



***YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!***  
**Winter 2017-2018 Midweek/Sermon Starter**

**Unit 1:** Everything Belongs to Him  
**Sermon Series Title:** Can God Trust You?  
**Sermon 2:** Giving God Our Best  
**Bible Passage:** Mark 12:41-44

**Introduction**

It is common practice for workplaces to administer reviews of employees to keep track of work progress. Most reviews are performed monthly, quarterly, or yearly. The purpose of the review is to ensure that employees are managing their work well—that they are being good stewards. However, there is one flaw in the system: companies usually notify the employees when the evaluations will take place. Consequently, some workers “slack off” until it is time for the reviews, only giving their best performance when it is time to be evaluated.

Just like in the corporate sector, we stand for review before God. However, unlike the corporate sector, we are not notified when we will come up for review. We are called to give God our very best—at all times.

**Background/Context**

Mark 12 highlights a distinct woman whose giving was reviewed and approved by God. This significant woman gave God her very best. We can learn from this woman who was determined to give God her very best.

**A. God Monitors What We Give  
(Mark 12:41-42)**

Worship has evolved tremendously over the years. Many churches include and emphasize a plethora of components that drive the success of their ministry. Although churches are diverse, there is one thing that all churches depend on to ensure the advancement of ministry: committed people who consistently give their best. The same was true in the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry. The stability and progression of ministry depended greatly on the dedication of individual giving.

In this Scripture passage Mark reported that as Jesus was “sitting across from the temple treasury, he watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury.” If you recall, during this time Jesus was a very busy man with an intense ministerial itinerary. Yet, here we find Jesus watching people as they gave during worship. God watched these people and God watches us. From this, we should never forget that God sees what we give inside and outside the church.

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God monitors what we give because our gifts are an indication of our gratitude and devotion towards God. Jesus confirms this truth with these words, “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21). The truth is when you love someone you give to them freely. And while it is possible to give and not love, it is impossible to love and not give. Therefore, believers should give with love, for they know that God monitors all our giving.

***Application Point:*** How does your level of giving match your love for God? Remember, God monitors everything we give. Therefore, we must always give our best to God because it expresses our love for God. This week, raise your level of giving and show God how much you truly love God.

## **B. God Measures Our Motives When We Give (Mark 12:43-44)**

Mark reported that Jesus not only monitored the giving that was taking place, but Jesus also measured the giving. According to the text, Jesus observed many rich people putting in large sums and witnessed a poor widow dropping in two tiny coins worth very little. At first glance, it would appear that everyone equally gave based on what they could give. However, Jesus added a striking observation, “truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.”

God measures what we give. At first glance, it seemed that Jesus’ measurement was flawed. Jesus declared that a poor woman’s two coins were worth more than the large sums that many rich people offered. However, Jesus was not merely measuring the amounts that were given; Jesus measured the motives of those who gave.

Mark reported that Jesus not only acknowledged that this poor woman’s gift was more valuable than the others, but Jesus also applauded the sacrifice of this poor woman. Jesus said to his disciples, “for they all (the rich givers) gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had—all she had to live on.”

God recognized something in the poor woman that was not present in the rich people. Although the wealthy gave much from their hands, they did not sacrifice anything from their hearts. Jesus acknowledged and applauded this poor woman’s sacrifice because she gave from her heart.

God measures the value of our gifts by searching our hearts. God not only looks at what lies in our hands, but He also is concerned about what lies in our hearts. Jesus reminded us that God is not only focused on how we handle money; God desires for all givers to give with pure hearts. If this poor woman was able to sacrificially give from her heart, then all of us should be willing to give from our hearts as well.

***Application Point:*** How do you think God would measure the motive behind your giving? The truth is that God never forces anyone to give but God measures the depth of our gifts by evaluating the sincerity of our hearts. We all must commit ourselves to giving God our best.

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