father knows that his son belongs to him. The father could get angry and never buy his son another french fry again to teach his son a lesson, or the father could "bury" his son in french fries. The father thinks, "Why is my son selfish, I have given him a whole package of french fries; I just want one french fry." God has given us money, when He asks for a tithe, people figuratively slap His hand and say, "Keep Your hands off my money." God owns everything we have. He wants us: 1. To manage what we have for His glory. God expects us to manage our time, talent, temple, testimony and treasures. 2. To give back a portion of what he has given us.

**HUMOR:** Did you see the bumper sticker the other day that read "Tithe if you love Jesus. Any fool can honk".

**5 GIVING POCKETS by Jerry Falwell:** Money that individuals give comes to the church from five sources, or "pockets." Obviously, these are not actual pockets, but symbolic pictures representing five major motives of church members in giving to their church. When church leaders understand the nature and source of their church's income, they can better plan a strategy for outreach and growth.

- **First Pocket: Money for "Light and Heat Bills".** This represents the desire of some people to contribute to the general fund. Members are motivated out of concern for the operating expenses of the church. "The light and heat" pocket represents money given to salaries, supplies, utilities and general maintenance.
- **Second Pocket: Money for "Missions".** Certain members want to contribute most of their money to foreign missions. This appeal will motivate them to give more than any other appeal. Other members want at least some of their money to go to outreach, usually out of their concern for the Great Commission.
- **Third Pocket: Money to Support "Ivy Walls".** Some members are best motivated by the needs of education. Because some church members value higher education, they direct their money to build college classrooms, libraries, or to equip science laboratories.
- **Fourth Pocket: Money for the "Cup of Cold Water".** Some members are best motivated to give to humanitarian purposes. These members have compassion for the needs of their hurting brothers. They give to hunger projects, hospitals, and to provide housing and emergency relief.
- **Fifth Pocket: Money for "Bricks and Mortar".** Some people are best motivated to give for buildings or physical expansion. This money is specially earmarked for church buildings. Some give large amounts to physical projects, but only occasionally fund other projects. However, almost all members want to give something for their church building projects.

**THREE KINDS OF GIVERS:** Some one has said, there are three kinds of givers -- the flint, the sponge and the honeycomb. To get anything out of a flint you must hammer it. And then you get only chips and sparks. To get water out of a sponge you must squeeze it, and the more you use pressure, the more you will get. But the honeycomb just overflows with its own sweetness. Which kind of giver are you?

**SPURGEON AND THE WEALTHY MAN:** SPURGEON was once invited by a wealthy man to come down and preach in a country church in order to help them raise funds to pay a debt. The man told Spurgeon he was free to use his country house, his town house, or his seaside home. Spurgeon wrote back and declined coming and said, 'Sell one of your homes and pay the debt yourself'.

**THE GIRL AND THE PENNY FOR MISSIONS:** The seed growing secretly can be best communicated by the following true story. A little girl loved the Lord and longed to share the message of Christ to those on the mission field. She contributed a penny to a missionary to help in the work of evangelizing the people of Burma. The missionary was so touched by the little girl's response that he decided to do the most he could with that little penny. After careful thought, he bought a gospel tract and personally gave it to a young chieftain. The chieftain would not admit that he could not read, yet he burned with a desire to know the contents of the leaflet. He traveled 250 miles to find someone who would read it to him. After hearing the gospel message, it was not long after that this young chief made a profession of faith in Christ. Returning to his people, he told them what the Lord had done for him. Later he

invited missionaries to come and share Jesus with the village. Many tribesmen accepted the good news and were converted. All this and probably more resulted from one dedicated penny given in Christ's name by a little girl who gave from her heart.

