

THE VINE

for internal circulation only

Vol 12/98, December 1998

Advent greetings to all JCC members and worshippers!

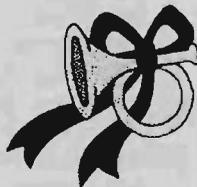
A Blessed Christmas and New Year 1999 to You. Christmas is here again. In this church season of Advent, we remember Christ's coming as God's loving gift to the world. As we celebrate and rejoice this season let us remember why Emmanuel came to be with us.

A little slum boy, whose parents were dead, was left in charge of a drunken woman, who beat and half-starved him. One of the boy's greatest delights was to gaze at the beautiful Christmas toys in the shop windows. He knew, however, that these toys were not for him, for there was ever the glass panel in between them. One day the little boy was run over by a car and taken to a hospital with leg injuries. After a week passed, to his surprise he saw other children in the hospital playing with toys they had received for Christmas. Soon he himself sat up in bed, when wonders of wonders, on the bed were a number of toys for him. He can hardly believe his eyes, he stretched out his hand, and said, "There's no glass between us now."

Do we have the same wonder and awe of God's great gift to us?, or it has become taken for granted. Sin like that glass panel has come between us and God. Christ's atoning blood has removed this barrier and with Christ in our life we can truly be thankful of God's wonderful gift to us this Christmas. Amen.

"What happy faces do we see,
their cares forgotten, every one,
This is the way it ought to be
from dawn until the set of sun.
These blessed days of joy and peace,
Bedecked with wonder, set apart,
Through all our years will never cease,
If we keep Christmas...in our heart!"

- Grace E. easley.



Pastor Martin Ycc

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Continued from the previous issue of The Vine.

How Is Our Resignation Into God's Hands Accomplished?

We see in the Bible that whenever someone approached this walk of self-resignation, he did so only with great seriousness of thought. It's easy for Christians today to say, "The Lord's will be done," in a general way. But it's another matter entirely for us to resign ourselves into the Lord's hands about a particular circumstance.

In my own life, I've had to learn to trust God one problem at a time. Think about it: How can I say I trust God with everything, if I haven't proven I can trust him with just one thing? Merely saying the words "I trust the Lord completely" isn't sufficient. I have to prove this over and over again in my life, in many areas and in everyday things. Also, our resignation into the Lord's hands can't be forced. It must be a free and willing surrender. There are several biblical examples of people who failed at this. Consider Egypt's Pharaoh: Only when he couldn't hold out against God's plagues any longer did he resign to let Israel take their wilderness journey. Likewise, many people living today have said, "I resign, I commit, I trust," only after they saw there was no other way out of their situation. But true resignation the kind that pleases God is done

freely and willingly, prior to our coming to wit's end. We are to act in covenant with the Lord, as Abraham did giving God his life as a blank check, and letting the Lord fill it all in.

God will accept no less than our all in this matter. If we resign our lives to him only half-heartedly, with any kind of reservation, we're as guilty as Ananias and Sapphira were. They pretended to give their all to the Lord, but in reality they held back a part and they paid with their lives. In short, our resignation to God must be without conditions. There can be no deals or restrictions placed on our Lord; we have to give up all control into his hands. Now, by resigning ourselves wholly into God's hands, we surrender all of our own thoughts, ways and desires and we subscribe totally to his wisdom and truth. Such a resignation is by nature a daily, ongoing work. It can't be done just once. God sees through all of our temporary submissions in times of distress, and through all of our feigned obedience.

Although the psalmist says we're to trust in God at all times, our proud flesh always desires to keep control over our lives. It constantly tries to convince us we can preserve ourselves by our own wits. And so, at the very moment we resign

ourselves wholly to the Lord, our flesh rears its stubborn will and we quickly discover how determined our heart is to make its own way.

Casting Ourselves Upon The Lord in Full Dependency is One of The Hardest Things We Christians Have to Do in Life.

Total resignation to God is an impossible task one that can be done only by faith. However, once we make this holy resignation to the Lord, no difficulty can prevail against us. Our faith in our shepherd will carry us, soul and body, through all hardships, discouragements and natural impossibilities.

We have to be aware, though, that once we make this commitment, we trip a loud alarm in hell. Once a resigned Christian yields all control to the Lord, placing every matter of his life into God's hands, Satan will rise up to oppose him with ferocity.

