

## Phil. 4:14-20—Invest #4

October 22, 2017

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In LOTR Gandalf sends Frodo out to find a mysterious figure named Strider, who would be king. But Gandalf knew that Frodo would seek someone who looked like a king. And Strider did not seem as important as he really was.

So Gandalf stitched together bits of verse to help Frodo in his journey.

“All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.  
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,  
The crownless again shall be king.”

All that is gold does not glitter.

Things of great value hide in plain sight and can be or are often missed all-together. We might even go so far as to say the things of greatest value—abiding value—usually don't seem like it.

Strider didn't seem like much but he would be king.

Generosity doesn't seem like much—but according to the Bible—it is of great value—abiding value even though it doesn't seem like it.

We've been asking a series of questions about how the Bible (and God) views money—and today we visit one more question.

We've asked:

- How does a disciple view money? As Belonging to God.
  - Why does a disciple give money? Because of all we have been given by Jesus.
  - How does a disciple give money? Generously.
- Today, we ask:

What does the money a disciple gives do?

What kind of work does the money a disciple gives do?  
What does it get done?

Generosity might not be that important—because it might seem that your part would be so small—but rest assured there is much gold that does not glitter.

Today we see the gold of generosity is the means by which the kingdom advances.

[14] Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. [15] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. [16] Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. [17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. [18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied,

having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. [19] And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.  
Philippians 4:14-20

PRAY

What money can sometimes do  
What God always does

### ***1. What money can sometimes do—***

I say sometimes, because money can be used for a great many good, necessary and enjoyable things but when you give money to the purpose of his kingdom you can see what money can sometimes do.

Not all that is gold glitters—generosity is one of those things.

The Philippians realized this.

You might not realize it, but Philippians is a thank you letter and this section, the final section in the book we see this more clearly.

And it is remarkable that the believers in this church were so quick to give. They didn't have much—we've covered that (these are the Macedonians)—but also they were not very mature.

They were all young Christians.

Remember when Paul came to Philippi there were exactly zero Christians in town. When he and Silas placed their feet on Philippian soil it marked the first time. Acts 16 tells how everything began.

It was—maybe—the worst ever start to a church. You might call the church at Philippi the church that is despite how it all started.

You can read the story in Acts 16. Paul and his travelling companion Silas visited Philippi with the express purpose of preaching Christ and planting a church. They met a woman by the river who was the first convert, they cast a demon out of a little girl and were imprisoned and they sang songs in the jail and were miraculously released seeing the conversion of the security guard along the way.

Whew.

Here are the first three members:

Lydia: A fabric saleswoman

A formerly demon-possessed slave girl

A jailer

That is in zero of the church plant literature, but a church was born in their brief visit to Philippi. But they caused such a stir that the town magistrates asked them to leave.

So they left a church in Philippi that was full of baby Christians. There was no one to learn from. No Christian books. No Christian radio. No Christian anything.

And their founder was run off.

And look how they responded,

Vs. 15,

“And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup> Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.”

These Christians were quick to send Paul help. Paul had barely left town and they were sending money to Thessalonica, the next major town some 80 miles away.

Remarkable.

They didn't know much—but they knew Jesus and they wanted others to hear the gospel from this man. So, they sent Paul money so that his needs could be met and Thessalonians could hear the gospel too.

There was no way that Paul preached to them about money. There wasn't time for a financial seminar. They knew what they had been given and wanted to give to as well.

They gave because they were so very aware of all that they had in Jesus. They gave because they so loved the message

that Paul had spoken to them and wanted to ensure that others hear it.

And so, they regularly sent support.

And many years later, they did so again. Paul was way off in Rome and incarcerated. The prison system did not feed inmates, friends and relatives had to do that. And Paul could not work.

And so again, the Philippians gave.

Paul would have used this to pay for food, the cost of travel, have a cloak to ward off the damp winter chill and purchase scrolls for study. The common, ordinary needs of ministry.

When their giving made them partners with Paul. When you give regularly here—you partner with our gospel work here.

There are Christians to encourage.  
There are unbelievers to reach.  
There are hurting people to help.  
There are hopeless people to lift up.  
There are dying people to lead to the river.  
There are children to

Nearly none of that might seem glittery, but not all that is gold glitters.

