

A Time not to Receive Gifts

Ec 3:1 ¶ To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

There is no wrong in receiving donations from unbelievers. By his donation, the unbeliever is blessed having put into action his conviction that God's people are living the truth and doing a good work.

But it is a different thing to receive money from a professed believer who is living in Sin, obtaining his livelihood from a practice such as gambling. To receive his gifts, confirms him in his belief that he is justified in his sin, because with the fruit of his sin, he is helping Gods work. By receiving his money we condone his belief that the end justifies the means. We are condoning his sin.

Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever.

Solemn are the lessons taught by this experience of one to whom had been given high and holy privileges. The course of Gehazi was such as to place a stumbling block in the pathway of Naaman, upon whose mind had broken a wonderful light, and who was favorably disposed toward the service of the living God. PK 252.him.

A youth is surrounded by temptations. He enters the bowling alley, the gambling saloon, to see the sport. He sees the money taken by the one who wins. This looks enticing. It seems an easier way of obtaining money than by earnest work, which requires persevering energy and strict economy. He imagines there can be no harm in this; for similar games have been resorted to in order to obtain means for the benefit of the church. Then why should he not help himself in this way? CS 201.2

Let us stand clear of all these church corruptions, dissipations, and festivals, which have a demoralizing influence upon young and old. We have no right to throw over them the cloak of sanctity because

the means is to be used for church purposes. Such offerings are lame and diseased, and bear the curse of God. CS 201.4

Notice there is such a thing as a lame and diseased offering.

Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtually excuse wrongs among the professed people of God, and murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them, and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! These, unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work, and holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval. They will fall in the general destruction of all the wicked, represented by the five men bearing slaughter weapons. Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those "that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done" in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in an agony, even sighing and crying. Read Ezekiel, chapter nine. RH September 23, 1873, par. 5

God said to Joshua (in the case of Achan's sins), "Neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you." How does this instance compare with the course pursued by those who will not raise their voice against sin and wrong; but whose sympathies are ever found with those who trouble the camp of Israel with their sins? Said God to Joshua, "Thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." He pronounced the punishment which should follow the transgression of his covenant. RH September 23, 1873, par. 7

We are showing these quotes here, not to say that situations we may be dealing with today are exactly the same in every respect. But "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1Co 10:11) God saw that we could learn from the principles dealt with in these stories. There is a reference that says that it is fine to receive money from unbelievers, but Naaman was an unbeliever, and in this case it was not right to receive his money. So obviously time and place and circumstances need to be considered.

There is one whom I have exhorted to give up his gambling. I even visited him in jail once and exhorted him to give up his sins, when his gambling brought him into a circumstance where he felt he needed to do something that was illegal to protect himself. When I and others have told him it was wrong to gamble, he has boasted about the way he uses his money, the donations he has given, the charitable works he has performed, the Gospel workers he supports, in order to justify his gambling. The fact that Gospel workers and church members have received his money for their own support and charitable projects, has not only emboldened him in his sins, but encourages others to follow his example.

All these inconsistencies, sanctioned by professed Christians under a garb of Christian beneficence, to collect means to pay church expenses, have their influence with the youth to make them lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. They think if Christians can encourage and engage in these lotteries and scenes of festivities, and connect them with sacred things, why may not they be safe in taking an interest in lotteries and in engaging in gambling to win money for special objects. Con 68.2

It is Satan's studied plan to clothe sin with garments of light to hide its deformity and make it attractive." Con 68.3

Let us remember that variance and sharp dealing never serve the cause to enrich God's institutions. By His providences God takes away the money gained by sharp devices. ... Those who think by sharp practice and worldly policy to get gain for the cause do not glorify God. He will not accept a jot or tittle of such offerings. God hates all such demonstrations.--Manuscript 16, 1901, p. 14 (Feb. 25, 1901 Testimony to the Battle Creek Church). {ChL 15.2}

Notice that God does not accept just any gifts.

Do not make the work and cause of God an excuse for dealing closely and selfishly with anyone, even if transacting business that has to do with His work. **God will accept nothing in the line of gain that is brought into His treasury through selfish transactions.** Every act in connection with His work is to bear divine inspection. Every sharp transaction, every attempt to take advantage of a man who is under pressure of circumstances, every plan to purchase his land or property for a sum beneath its value, will not be acceptable to God, even though the money gained is made an offering to His cause. The

price of the blood of the only - begotten Son of God has been paid for every man, and it is necessary to deal honestly, to deal with equity with every man, in order to carry out the principles of the law of God..." CS 145.3

Here the duty of God's servants is made plain. They cannot be excused from the faithful discharge of their duty to reprove sins and wrongs in the people of God, although it may be a disagreeable task and may not be received by the one who is at fault. But in most cases the one reprov'd would accept the warning and heed reproof were it not that others stand in the way. They come in as sympathizers and pity the one reprov'd and feel that they must stand in his defense. They do not see that the Lord is displeas'd with the wrongdoer, because the cause of God has been wounded and His name reproach'd. Souls have been turned aside from the truth and have made shipwreck of faith as the result of the wrong course pursued by the one in fault; but the servant of God whose discernment is clouded and whose judgment is sway'd by wrong influences would as soon take his position with the offender whose influence has done much harm, as with the reprov'er of wrong and of sin, and in so doing he virtually says to the sinner: "Do not be troubled, do not be cast down; you are about right after all." These say to the sinner: "It shall be well with thee." {3T 196.1}

When we receive gifts from professed believers who earn their livelihood in a way we know to be wrong, (such as gambling) how can we then reprove them? Rather, my personal experience has proven that they will take the side of the one reprov'd by God's faithful servants, and virtually say to the sinner, "It shall be well with thee."

I hope these statements shed additional light on the subject.

By Pastor David Sims - September 9, 2018