**TONY CAMPOLO AT A WOMEN'S CONFERENCE:** Tony Campolo tells of being invited to speak at a ladies meeting. There were 300 women there. Before he spoke the president of the organization read a letter from a missionary. It was a very moving letter. In the letter the missionary expressed a need for \$4,000 to take care of an emergency that had cropped up. So the president of the organization said, "We need to pray that God will provide the resources to meet the need of this missionary. Bro. Campolo will you please pray for us?" Tony Campolo, who is very outspoken said, "No." Startled, she said, "I beg your pardon." He said, "No, I won't pray for that." He said, "I believe that God has already provided the resources & that all we need to do is give. Tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to step up to this table & give every bit of cash I have in my pocket. And if all of you will do the same thing, I think God has already provided the resources." The president of the organization chuckled a little bit & said, "Well, I guess we get the point. He is trying to teach us that we all need to give sacrificially." He said, "No, that is not what I am trying to teach you. I'm trying to teach you that God has already provided for this missionary. All we need to do is give it. Here, I'm going to put down all of my money I have with me." He wrote, "I only had \$15 in my pocket so I wasn't too worried about that." So he put down his \$15 & then looked at the president of the organization. Reluctantly, she opened her purse & took out all of her money, which was about \$40, & put it on the table. One by one the rest of the ladies filed by & put their money on the table, too. When the money was counted they had collected more than \$4,000." Tony Campolo said, "Now, here's the lesson. God always supplies for our needs, & he supplied for this missionary, too. The only problem was we were keeping it for ourselves. Now let's pray & thank God for His provision."

**JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER - THE FIRST BILLIONAIRE:** The very first person to reach the status of billionaire was a man who knew how to set goals and follow through. At the age of 23, he had become a millionaire, by the age of 50 a billionaire. Every decision, attitude, and relationship was tailored to create his personal power and wealth. But three years later at the age of 53 he became ill. His entire body became racked with pain and he lost all the hair on his head. In complete agony, the world's only billionaire could buy anything he wanted, but he could only digest milk and crackers. An associate wrote, "He could not sleep, would not smile and nothing in life meant anything to him." His personal, highly skilled physicians predicted he would die within a year. That year passed agonizingly slow. As he approached death he awoke one morning with the vague remembrances of a dream. He could barely recall the dream but knew it had something to do with not being able to take any of his successes with him into the next world. The man who could control the business world suddenly realized he was not in control of his own life. He was left with a choice. He called his attorneys, accountants, and managers and announced that he wanted to channel his assets to hospitals, research, and mission work. On that day John D. Rockefeller established his foundation. This new direction eventually led to the discovery of penicillin, cures for current strains of malaria, tuberculosis and diphtheria. The list of discoveries resulting from his choice is enormous. But perhaps the most amazing part of Rockefeller's story is that the moment he began to give back a portion of all that he had earned, his body's chemistry was altered so significantly that he got better. It looked as if he would die at 53 but he lived to be 98. Rockefeller learned gratitude and gave back from his wealth. Doing so made him whole. It is one thing to be healed it is another to be made whole.

**HUMOR - MONEY IN THE CASKET:** Ann Landers had an interesting letter in her column. It was from a girl who was writing about her uncle & aunt. She said, "My uncle was the tightest man I've ever known. All his life, every time he got paid he took \$20 out of his paycheck & put it under his mattress. Then he got sick & was about to die. As he was dying, he said to his wife, "I want you to promise me one thing." "Promise what?" she asked. "I want you to promise me that when I'm dead you'll take my money from under the mattress & put it in my casket so that I can take it all with me." The girl's letter went on with the story. "He died, & his wife kept her promise. She went in & got all that money the day he died & went to the bank & deposited it, and wrote out a check and put it in his casket."

**HUMOR - TITHING JOKE:** Two men were marooned on an Island. One man paced back and forth worried and scared while the other man sat back and was sunning himself. The first man said to the second man, "aren't you afraid we are about to die." "No," said the second man, "I make \$100,000 a week and tithe faithfully to my church every week. My Pastor will find me."

**WAS THE CHURCH SERVICE WORTH A DOLLAR?:** I like the old story about the guy who came to church with his family. As they were driving home afterwards he was complaining about everything. He said, "The music was too loud. The sermon was too long. The announcements were unclear. The building was hot. The people were unfriendly." He went on and on, complaining about virtually everything. Finally, his very observant son said, "Dad, you've got to admit it wasn't a bad show for just a dollar."

