

THE ELDERS AND THE OFFERINGS

Volume 3

Section 6



“...No one should appear before the Lord empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.”

Deuteronomy 16:16-17



The church elders have the privilege of promoting systematic benevolence in their churches. Besides being a privilege, it is a sacred duty to motivate the congregation to bring their offerings.



I. Offerings in the Bible



The notion of giving offerings is clearly Biblical. Its goal is to banish selfishness from the human heart and provide the resources necessary for the better functioning of the church and the faithful fulfillment of its mission.



“Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give.”

Exodus 25:2



“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”

Matthew 5:23-34



“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-7



The elders should always remind the church that God accepts the offerings that are given *voluntarily and with a joyful heart.*



*“May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. **May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings.** May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.”*

Psalm 20:1-4



II. Characteristics of the offerings that God accepts



1. The offerings should be voluntary

“Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give.”

Exodus 25:2





As leaders, the elders should:

- Encourage the church so that each member makes an *offering covenant with the Lord*.
 - Remind them that an offering is a *personal covenant with our Creator*.
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- Remind them that God does not force us to decide as to what percentage we are to covenant with Him.
- Each must decide what to covenant with the Lord.
- That once we have made a covenant we should fulfill it, and not be like Ananias and Sapphira.



- Neither should we leave it up to circumstances. We should define with the Lord what our offering will be. That is what is meant by the term: Systematic benevolence.
- Nor are we to decide on behalf of the rest of the members of the church.



“All that we do is to be done willingly. We are to bring our offerings with joy and gratitude, saying as we present them, Of Thine own we freely give Thee.”

CS 198



“Come to the Lord with hearts overflowing with thankfulness for past and present mercies, and manifest your appreciation of God’s bounties by bringing to Him your thank offerings, your freewill offerings, and your trespass offerings.”

CS 198



2. The offerings should be given willingly

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:19-21

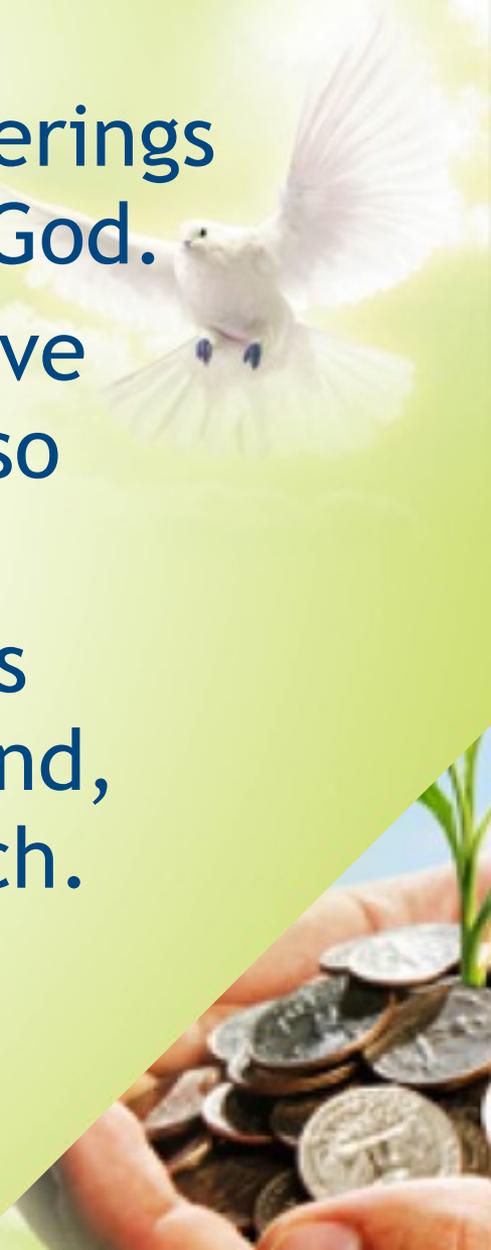


As leaders, the elders should emphasize:

- That it is necessary that our hearts be in our offerings.
- That if we give our hearts to God, surely what follows our heart will be our offerings, our time, our talents, our family, our home, our tithes and our whole lives.



