

“Past Due” Notices

Dub McClish

Once, while thumbing through an office supply catalog, I found a section of “collection stickers.” These are brief notices printed on colorful gummed messages and intended to “encourage” people who are delinquent in their bills to make their payments. It immediately struck me that this must be a major problem for businessmen, because this small catalog contained five full pages of such materials.

As I read some of these stickers, it occurred to me that some of them, with a slight alteration in the wording, might be appropriate for the Lord's “business.”

1. One says, **“If there is any real reason why payment on this past due account has not been made, please tell us. If not, please mail remittance today.”** This note made me think of those brethren who have never discovered the responsibility and the blessing of giving as they have prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). They do not have any **reason** to offer, but they have many excuses. Those who have real reasons, the Lord understands, but to those who have only excuses, the Lord would say, “Please bring your contribution next Lord’s Day.”
2. Another one says, **“Missing you. We know you’re busy, but please take time now to mail your payment.”** This one signals the correlation between attendance and contribution. Not all who attend worship regularly give as they prospered, but it is certain that those who attend irregularly do not give as they should. When you miss worship, we miss you and the Lord misses you. The consistent part you should have in supporting the Lord's work is also missed.
3. Another one says, **“You are now two months in arrears on your payments. Please make these up immediately.”** This sticker reminds the recipients that their financial responsibilities (utilities, insurance, auto loans, etc.) continue, whether they are at home or elsewhere when they come due. The same is true with the Lord's work (and its expenses). Sad to say, it never seems to occur to some brethren when they must travel to either leave their contributions in advance or make them up when they return.
4. Another one says, **“Final notice. We will be compelled to place this account in outside hands unless payment is made at once!”** While God doesn’t issue such “final notices,” the time will come when we will have no further opportunities to “lay up treasure in Heaven” (Mat. 6:19–21). Our “accounts” will be taken out of the hands of preachers and elders and others who tried to help us live—and give—rightly. These accounts will be in the Lord’s hands, and He will deal with them personally.
5. Finally, one says, **“Thank you for your faithful payment record and for being such a good customer. We wish we had more like you.”**

If God sent personal “stickers,” which kind would He send to you?

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