**CORRIE TEN BOOM:** I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

**HUMOR - THE TOP HOG:** I heard about a farmer who called the office of the minister asking to see "The Head Hog at the trough." The receptionist said, "Sir, if you're talking about our beloved Minster, you may call him Reverend or Pastor, but I don't think it would be proper to refer to him as the "head Hog at the trough." "Well, all right," the farmer said. "I just sold a few sows and was going to donate ten thousand dollars to the building fund, so I was hopping to catch him." "Oh, just a minute, sir." The receptionist said, "I think I heard the little porker just come in!"

**HUMOR - MONEY IN YOUR POCKET:** The pastor stood before the congregation and said "I have bad news, I have good news, and I have more bad news." The congregation got quiet. "The bad news is: the church needs a new roof!" the pastor said. The congregation groaned. "The good news is: we have enough money for the new roof." A sigh of relief was heard rippling through the gathered group. "The bad new is: it's still in your pockets"

**SKATEBOARDER:** Leadership journal recently had a cartoon of a young skateboarder who greets the Pastor after the service with skateboard in hand. "Church was cool! Especially when the dude next to me passed a plate a plate of money!"

**MISSIONARY JIM ELLIOT:** "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

**TROPICANA ORANGE JUICE:** When I was in Bible College, a tractor trailer load of Tropicana Orange Juice was dropped off at the cafeteria every week. I wondered how a low-cost Bible College could afford so much expensive O.J. One morning in chapel, I found out how an older Italian man in broken English, gave his testimony. He said he had come to the US from Italy in the 20's as a young teenager, with nothing but the clothes on his back. A Christian couple befriended him and through their love he came to know Christ as his Savior and Lord. One Sunday in church, he prayed: "Lord, if you give me an idea for a business, I will be faithful to give a portion of everything I make back to Your work." That very morning, the idea of "Fresh squeezed orange juice" popped into his head - and the rest is history: Anthony Rossi founded the "Tropicana Co" and has been faithful to give God - not 10% of his income, as many faithful believers do, but 50% of his income, for the past 60 years! He also gave truckloads of FREE O.J. to Christian colleges throughout the country!

**CORRIE TEN BOOM:** The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration, but its donation.

**HUMOR:** Andrew Carnegie made millions in the steel industrial. He worked hard helping the poor and underprivileged. Once a socialist came to see him in his office and soon was railing against the injustice of Carnegie having so much money. In his view, wealth was meant to be divided equally. Carnegie asked his secretary for an assessment of everything he owned and at the same time looked up the figures on world population. He did a little arithmetic on a pad and then said to his secretary. "Give this gentleman 16 cents. That's his share of my money.

**THE MIRACLE OF THE GROCERIES:** The following is a true story. In 1984, Mike and his family belonged to an East Coast church. One Sunday evening, the sermon was on sacrificial offerings, and a special offering was taken at the end of the sermon. The only money in Mike's wallet was a \$50 bill, which was supposed to buy a week's worth of groceries for his wife, their five children, and himself. However, in a move of faith, Mike put the \$50 bill in the offering. Then, after the conclusion of the service, the family went out to the parking lot to go home. Within minutes, they joyfully returned to the sanctuary, and asked the pastor to come outside and see their miracle. Somewhat skeptical, the pastor accompanied them outside to their 20-year-old station wagon. Peering through the windows, he saw that the interior of the vehicle was completely filled with bags of groceries. Happy for the family, he remarked that someone had given them a huge blessing. "You don't understand, pastor," Mike said. "Before service, I made sure that all the windows were rolled up and the doors were locked. I have the only key, so it must have been the Lord!" To which the pastor added, "Giving truly is the only key to God's provision!" (Mike had no family living in the area, and no one from the congregation ever claimed responsibility.) Witnessed by, Rev. Robert Costa, Detroit, Michigan. Editor's note: this sounds exactly like: Psalm 78:25 Men ate the bread of angels; He sent them all the food they could eat.