- That it is possible to give offerings without giving our hearts to God.
- But that it is impossible to give our hearts to God without also taking our offerings to Him.
- That giving offerings banishes selfishness from our hearts and, consequently, from the church.



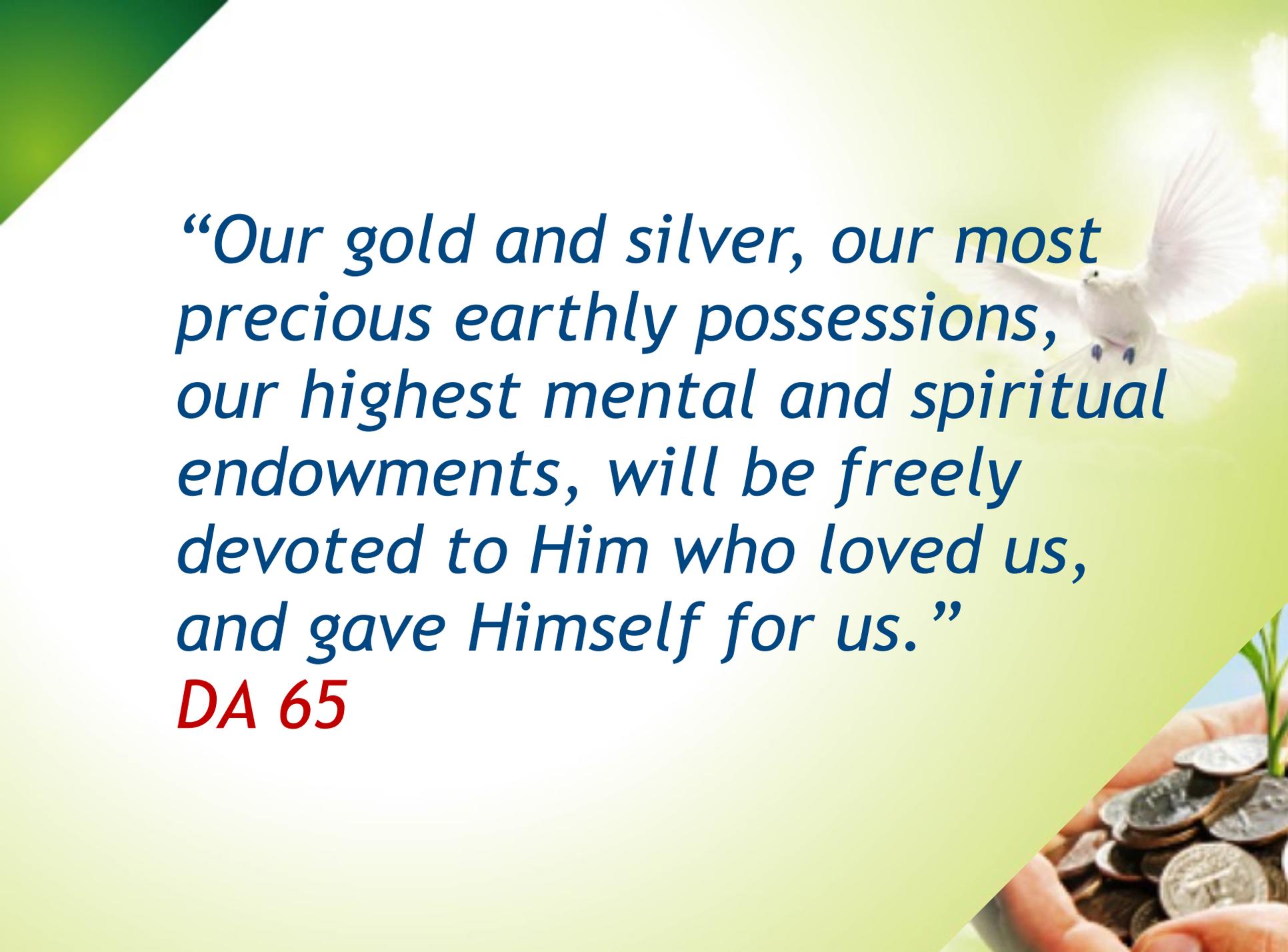
- That not giving offerings to God makes us more selfish.
- That when families are generous when giving offerings, the children receive great blessings because of the benevolence of their parents.



