



# Jesus and the Widow's Offering

Luke 21:1 - 4



Jesus warned against those who acted generously just to show off to those around them. Jesus was truly pleased with the small offering of a poor widow. Though it was a small amount, she gave all she had.

## Day #1: The Pharisees

After Jesus cleared the Temple, He stayed and taught at the Temple for many days. The chief priests and teachers of the law were angry with Jesus and continually tried to cast doubt on His authority (Luke 20:2). Jesus told His disciples not to trust these men.

**+** *All the people were listening. Jesus said to his disciples, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in long robes. They love to be greeted in the market places. They love to have the most important seats in the synagogues. They also love to have the places of honor at dinners. They take over the houses of widows. They say long prayers to show off. God will punish those men very much." - Luke 20:45-47*

Jesus knew the wicked hearts of these religious leaders. Jesus did not want His followers to be fooled by them. He told His disciples that these men loved to be recognized as important people. They loved having lots of attention and having people admire them. They tried to look godly by saying long prayers, but in truth, it was all just a show. They loved money and they took advantage of those who trusted them.

*The Pharisees loved money. They heard all that Jesus said and made fun of Him. Jesus said to them, "You try to make yourselves look good in the eyes of other people. But God knows your hearts. What is worth a great deal among people is hated by God." - Luke 16:14-15*

Jesus taught that it was wrong to make a big show of doing good things. He said not to be like the Pharisees who announced all the good things they did. They were only pretending to be holy. Jesus said that the only reward they would get from showing off their good deeds was a pat on the back from the people watching (Matthew 6:2). But, there is a much greater reward waiting in heaven for those who do good in secret (Matthew 6:3, 18).

**\*** Try to think of something good you can do for someone without telling anyone about it. Can you give something to someone without them knowing who gave it? God will reward those who do good things without other people seeing their actions.

*Then your giving will be done secretly. Your Father will reward you. He sees what you do secretly. - Matthew 6:4*

## Day #2: The Widow

Make two piles of money. In one pile, place several bills and as many coins as you have. In the other pile, place just two pennies. Now, which pile is worth more? In today's story, we will see how the two pennies could be worth *more* than the big pile of money!

One day when Jesus was at the Temple, He watched as people placed their money gifts into the offering boxes (Mark 12:41). One poor widow had just a tiny offering to give. A widow is a woman whose husband has died. In Bible times, widows were not allowed to get a job, so very often they were poor. In most cases, they had to depend on the charity of others (Deuteronomy 14:28-29).

**+** *As Jesus looked up, he saw rich people putting their gifts into the temple offering boxes. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.*

*"What I'm about to tell you is true," Jesus said. "That poor widow has put in more than all the others. All of those other people gave a lot because they are rich. But even though she is poor, she put in everything. She had nothing left to live on." - Luke 21:1-4*

The wealthy people put large amounts of money into the offering box. But the poor widow had only two small coins to give. The Bible says these coins were worth just a fraction of a penny (Mark 12:42). So why would Jesus say her offering was worth *more* than all of the others? Even though the rich people gave a lot of money, they still had plenty of money left over. They still had enough money to buy food and clothing, and pay for all of their other needs. In fact, they probably kept enough of their money to pay for all of their needs, plus many of their wants as well. Wants are things that are not necessary for us to live, but are nice to have. On the other hand, the widow did something far different. She gave up all of the money that she needed to live on.

The widow's actions displayed two things that greatly please the Lord. She showed obedience and faith. First, she gave an offering to God, **obeying** His command to give a money offering (Exodus 30:16). Secondly, this widow showed great **faith** by giving all she had to God. Unlike the wealthy givers, she showed that she trusted God to provide all of her needs after she gave all of her money.

**\*** The Bible tells us to give a portion of what we have to God's work (Malachi 3:8). We must have faith that God will supply all of the things we need when we are obedient to give.

## Day #3: Biblical Giving

Take a sheet of paper, and draw a line down the middle. On one side, write "NEEDS"; on the other side write "WANTS." Now, think of all the things people spend money on. List these things on your paper, placing them on either the NEED side, or the WANT side.


It has been said that, "You can't out-give God." But is this a principle that is taught in the Bible? According to Philippians 4 and Luke 6, this concept is true.

Everyone has certain needs that must be met in order to live. Sometimes people are afraid to give to others because they are afraid their own needs will not be met. And, often times people are not willing to give

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up any of their wants, either. It would seem to us that the best way to have our own needs met would be to hold onto everything we get. But according to Scripture, it is just the opposite. This is what is called a **paradox**. A paradox is a statement that is the opposite of what we think would be true.

The Bible teaches that the more we give to others, the more God will pour out blessings on us (Matthew 25:34-40).


 *Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.* - Luke 6:38

The word **measure** in this verse means, "A rule, or standard of judging." How do you measure your giving? Are you stingy or generous? Are you selfish, or do you give freely? God will use the same standard to give to you that you use to give to others. If you give freely, then God, who gives all good gifts (James 1:17), will freely pour His blessings on you. The Apostle Paul once said that when we give to others, it is credited to our account with God (Philippians 4:17). Paul taught that God will supply all we need to be generous to others (2 Corinthians 9:8-11).