Consider what happened with Paul: As long as he went on his pharisaical way, apart from the Lord's will, he felt no opposition from the enemy. Yet, when he placed his life wholly in God's custody, he was buffeted and attacked relentlessly. Likewise, beloved, if you yield all to God, you'll be fiercely opposed by every power of darkness. Satan will erect mountains of frightful conditions before you, to try to drive you to unbelief. He'll flood your mind and heart with doubts and fears that had never even crossed your mind

before. His strategy is simply to turn your gaze onto "how bad things are going to get," rather than onto God's promises to keep you through any crisis.

I've felt this struggle many times throughout my years in ministry. When hard times have come, doubts have risen up in my heart and whispered accusingly, "Well, David, what are you going to do now? How will you be preserved through this crisis? What's your plan for survival?" Satan will do anything to keep our focus away from Jesus! Yet we know from the scriptures that this kind of temptation is the experience of all who commit to follow Christ.

Fear Will Inevitably Come Upon You When The Storm Hits.

The biblical prophets warn us that when we see God shaking the nations, and perious times befall us, our natural man will fear greatly. Ezekiel asked, "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?" (Ezekiel 22:14).

When God warned Noah of his coming judgments and told him to build an ark, Noah was "moved with fear" (Hebrews 11:7). Even bold, courageous David said, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments" (Psalm 119:120). And when the prophet Habakkuk saw disastrous days

ahead, he cried out, "When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble..." (Habakkuk 3:16).

Please note as you read these passages: The fear that came upon these godly men wasn't a fleshly fear, but a reverential awe of the Lord. These saints weren't afraid of the enemy of their souls but they did fear God's righteous judgments. And that's because they understood the awesome power behind the approaching calamities. They didn't fear the outcome of the storm, but rather God's holiness!

Likewise, each of us will experience overwhelming fear in the coming times of destruction and disaster. But our fear must come from a holy reverence for the Lord, and never from a fleshly anxiety about our fate. God despises all sinful fear in us, the fear of losing material things, wealth, our standard of living. All over the world today, people are filled with this kind of fear, as they see their nations' economies deteriorating. They're afraid an economic flood will sweep away everything they've labored for throughout their lifetime. And they're saying, "All my sweat, all my efforts to build an estate and prepare for the future, are about to come to ruin. I'm going to live in poverty!"

Such is the cry of unbelievers who have no hope. It ought not to be the

cry of the godly. Indeed, if you're a child of God, your heavenly father will not endure such unbelief in you. Isaiah warned: "...who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker...and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor..." (Isaiah 51:12-13). "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread [awe]" (8:13).

Let God be your fear and awe. That kind of fear leads not to death, but to life!

Right Now, America is Filled With People Who Think No Distressing Calamity Will Ever Befall Them.



Throughout history, people have believed they could handle any calamity well enough without faith in God. The prophet Isaiah writes that such scoffers boast, "...when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us..." (Isaiah 28:15). Isaiah says these people are spiritually blind: "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see..." (26:11). In other words, they won't attribute any calamity to God's work. Instead, they'll act as if there were no God in heaven at all to bring them to account for their unbelief. Many scoffers in America today think their wealth will save them from any

disaster. But God's word says in no uncertain terms that when his divine shaking begins, the ungodly rich will suddenly see their possessions as worthless: "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (2:20-21).

Other scoffers may say, "Why all the worry and concern? Things continue as they have since the very beginning of humanity. Calamities have come and gone, but we've always survived. Economies may collapse, empires may fall, but human life goes on. "We can't listen to these prophets of doom they've been saying the same things for centuries. The world hasn't ended, as they've said it would many times. The bad times have always given way to the good. We just need to enjoy life while we can."

It's true that God's prophets have sounded warnings in every generation. But history proves that God has always sent his judgments in due time. John Owen, the great Puritan preacher, spoke the following message to his congregation on April 9, 1680: "You know that for many years, without failing, I have been warning you continually of an approaching calamitous time, and considering the sins that have been the causes of

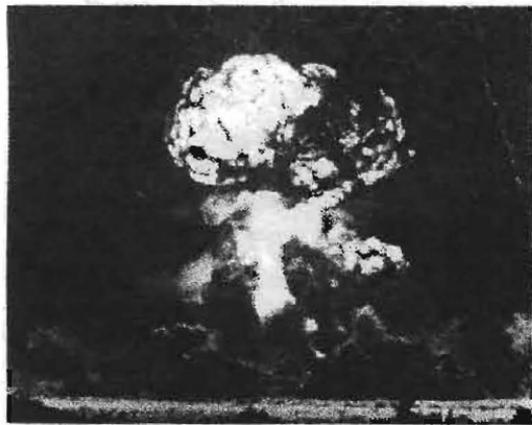
it...I have told you that judgment will begin in the house of God; that God seems to have hardened our hearts from his fear...= and that none knows what the power of his wrath will be. In all these things I have foretold you of perilous, distressing, calamitous times...these all now lie at the door, and are entering in upon us."