“The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him.”

CS 198





“Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.”

DA 65

3. The offerings should be abundant

Even though what God requires from us is not quantity but fidelity, He does expect our offerings to be in abundance, proportionate to the many blessings He has bestowed upon us.



“No one should appear before the Lord empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.”

Deuteronomy 16:16-17





*“Whoever sows sparingly
will also reap sparingly, and
whoever sows generously
will also reap generously.”*

2 Corinthians 9:6



*“Each of you must bring
a gift in proportion to
the way the Lord your
God has blessed you.”*

Deuteronomy 16:17



“How much more eager will every faithful steward be to enlarge the proportion of gifts to be placed in the Lord’s treasure house, than to decrease his offering one jot or tittle. Whom is he serving? For whom is he preparing an offering?—For the One upon whom he is dependent for every good thing which he enjoys.



Then let not one of us who is receiving the grace of Christ, give occasion for the angels to be ashamed of us, and for Jesus to be ashamed to call us brethren.”

CS 200



“Let us surrender ourselves a living sacrifice, and give our all to Jesus. It is His; we are His purchased possession. Those who are recipients of His grace, who contemplate the cross of Calvary,



will not question concerning the proportion to be given, but will feel that the richest offering is all too meager, all disproportionate to the great gift of the only-begotten Son of the infinite God.”

CS 200



4. The offerings must be given with joy

Our offerings must be the product of our gratitude for all the good things that God daily does for us, our families and churches.

Therefore, we present our offerings with joy and gratitude, so that God may be honored.



For what reasons must the elders remind the church that it should give offerings with joy?

- For having previously received blessings from our God.
- For having something to bring to the Lord.
- For being able to cooperate with the church for its needs.
- For being able to contribute to the fulfillment of the mission of the church.

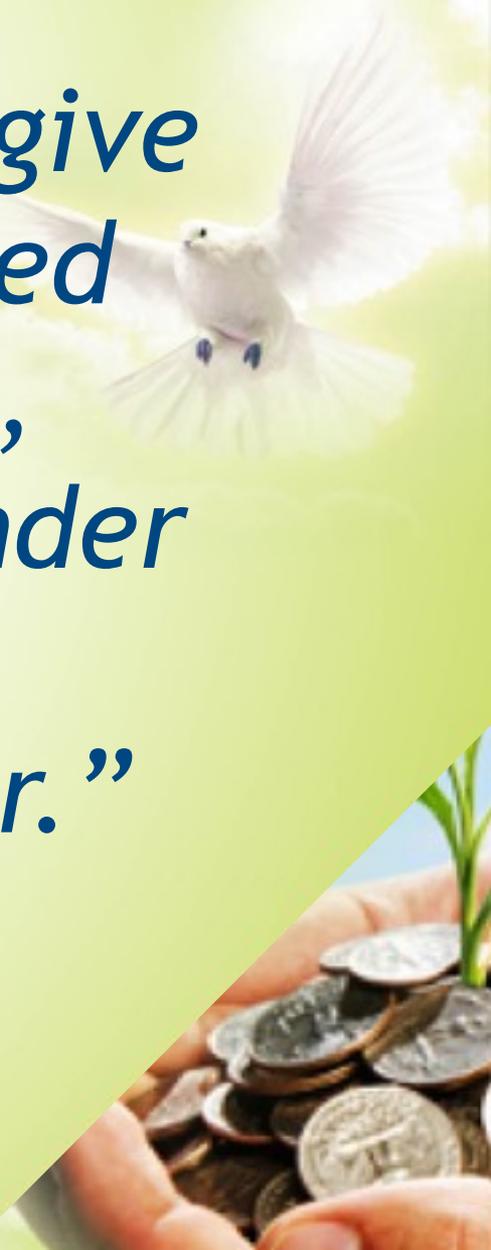


- For being able to give to help others who so much need it.
- For being alive and being able to worship our God.
- For all the things God does for us without being worthy of it.
- For knowing that we are under the protection of the Almighty.
- For knowing that our offering is pleasing to God.



