

WRONG METHODS AND **UNACCEPTABLE** OFFERINGS



GOD FIRST
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

Wrong Methods and Unacceptable Offerings

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Cover, Synesthezia Emotional Marketing LLC

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GROUP ACTIVITY

Wrong Methods and Unacceptable Offerings

(Based on “*Counsels on Stewardship*,” Chapter 41, “Popular Methods of Appeal,” pages 201-206)

Purpose: To identify unacceptable methods of raising money for God’s treasury; to develop awareness about some offerings that cannot be accepted by God; to identify some improper behaviors while offering to the Lord.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Facilitator and secretary:** Each group must choose a leader, who will conduct the discussion, and a secretary, who will report the conclusions.
2. **Read the inspired texts:** Before any other work, each group must read all the assigned texts (one paragraph per participant).
3. The **Group Activity** is provided at the end of the text in the “Growing Together” section.
4. **Answers are based on the texts:** The group must find the answer(s) based primarily on the inspired text provided, and not only from opinions, unless there is an open question, with specific instruction to discuss personal opinions.
5. **Group opinion:** In case of open questions (no right or wrong answers), the group should discuss which opinion(s) would better express the thought of the group (not only that of the leader).
6. **Timeliness:** The group should spend no more than five (5) minutes on each question, and secretaries must take no more than one (1) minute to answer publicly.
7. **Paragraph zero:** Be aware that some pages may begin with paragraph zero (0), which is the continuation of the last paragraph of the previous page.

All the following quotes are taken from Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*.

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We see the churches of our day encouraging feasting, gluttony, and dissipation, by the suppers, fairs, dances, and festivals gotten up for the purpose of gathering means into the church treasury. Here is a method invented by carnal minds to secure means without sacrificing.—p. 201.1

[...] —p. 201.2

[...] —p. 201.3

Lame and Diseased Offerings

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 ... —p. 201.4

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...means is to be used for church purposes. Such offerings are lame and diseased, and bear the curse of God. They are the price of souls. The pulpit may defend festivals, dancing, lotteries, fairs, and luxurious feasts, to obtain means for church purposes; but let us participate in none of these things; for if we do, God's displeasure will be upon us. We do not propose to appeal to the lust of the appetite or resort to carnal amusements as an inducement to Christ's professed followers to give of the means which God has entrusted to them. If they do not give willingly, for the love of Christ, the offering will in no case be acceptable to God. —p. 202.0

Characters Wrecked

[...]—p. 202.1

Giving for Selfish Considerations

In professedly Christian gatherings, Satan throws a religious garment over delusive pleasures and unholy revelings to give them the appearance of sanctity, and the consciences of many are quieted because means are raised to defray church expenses. Men refuse to give for the

love of God; but for the love of pleasure, and the indulgence of appetite for selfish considerations, they will part with their money.—p. 202.2

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Is it because there is not power in the lessons of Christ upon benevolence, and in His example, and the grace of God upon the heart to lead men to glorify God with their substance, that such a course must be resorted to in order to sustain the church? The injury sustained to the physical, mental, and moral health in these scenes of amusement and gluttony is not small. And the day of final reckoning will show souls lost through the influence of these scenes of gaiety and folly.—p. 203.1

It is a deplorable fact that sacred and eternal considerations do not have that power to open the hearts of the professed followers of Christ to make freewill offerings to sustain the gospel, as the tempting bribes of feasting and general merriment. It is a sad reality that these inducements will prevail when sacred and eternal things will have no force to influence the heart to engage in works of benevolence.—p. 203.2

Moses Did Not Institute Lotteries

The plan of Moses in the wilderness to raise means was highly successful. There was no compulsion necessary. Moses made no grand feast. He did not invite the people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, and general amusement. Neither did he institute lotteries or anything of this profane order to obtain means to erect the tabernacle of God in the wilderness. God commanded Moses to invite the children of Israel to bring the offerings. Moses was to accept gifts of every man that gave willingly from his heart. These freewill offerings came in so great abundance that Moses proclaimed it was enough. They must cease their presents; for they had given abundantly, more than they could use.—p. 203.2

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Satan's temptations succeed with the professed followers of Christ on the point of indulgence of pleasure and appetite. Clothed as an angel of light, he will quote Scripture to justify the temptations he places before men to indulge the appetite, and in worldly pleasures which suit the carnal heart. The professed followers of Christ are weak in moral power, and are fascinated with the bribe which Satan has presented before them, and he gains the victory.—p. 204.1

How does God look upon churches that are sustained by such means? Christ cannot accept these offerings, because they were not given through their love and devotion to Him, but through their idolatry of self. But what many would not do for the love of Christ, they will do

for the love of delicate luxuries to gratify the appetite, and for love of worldly amusements to please the carnal heart.—p. 204.2

Repeating the Sin of Nadab and Abihu

Professed Christians reject the Lord's plan of raising means for His work; and to what do they resort to supply the lack? God sees the wickedness of the methods they adopt. Places of worship are defiled by all manner of idolatrous dissipation, that a little money may be won from selfish pleasure lovers to pay church debts or to sustain the work of the church. Many of these persons would not of their own accord pay one shilling for religious purposes. Where, in God's directions for the support of His work, do we find any mention of bazaars, concerts, fancy fairs, and similar entertainments? Must the Lord's cause be dependent upon the very things He has forbidden in His word—upon those things that turn the mind away from God, from sobriety, from piety and holiness?—p. 204.3

