

“Small Portion” Thinking

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It is not uncommon to hear the following (or similar) words uttered in the prayer before the contribution on the Lord's day: "Father, bless us as we give this small portion back to thee." Is this prayer in harmony with the New Testament teaching about giving?

The widow who gave two mites was not commended because she gave a "small portion," but because she gave all she had (Mark 12:44). Those who gave out of their abundance (a small portion?) were not commended. The Lord does not demand that we put every penny we have into the contribution plate. However, He surely did not commend "small portion" giving, either.

"Small portion" thinking is not in harmony with the constant urgings of principle and precept in the New Testament. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35; cf Luke 6:38). Paul commended the Macedonian saints, not for giving a "small portion," but for the "riches of their liberality" despite their poverty (2 Cor. 8:2). In the same context, he exhorted all Christians to "abound in this grace [giving] also" (v. 7). *Abound* means to overflow, go beyond, multiply thus to do more than give a "small portion." Our Lord was no "small portion" giver. He gave up everything (the riches of Heaven and even His life) for our sakes (v.9). Had He given only a "small portion," we would still be hopelessly lost.

Paul stated plainly the consequence of "small portion" thinking and giving: "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly" (2 Cor. 9:6). We reap what we sow, not only in kind (Gal. 6:7), but in quantity. The amount we give is to be in keeping with the amount we have received or prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). However, there is never any encouragement in Scripture to give a "small portion."

The real concern of God is not how much one gives, but how much of our income the gift represents. It is a measure of our love for Him (2 Cor. 8:8). Thus, the small amount of two mites was a much larger gift than the larger amounts given by others which represented only a "small portion" of their wealth. The moral is, God may indeed be pleased with a small amount, but never with a "small portion."

Surely, considering all that the Bible teaches about generosity, liberality, responsible use of wealth, and duty to take and send the Gospel throughout the world, we cannot seriously

expect God to bless us in giving only a “small portion” for His work. We need to discard “small portion” wording and thinking and giving.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, December 6, 1990, of which I was editor.]

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