And then we see what money sometimes gets used for—

“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. [18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.”

What happens when you give your money?

You receive fruit that increases to your credit  
You offer a fragrant offering pleasing to God

What does that mean?

*Fruit that increases to your credit—*

Paul is using the language of the transactional language of the marketplace. ‘Increases to your credit.’

The idea is that he is excited that the offering gives them increased credit. They are accruing credit. A credit of fruit. He is not talking about produce.

They are literally accruing interest—

What kind of interest? It is a picture of compounding interest.

What does that mean?

This means when you give to the purposes of gospel advancement you gain. When you give you get more than you give. You are accruing interest.

This is an on-going permanent gain.

No gift to God and his purposes ever made one poor. Never. Those who give enrich themselves. There is profit that accrues to your account with God when you take money out of your account here.

God literally keeps track of what we give to keep track of how to bless us in this life and the life to come. Giving is an investment.

Giving to the purposes of God is an investment. Anywhere else it is a cost. Money given to the cause of Christ is fruit.

You always gain when you give. Without exception.

“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.”

He is grateful for what they gave him so that he could have his needs provided for—but excited that they would be blessed more by what they gave.

You give toward gospel ministry. Your credit/interest grows.

Normally when you buy something you do not gain interest, you just gain the use of that thing for a while.

I buy gasoline each week and have to buy more the next.

I buy food this week and have to buy more the next.

I buy electricity this week and have to buy more the next.

I buy the use of my phone this week and have to do it again next week.

I buy water this week and have to do it again next week.

Normally when you buy something you do not gain interest, you just gain the use of that thing for a while.

When you give to his purposes you accrue interest. It might seem like a bill to be paid but it is an investment to be made.

Fruit is increased into your account—when you give. It might not seem like it. But all that gold does not glitter.

Fruit increased to their account AND

A fragrant offering...

He moves from the language of commerce to the language of the temple.

He is drawing attention to the immensity of the perception of what they did for God. They might have felt like all they did was give money—but God sees something more.

All that is gold does not glitter.

Isn't that always the way it is?

These gifts are of the highest worth.

They gave money so that Paul could eat, sleep and work to spread the gospel and Paul says that they gave a gift of inestimable value.

When you give to gospel advancement you do more than provide (ex)

You make an offering that is sweet to the Lord.

One of the great new truths this side of the open, empty tomb is the priesthood of all believers. A priest in the OT was a mediator between God and man. Men and women could not interact directly with God.

The people could not approach God.

The priests did that.

In the holy place.  
With the holy rituals  
With the holy furniture.  
On the holy days.

But now we approach God through Jesus.

There is no holy place.  
There are no holy rituals  
There is no holy furniture.  
Or holy days.

JUST Jesus.

But this side of the empty, open tomb Jesus is the great high priest and we go to him and go through no man. You and I do not need human mediators, but we have the man Christ Jesus as our mediator.

The priests of old would offer sacrifices in the temple and if they were offered rightly they were sweet and pleasing to the Lord.

We don't offer sacrifices anymore, but we can please the Lord just the same by giving regularly to gospel work.

The Philippians might have thought—wow all we did was send a bit of money to you so that you could buy some food, water, pay for soap, get some parchments to write letters and buy scrolls to study.

We just gave a little and yet.

Paul says their gift reached the nostrils of God. Better than an offering from an OT priest in the OT temple is your giving today.

Our money—can sometimes make a massive difference.

You might think—what does this have to do with our Invest fund? Everything.

The Philippians gave so that others could hear. You—if you give to Invest—give so that others can hear too. You might say—it is only a kitchen.

But it can be much more. It can be an airlock. This can make a huge difference.

How?

Imagine a new person coming to church here for the first time and she visited the website, listened about 11 min of a

sermon from last May and decided to visit. Yet twice in the span of six weeks she drove into the parking lot only to drive right back out.

Finally, she screws up the courage to walk in. She is expecting a strange and foreign place, but finds a coffee commons area. She might not know church but she is comfortable with coffee. It is a safe zone. Neutral ground.

She can ease into church because she can stand for a few minutes in this area. And she watches the Christians talk and they seem normal and average and relatable and this church thing seems less scary.