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And what impression is made upon the minds of unbelievers? The holy standard of the word of God is lowered into the dust. Contempt is cast upon God and upon the Christian name. The most corrupt principles are strengthened by this un-Scriptural way of raising means. And this is as Satan would have it. Men are repeating the sin of Nadab and Abihu. They are using common instead of sacred fire in the service of God. The Lord accepts no such offerings.—p. 205.1

All these methods for bringing money into His treasury are an abomination to Him. It is a spurious devotion that prompts all such devising. O what blindness, what infatuation, is upon many who claim to be Christians! Church members are doing as did the inhabitants of the world in the days of Noah, when the imagination of their hearts was only evil continually. All who fear God will abhor such practices as a misrepresentation of the religion of Jesus Christ.—p. 205.2

Liberality With No Depth of Principle

The minister may be the special favorite of some wealthy man, and he may be very liberal with him; this gratifies the minister, and he in turn lavishes praise upon the benevolence of his donor. His name may be exalted by appearing in print, and yet that liberal donor may be entirely unworthy of the credit given him.—p. 205.3

His liberality did not arise from a deep, living principle to do good with his means, to advance the cause of God because he appreciated it, but from some selfish motive, a desire to be

thought liberal. He may have given from impulse, and his liberality have no depth of principle. He may have been moved upon by listening to stirring truth, which for the time being...—p. 205.4

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...loosed his purse strings; yet, after all, his liberality has no deeper motive. He gives by spasms; his purse opens spasmodically, and closes just as securely, spasmodically. He deserves no commendation, for he is in every sense of the word a stingy man; and unless thoroughly converted, purse and all, will hear the withering denunciation, “Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.”—p. 206.0

Such will awake at last from a horrible self-deception. Those who praised their spasmodic liberalities, helped Satan to deceive them, and make them think that they were very liberal, very sacrificing, when they know not the first principles of liberality or self-sacrifice.—p. 206.1

For Further Study

“Willing Obedience and Pure Love to Bind Every Offering on the Altar,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 269, 270.](#)

“Small Offering Given in Cheerfulness Is Greatly Blessed,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 295.](#)

“No Virtue in Giving More With Grudging Heart,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 285.](#)

“None Compelled to Sacrifice, Must Be a Freewill Offering,” [*Early Writings*, pp. 50, 51.](#)

“Those Who Give Must Esteem It a Privilege to Do So,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 177.](#)

“Anciently Offerings Must Be Without Blemish, the Best, and Given Freely,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 221.](#)

“Selfishness the Reason for No Freewill Offerings,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 225.](#)

“Responsibility for Large or Small Gift an Individual One,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 237, 238.](#)

“Freewill and Thank Offerings Brought to Convocations,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 573, 576.](#)

“Freewill Offerings Enrich Not God but the Giver,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 653.](#)

“No Heart-stirring Appeals Needed When Heart Is Filled with Grateful Love,” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 396, 413.](#)

([Source](#))

Growing Together

1. **CASE STUDY:** You are a leader in a small church, struggling with the remodeling of the church building. Money is scarce as offerings intake is very low. Some leaders have suggested using the tithe for the building remodel. However, a well-respected leader suggests a dinner, inviting members and non-members to raise funds for the building. Based on what you just read (202.1; 202.0; 203.3; 204.3) how would you respond?

2. Why do you believe that these kinds of offerings mentioned (202.1; 202.0; 203.3) are not acceptable to God? —pp 202.0; 205.1.

3. **CASE STUDY:** A church member confides in you, telling you that their offering will be useless as God will not accept it because they are not giving willingly (202.0). As a leader, you also know that if that person does not give, there will be spiritual and moral consequences (Mal. 3:8-10). What would you suggest to help this person grow spiritually?

4. What did Moses not do [a], and what did he do [b], to raise means to erect the tabernacle? — p. 203.3

a. _____

b. _____

5. Why do you believe that God considers “all these methods for bringing money into His treasury” as “an abomination to Him” (205.2)?

6. **CASE STUDY:** Rick Wealth is a prosperous church member publicly praised by the pastor for his liberality, while in reality he “may be unworthy of the credit given him” (205.3). With your group, find in the text (205.4 and 206.0 and 1) at least 2 reasons why someone may be liberal but at the same time “deserves no commendation”.

1. _____

2. _____

7. Why is it said that someone’s “liberality have no depth of principle” (205.4) even though that person may be giving significant amounts of money? What giving principle applied to offerings do you believe is alluded to in this text?

8. What are the consequences when leaders praise wealthy members who are spasmodic (intermittent) in their giving, even though they are very liberal? — p. 206.1

9. **CASE STUDY:** Brother Rock Feller was publicly praised by his pastor for giving huge amounts of money every time he was asked to give. According to the text (206.1), the pastor was “helping Satan to deceive” him, making him think that he was “very liberal, very sacrificing, when” he would “know not the first principles of liberality or self-sacrifice.” Discuss the “principles of liberality” with your group.



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