2 Corinthians 9:7 tells us that, "God loves a cheerful giver." Let's look at two reasons that God is pleased when we give to His work, and to those in need.

*Your gifts meet the needs of God's people. And that's not all. Your gifts also cause many people to thank God.* - 2 Corinthians 9:12

It may seem obvious that when we give, it meets the needs of people. But even more importantly, it brings glory to God. People will praise God because of the generosity of His people (2 Corinthians 9:13).

 We have seen that God is the great PROVIDER! We must have faith, knowing that when we give to others, God will provide all of our needs. And, sometimes He blesses us with some of our wants as well.

## Day #4: Treasures in Heaven

 *Do not put away riches for yourselves on earth. Moths and rust can destroy them. Thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, put away riches for yourselves in heaven. There, moths and rust do not destroy them. There, thieves do not break in and steal them.* - Matthew 6:19-20

Many years ago, there was a man who lived in Germany named Oskar Schindler. World War II was under way in Germany. Mr. Schindler was a businessman who became very wealthy because the factory he ran made products for the war. The soldiers in Germany were very, very cruel to the Jewish people in Germany. Their leader hated all Jewish people. The German soldiers put the Jewish people in prison camps where most of them died. At first, Mr. Schindler was content to sell products and make a lot of money. But after seeing the cruelty to the Jewish people, his heart was touched and he wanted to help them.


Mr. Schindler asked the German leaders if some of the Jewish prisoners could work in his factory. He knew that they would be safe there. The Germany party was corrupt and accepted money from Mr. Schindler for allowing prisoners to work for him. In essence, Mr. Schindler was paying for the safety of the Jewish prisoners. By the time the war had ended he had given up nearly everything that he owned to "buy" the safety of those who could not help themselves. By all estimations, Mr. Schindler saved the lives of at least 1,100 people.

Years after he died, a movie was made about Mr. Schindler's life. One unforgettable scene showed Mr. Schindler after he heard the announcement that the war was over. He was overcome with emotion. He did not pat himself on the back and think what a good job he had done. Instead, he was heart-broken that he had not done more. With

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tears in his eyes, he looked at his car and shouted, "Why didn't I sell my car? That could have been even more people saved!"

Mr. Schindler lived out the principle found in Matthew 6:19-20. He did not store up his wealth so that he could live an easy life on earth. Instead, he saw what was more valuable. He put the good of others before his own wants and needs. When we do this, the Bible says we are storing up treasure for ourselves in heaven. We must each face these questions: Am I spending the resources God has given me on things that will one day decay? Or am I using those resources to help others and to further God's kingdom? These things will last forever.

 Mr. Schindler did an incredible thing by giving up nearly everything he had to save the lives of complete strangers. Even more so, we have the Truth of God, which can save the souls of those who do not know Jesus. When we realize that giving to others might bring them to God, the question turns from, "How much must I give?" to "How much must I keep?"

## Day #5: A Child's Offering

In Matthew 25, Jesus said that when we help someone in need, it is the same as helping Him.

 *The King (Jesus) will reply, "What I'm about to tell you is true. Anything you did for one of the least important of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me."* - Matthew 25:40

Jesus said anytime we give food to a hungry person, or look after a person who is sick, it is the same as feeding or taking care of Jesus. There will be great reward for those who help people in need (Matthew 25:35-40). Jesus also said there would be harsh punishment for those who do not do these things. For, it is the same as ignoring Jesus when we ignore those who are in need (Matthew 25:41-46).


*Here are the kinds of beliefs that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows and children who have no parents are in trouble, take care of them.* - James 1:27a

You may think that you are too young to be able to help others. This is not true! The Bible says young people can be an example to other believers (1 Timothy 4:12). There are many ways you can give to God by giving to your church or helping others.

You can **give money**. Just as many adults do, you can give a portion of the money that you earn or receive as a gift. You can earn money by selling lemonade on a hot day, or by organizing a bake sale. You can give the money to your church, to a missionary, to a family in need, or even to a children's hospital.

You can **donate items**. You can help your mom or dad sort through your clothes and give away items that you do not wear. There are many organizations that give these clothes to children who need them. You can do the same with your toys and games.

You can give to others by **giving your time**. You might help an older neighbor by raking their yard or pulling some weeds. You might help your mom bake some cookies and take them to a neighbor or to a retirement center. You could also take the time to write a letter of encouragement to a soldier or to a missionary. These are precious things that money can't buy!

 Take a moment to discuss ways that you can give to those in need. Be creative and know that when you give to others, it is the same as giving to Jesus. Remember that, just like the widow's offering, it is not the amount that matters, but the heart of the one who gives. Do you recall the boy who gave two fish and five small loaves of bread to Jesus (John 6:8-13)? What seems like a small amount to us can be used by God in a mighty way!