Right now, on Sundays—that area of the building is not used much. We have staged a lot of food there. Wonderful. We can do that in the new area as well.

But week to week most of us don't use that area. We want to change that.

It is not just Sunday morning that this building is used. There are people coming and going from this place every day of the week. I can't possibly begin to tell you all the groups and ministries that use this building for gospel work—but

One of the busiest nights of the week is Wednesday, Student Ministry night.

If you have kids of any age—you care most about their relationship with Jesus. A great many other pressings things:

Education, happiness, employment, state of mind—all of those things fall far behind your concern that they love Jesus. That room can be more than a place for them to get a warm drink but the all-important place for them to hang out. Instead of tromping off one of the local fast food restaurants, they can talk there.

That room could be the room that everything changes for them. Maybe they believe that Jesus is real but don't trust in him as their savior. And imagine that over the course of 27 different conversations with 8 people over 9 months and they meet Jesus.

The talks varied greatly. Some were short, some were long. Some were peppered with questions and statements like:

If Jesus cares why am I so disliked at school?  
Why do parents seem NOT to understand?  
I just don't understand what the big deal about sin is.  
Why? Why is everything so hard?  
Why should I care?

And a thousand more. And you slowly, incrementally the light of the glory of God in Christ starts take hold. That space is not going to save anyone, but it will be used for gospel ministry and it will make a difference.

If your child is 6—you are going to want these kinds of conversations for the future. And if your child is grown you are going to want a place for kids like yours.

One of the dads I know was talking to his kid about redoing the kitchen—

She said, “Why are we redoing a part of the building we never use on Sunday to begin with.”

“Exactly. That is why we want to redo it, so more people can use it.”

“Oh, I get it. I thought you were saying that it was going to stay unused. The coffee thing is cool but a gym would help more people.”

Maybe so.

But here is what we are planning for it to look like. We will show you all the renderings tonight. At the Member’s meeting.

→Rendering←

You might think—I can’t give very much—it won’t make a difference. WRONG. And that is the wrong question. Giving always makes a difference—bigger in your life than you think.

As you give you—accrue interest and bring great pleasure to God.

That is what our money can sometimes do—when we use it to advance the kingdom of Christ.

***2. What does our God always do?***

Vs. 19,

“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Meet our every need.

First God knows all your needs (EVERY NEED OF YOURS)

Paul says, “my GOD”—not because he was exclusively his God but because he knew and experienced God personally.

Once when Elvis Presley stood on the wings of one of the stages he was about to take and the crowd was losing his mind—he looked over to one of his staff and said,

“Those people don’t love me in a personal way, they don’t know what is inside me.” Elvis Presley

Paul knew God’s love in a personal way and to borrow an idea from Packer—Paul did not merely know about God he knew God. And he knew that his God would provide for them.

What can we take away from this?

Faithful giving to gospel advancement gives you an opportunity to go from knowing about God to knowing God.

Second, he will supply for them all (this life and the life to come)

He covers all your needs. As you give generously you open the door wider for the Lord to bless you. There is not one that he will miss.

Needs are not wants, and God knows the difference. We may lose many things that we want back, but our needs God will provide. We need less than we think, but that is another message for another day.

Physical and spiritual.

At this point—if you are one who looks at your budget and says, “I just don’t think I can afford to give.” I get it. I have said that. But you need to realize what regular giving is—it is saying with your actions—I trust you to provide for me.

When you say, I can’t afford to live—you are saying—I need to provide for myself. And when you give regularly and generously you are saying, “I trust you to provide for me.”

What are you saying with your money?

Third, he WILL supply (WILL SUPPLY)

He will continually supply all your needs.

How?

He is the God who has supplied his Son.  
He is the God who supplies forgiveness.  
He is the God who supplies hope.  
He is the God who supplies ongoing help.

He is the God who supplies strength for today.  
He is the God who supplies assurance his love.  
He is the God who supplies rest for our souls.  
He is the God who supplies a listening ear for our prayers.  
He is the God who supplies a help when we fall.  
He is the God who supplies our physical needs too.

And he pays all this through what?

**“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”**

The Glory of Christ.

Buddhists say the best way to NOT be disappointed is to lower your expectations. Paul says—raise yours. Is there anything that Jesus cannot provide?