Scoffers today may read Owen's words and say, "This proves my point! Here's a doomsday preacher from three hundred years ago who tried to put a scare in his society. But the world has continued, in spite of everything he said. Things have



gone on as usual!" What such scoffers don't acknowledge is that God did send his awful judgments on that society. John Owen lived to weep over a flaming holocaust that engulfed London and destroyed that

great city. In fact, he saw the fulfillment of every one of his powerful prophecies wars, destruction, shattered economies, nationwide depression, diseases that wiped out multitudes of careless, unconcerned people. Yet before he ever saw a single one of these calamities take place, Owen faithfully cried out from his pulpit: "I am going to show you how we ought to deport ourselves in and under the distressing calamities that are coming upon us, and may reach, it may be, up to the very neck."



Beloved, we're living in just such a time as Owen's. And in times like these, there is only one response to the coming financial holocaust: "The just shall live by faith!" Owen admonished his people with tears: "Get you an ark, prepare an ark for the safety of you and your families." Then he added: "That ark is Jesus Christ. There is no other way, no other ark for Isaiah, the prophet, said of our Lord, 'And a man [Christ] shall be as an hiding place from the wind,

and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadows of a great rock in a weary land.' "That is our ark blessed are they that trust only in him...I know of no safety, no deliverance, in the trials and afflictions coming upon the earth, but in believing Christ as our only refuge."

Lord, Give Us Spiritual Eyes to See Your Protective Wall of Fire Round About Spiritual Zion, Keeping and Preserving All Who Resign Themselves Into Your Hands!

We may see dangers on all sides, including a devil and his principalities who want to drown our faith in doubts. But we have a fiery guard of angels surrounding us and a God who is under oath to carry us through any disaster we may face.

So, let me ask you do you want to face the coming storm with quiet confidence and peace of mind? Then die today to all your own ways and means of saving yourself and commit the keeping of your life wholly to God's care. He's your good, loving shepherd and he is faithful to see you through all!

by David Wilkerson

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Times Square Church Information | New Reader Information



Kids Camp held at JCC church grounds from 21 - 23rd November 1998.



1st LCS
Reformation Day
Celebration
at JCC
on 31 Oct 1998



Care Group Profile Clementi Care Group

We knew the importance of a Christian Care Group. However, we procrastinated from joining any group after the Pandan/Teban CG ceased to meet as the members moved to other residential estates. Nevertheless, sisters from Taman Jurong CG always encouraged and invited us to join them. But there was always a "good" reason that held us back.

Post retreat 98, we strongly felt that there should be a Care Group in Clementi. Therefore we decided to open our house to promote Christian fellowship among JCC members living in Clementi who had yet to belong to any CG. In fact, the church directory showed that the members who lived in this locality were sufficient to form a group. We spoke to those who were yet unattached to any CG about our plan.

A brother encouragingly said, "If only two of you with the Heavenly Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit there would be at least five people in the group." There was also some opinion that since the church already had so many Care

Groups, there should not be any need for us to set up another one.

We finally settled for the decision to go ahead with our plan so that those who resided in Clementi would have the convenience of fellowship at a nearby Care Group. By the grace of God, the Clementi Care Group (CCG) was inaugurated on 22nd July 1998. Those present at the first meeting were Pastor Martin Yee, Pastor Michael Christian, Tommy, Edna and Chee Meng.

Presently, the committee members of the CCG are as follows:

Chairman:

Roy Ang

Treasurer:

Lee Chee Meng

Recreation:

Tommy Tsu

Prayer Co-ordinator:

Juria Loo

Members:

Edna

Ann Lin

(As Sis Ann Lin has to travel extensively on her work assignments, she is hardly able to join us regularly. We shall continue to pray for her.)