“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:7



“It were better not to give at all than to give grudgingly; for if we impart of our means when we have not the spirit to give freely, we mock God.”

CS 199



“All our offerings should be presented with cheerfulness; for they come from the fund which the Lord has seen fit to place in our hands for the purpose of carrying forward His work in the world, in order that the banner of truth may be unfurled in the highways and byways of the earth.”

CS 199



“I was shown that the recording angel makes a faithful record of every offering dedicated to God and put into the treasury and also of the final result of the means thus bestowed.



The eye of God takes cognizance of every farthing devoted to His cause and of the willingness or reluctance of the giver. The motive in giving is also chronicled.”

AH 368



5. The offerings should be given as part of the worship to God

- Giving is an act of worship and, as such, it should be rendered with all the reverence that every act of worship to God requires.
- The time to collect tithes and offerings should be a solemn moment.



- It must be shrouded with humility and contrition because it is the moment when man responds to the many blessings that a kind Father has given for humankind.
- Since it is part of worship, that is the reason why it should not be something to be left for the last minute or according to the circumstances of the moment.

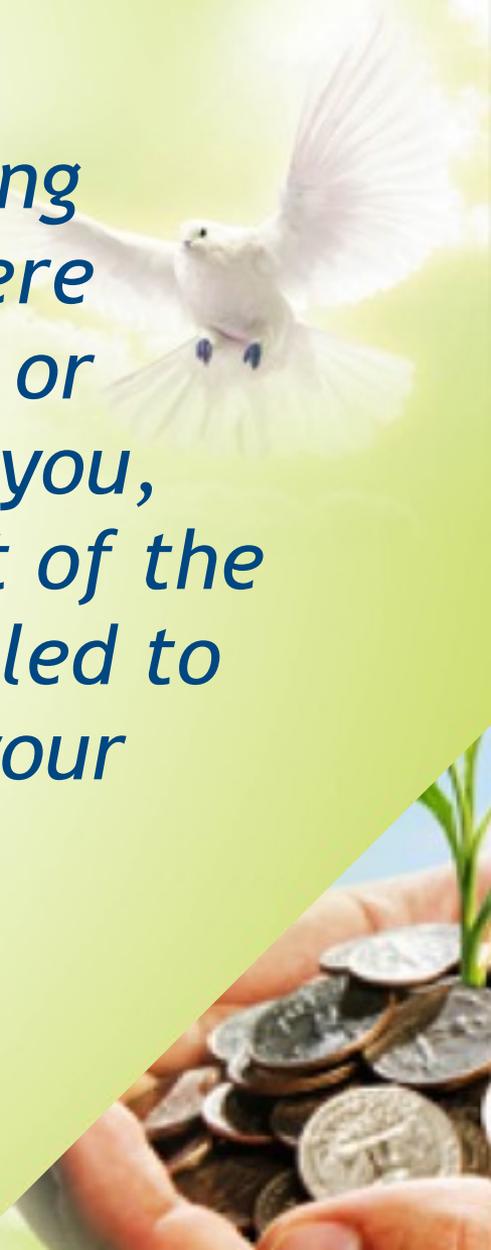


- From the time we leave our home we should know what offerings we will bring to our Lord.
- We should be conscious that a worship act should not be left to circumstances, neither should it be neglected or forgotten.



“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”

Matthew 5:23-34



***“Sacrifices and Offerings.
Animals or agricultural
products brought to the Lord
as an expression of worship,
gratitude, or dedication, or for
the expiation of sin.”***

Adventists Bible Dictionary 963



The elders should emphasize that when offerings are given, it should not be forgotten that we are worshipping God and that He is to be worshipped with the best.



Recapitulating what we studied



What six things did the psalmist pray that would happen when God made memory of all of our offerings and accepted them?

1. That He answers us when we are in distress.
2. That He protects us.
3. That He may send us help from the Sanctuary.
4. That He may grant us support from Zion.
5. That He may give us the desires of our hearts.
6. That He may make all of our plans succeed.