**THE STORY OF THE LAMB:** Katie Fisher, 17, entered the Madison County Ohio Junior Livestock Sale hoping the lamb she had for sale would get a good price. For months Katie had been battling cancer. She had endured hospital stays and been through chemotherapy a number of times. Before the lamb went on the block, the auctioneer told the audience about Katie's condition, hoping his introduction would push the price-per-pound above the average of two dollars. It did-and then some. The lamb sold for \$11.50 per pound. Then the buyer gave it back, and suggested the auctioneer sell it again. That started a chain reaction. Families bought it and gave it back; businesses bought it and gave it back. Katie's mother said, "The first sale is the only one I remember. After that, I was crying too hard." They ended up selling

the lamb thirty-six times that day, raising more than \$16,000 in the process. (This is from The Story File by Steve May)

**JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER GIVING STORY:** John D. Rockefeller is an example of the benefits of giving. He achieved what our culture calls success. Rockefeller had amassed more wealth than he could ever spend. By the time Rockefeller was fifty-three his life was a wreck. Throughout his business career he said, "I never placed my head upon the pillow at night without reminding myself that my success might only be temporary." He was the richest man in the world and yet he was miserable in every sense of the word. He was sick physically, mentally, and emotionally. There was no humor, balance, or joy in his life. Then a transformation occurred. He determined to become a giver rather than an accumulator. He began to give his millions away. He founded the Rockefeller Foundation, dedicated to fighting disease and ignorance around the world. He lived to be ninety-eight years old and was a happy man in those years because of his new and revitalized definition of success.

**MOTHER TERESA STORY:** Mother Teresa visited Australia. A new recruit to the monastery in Australia was assigned to be her guide and "gofer" during her stay. The young man was so thrilled and excited at the prospect of being so close to this woman. He dreamed of how much he would learn from her and what they would talk about. But during her visit, he became frustrated. Although he was constantly near her, he never had the opportunity to say one word to Mother Teresa. There were always other people for her to meet. Finally, her tour was over, and she was due to fly to New Guinea. In desperation, the friar had his opportunity to speak to Mother Teresa. He said to her, "If I pay my own fare to New Guinea, can I sit next to you on the plane so I can talk to you and learn from you?" Mother Teresa looked at him. "You have enough money to pay airfare to New Guinea?" she asked. "Oh, yes," he replied eagerly. "Then give that money to the poor," she said. "You'll learn more from that than anything I can tell you." The problem was the young man wanted to experience a feeling when he needed to simply learn by doing.

**DANNY THOMAS "I GOT CARRIED AWAY":** The late Danny Thomas lost his life savings of \$600 at a time when he was out of work. He and his wife, Rosie, had a baby on the way, and they needed money. Danny worked at part-time jobs so Rosie could buy groceries. He also borrowed money from friends. It was a tough time in his life. A week before the baby was born, Danny had the grand total of seven dollars and eighty-five cents to his name. What would he do? "My despair led me to my first exposure to the powers of faith," Danny would later recall. On Sunday morning Danny went to church. When the offering plate was passed he put in his "usual one dollar." But something unexpected happened that day. A special missions offering was taken. The priest explained where the mission offering would go, and Danny felt he had to give something. "I got carried away," Danny said, "and ended up giving my seven dollars." He had given away all his money that Sunday. What in the world had he done? He walked up to the altar rail, got on his knees and prayed aloud. "Look, I've given my last seven bucks," he prayed. "I need it back tenfold because I've got a kid on the way, and I have to pay the hospital bill." He went home with a mere eighty-five cents in his pocket--all the money he had in the world. "You won't believe this," Danny Thomas later wrote, "but the next morning the phone rang in the rooming house hall." It was a job offer. He was offered a part in a commercial. The job wasn't much but the pay was good--seventy-five dollars. "I literally dropped the telephone receiver," Danny remembered. "First I whooped with joy; then an eerie feeling came over me." He remembered what he had prayed at church the day before. "The

seventy-five dollar fee," he said, "unheard of for me at that time was almost exactly ten times the amount of money I had donated to the church."

**GIVING YOUR LIFE FOR OTHERS - A STORY FROM THE COLUMBINE SHOOTINGS:** Many of you have probably never heard of Daniel Rohrbough--but he is a modern day hero. Daniel Rohrbough attended Columbine High School and was there on that horrible day when two students went on a rampage of violence and terror. Daniel Rohrbough stopped his escape from the building to hold a door open so that other students could escape and he was killed holding the door. Daniel died while helping others have a new chance at life. (Adapted from an Article in People Magazine)

This list was compiled by Brian Kluth ([www.kluth.org](http://www.kluth.org))

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