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much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.'" (Mark 12:41-44)

I become nauseous when Christians try to tell me how much they are like this widow. Many congregations sing a hymn which says, "Living below in this old sinful world, hardly a comfort can afford..." I refuse to sing this song. I sincerely doubt that any American can sing these words without lying. Most of us have automobiles, high-definition TV's, and central air. Even the poorest people in our country live better than 90% of the rest of the world!

Have you ever wondered what would happen if God made people as poor as they claimed to be? I've had preachers tell me the contribution where they preached was because "the farmers had a bad year." I usually respond by saying that I have never met a farmer who had a good year! Many claim poverty, yet some of these men own large motor-homes and are able to vacation overseas. The problem is not just with farmers—many Christians claim to be poor when the collection plate is passed.

### Brethren In Macedonia

The first century brethren in Macedonia lived in poverty. Yet, somehow these brethren could send a *gift* to the saints in Judea. Paul explains it in 2 Corinthians 8:5, "And this they did, not as we had hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God." It was no problem for these

Christians to give what they could, for they had already "given themselves to the Lord."

When a man realizes that every good thing he possess comes from God, he will give generously, not out of obligation. Paul also exhorted these brethren to "prepare your bountiful gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:5-7).

### Conclusion

There is a part of your income that does not belong to you—it belongs to the Lord. Will a man rob God? He might in this life. He might give unto the Lord "that which costs him nothing." He might convince his brethren he is giving the "widows mite." He might convince those around him that he is living in poverty, but God knows. There will be a day of accounting. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal 6:7). 📖

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## Will A Man Rob God?



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The book of Malachi was written over 400 years before our Lord came to this earth. Malachi uses what some have called the “Didactic Dialectic” method of teaching. This method of teaching can be divided into three parts: 1) An assertion or charge is made, 2) the writer gives the presumed objection to the charge, and 3) the objection is soundly refuted.

Among the sins cited in this book, we find corrupt priests, infidelity, and rampant divorce. The first sin mentioned is the offering of defiled sacrifices to God (Mal 1:6–11). The people were offering sick, lame, and blind animals on God’s altar. Malachi chides the people by urging them to offer this type of sacrifice to their governor. God equated their offering with a lack of reverence for Him and accused them of despising His name (Mal 1:6).

Malachi brings this topic up again in the third chapter. He asks, “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings” (Mal 3:8).

When Christians assemble on the Lord’s Day for Scriptural purposes, I wonder if they are repeating the sin of Israel by “robbing God.” Christians are commanded to give of their means on the first day of the week. Paul told the saints at Corinth: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each

one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come” (1 Cor 16:1–2).

How much should I give back to the Lord on the Lord’s day? How much does God expect from me? I want us to look at three Bible examples of giving. I believe if we develop the proper *attitude* towards giving, the *amount* will take care of itself.

“This subject is much neglected, both in teaching and practice; perhaps it is neglected in practice because it is so much neglected in teaching. Possibly preachers fail to preach on it because they fear they will be criticized and accused of preaching with selfish ends in view, or it may be because they cannot approach the subject in a wholly unselfish spirit.” (C. R. Nichol, *Sound Doctrine*, 1.133)

## King David

David sinned against God by numbering the children of Israel—such action was a direct violation of the will of God (2 Sam 24). Upon realizing his sin, David sincerely repented and sought God’s forgiveness. God sent a plague upon the land for three days as punishment for this sin. Seventy thousand men in Israel died from the plague.

After the plague ceased, David went to “erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunuh the Jebusite” (2 Sam 24:18). When David tried to buy the threshing floor, Araunuh offered to give it to David—with wood for the fire and oxen for the sacrifice.

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David turned down his magnanimous offer. In refusing he said, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing” (2 Sam 24:24).

Do we ever offer God “that which costs us nothing?” How much money do you make? I mean *really* make? Sometimes people look at their “take home” pay and delude themselves into thinking that is all the money they make. The self employed know better than that, for they now pay over 15% of their income to Social Security. If you are employed by another, your employer pays half of this cost. What about your health insurance? You can easily tack on another \$1,000 per month if you add this. Let’s not forget your retirement plan at the factory. Some would have to add their Christmas bonus, company car and other perks. Now, how much money do you make? How much of that do you give to the Lord? Are you giving to the Lord “that which cost you nothing?”

Those things in life which cost us nothing are generally appreciated very little. Those who have had to bear the burden of work when a new congregation is established usually appreciate a simple item like a meetinghouse more than those who come in later. Those who have not given of their time, money, sweat and tears do not have as much “invested” in a local work as those who made such sacrifices in the past.

## The Poor Widow

The story of the poor widow is an outstanding example of love, devotion and sacrifice. Her story is recorded by Mark: “Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in

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