Ours is a small group although there are about six families of JCC members living in Clementi. Regarding those who had already been with other CGs prior to the formation of the CCG, we would continue to encourage them to be with the group where they are comfortable. The objective of the CCG is to make available Christian fellowship opportunities and foster the Christian values of care and love as our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us.

Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as yourself." It is indeed a challenge to our Care Group. We hope that this group could develop in members the spirit of being doers of the Word rather than mere listeners.

Thus far, members of the CCG have studied together the first chapter of "10 things a Christian must know". Having had the experience of God's blessings through our spiritual fellowship and sharing of mutual concerns and prayers, we pray and believe that God will continue to bless us so that we can be a blessing to others. We also wish that more families would make their homes available for care group meetings. Here is a quotation from the Book of Hebrews:

"And let us consider how we may spur one another unto love and good deeds.

Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but let us encourage one another - and all the more as we see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)



Roy Ang

A new lookit stuff the Oxford dictionary would never admit to... hehehe..

Father :A banker provided by nature.

Rumour :News that travels at the speed of sound.

Criminal :A guy no different from the rest of us...except that he got caught.

Worry :Interest paid on trouble before it falls due.

Boss : Someone who is early when you are late and late when you are early.

Philosopher :A fool who torments himself during life, to be spoken of when dead.

Adult :A person who has stopped growing at both ends and started growing in the middle.

SALVATION PRAYER

God recently provided me with an opportunity to share the Gospel with a friend who was concerned about the spiritual health of her eldest daughter. From this experience, I thank our Lord for opening my eyes to see the spiritual truth as written in the Holy Bible. Praise His Name!

This friend, let us call her Mrs. A, had been attending church services for many years with her children, but on an irregular basis. During our sharing, she told me that the last time they attended church was 6 months ago. Her non-believing husband had allowed them to attend church on the condition that they do not get baptized. So, although not baptized, she had the impression that they were already saved because years ago, they had said the prayer of repentance and accepted Christ as their Savior. (Let's call this the **salvation prayer**). Despite being a Christian for many years, Mrs. A did not know that there are four Gospels in the NT and apparently knew little about God's Word, a fact that surprised me somewhat during the sharing.

I began to ask myself these questions:

a) *Was Mrs. A and her children saved as she had thought?*

b) *What does it take to recite an effective salvation prayer, if there is such a thing as effectiveness?*

As **salvation is by grace through faith**, I cannot answer the first question. Our Almighty God is a God of Mercy. Who am I to say whether she is saved or not?

Allow me to share with you my opinion in answering the second question.

Shortly after my conversion, Christian friends told me at different times: "Salvation is given **free** to all believers". "Once you repent before the Lord Jesus and accept Him as your Savior, the Holy Spirit will come upon you immediately. At that moment, you are saved. Salvation is assured", and "baptism is only a public declaration of your new status. You are already saved once you have accepted Christ".

Salvation is like our government's social benefits. Yes, they are given free. But an applicant must meet specific criteria. To be effective, there must be **true repentance** and **genuine faith** when reciting the salvation prayer.

The New Bible Dictionary (3rd Edition) describes repentance as "to regret, feel remorse, and a turning round, a

complete alteration of the basic motivation and direction of one's life". Faith is "trust, believe, hope".

Thus, without a genuine desire to turn away from past sins and putting full trust in our Lord when accepting Him as Savior, one may not have properly accepted Christ. However, a distinction has to be made between 'no faith' and 'weak faith'. In the former instance, he was only paying lip service and cannot be said to desire acceptance of Christ Jesus. (A new convert may not have as strong a faith as a matured Christian, which is sometimes the case and is all right)

Faith is also about right attitude towards our Lord. A man who really believes God will act on that belief. When he believes, he commits himself decisively to Christ. Therefore, faith also gives rise to commitment.

There is a difference between a decision to do something and a commitment to our Lord. Many marriages are falling apart today because the couples make a decision to marry, but have no commitment to make the marriage work.

A young Christian, depending on his age at the time of conversion, may have a 15 or 30 years' head start for his 'flesh' as compared to his 'spirit'. Without commitment, the lust of his

flesh may quickly dilute his faith and he soon fall away.

We know that in a group, group behaviour can act as a powerful influence for individual members to conform to the group norm. A non-believer may, under such circumstance, follow his group and accept Christ during a rally or revival meeting, without giving it much thought beforehand. If he did not truly repent, he may be under a false sense of being saved.

For God can see through our masks (to borrow Dr. Solomon's terminology he used at the last Church Retreat).

In John 6:64, