

## The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

### LCMS Stewardship Ministry

#### October 2018 Newsletter Article

Why do we give? Is it simply because God commands us to? Or is there more to it? To be sure, the instruction and Word of God in the Bible says we should give, and this is sufficient to encourage us to give (Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:7; Gal 6:6).

But there's more to it than just obligation. We're not just trying to fulfill a work of the Law. We are bearing fruits of the Spirit given to us by our Father in heaven through His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we're not just doing what our Father said, we're also doing what He did.

Children emulate their parents. When they grow up they often carry many of the same mannerisms and characteristics as their parents, but there is more to it than that. Children copy their parents even on a more mundane level. They watch how their parents cross their legs, how they fold their hands, how they stand and sit and walk, how they do and say most everything.

And children try to copy it, which can be quite humorous when parents wish they wouldn't. It can be uncomfortable and embarrassing if a child copies or repeats something less than polite that they learned from a parent. Sitcoms thrive on these situations. It only happens because children emulate their parents because they want to be like them.

We are the children of God, by grace, through faith. In Holy Baptism, God the Father declares of us what He declared of Jesus at His Baptism in the Jordan: "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God the Father claims us as His own. He takes away all our sins, and in exchange He gives us His righteousness, His purity, His holiness, and His Spirit, by which we cry out, "Abba, Father."

We are born again, born from above, born of water and the Spirit, to a new life in Christ as His children. We are sons of God in Christ, through Baptism. And since we are sons, we are heirs – heirs who share in the glory of the Son of God. The inheritance is ours because of the Father's grace and mercy, His generosity in sending His Son in time to save us for all eternity.

And this is why we give generously of our income to the work of the church. We want to be like our heavenly Father. We want to emulate His generosity by being generous ourselves. We give to the work of the Church because we have witnessed the generous giving of our Father in heaven.

More than that, we are recipients of it. It is because we have received God our Father's gifts that we desire to give ourselves. And His gifts are not just spiritual. They are temporal and earthly as well. As the Small Catechism teaches in the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer:

**"Give us this day our daily bread."** *What does this mean?* God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. *What is meant by daily bread?* Daily bread

includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”

In other words, God gives us everything we need for the care of both body and soul. His generosity knows no bounds. Therefore, we sit down at the beginning of the year, the beginning of the month, or the beginning of the week to set aside a generous portion of God’s daily bread for His work in the Church.

We don’t do this simply because He has commanded us so to do; it is because we, as His children by grace, want to emulate His generosity in our own lives. He is our Father; we are His children. And children want to be like their parents.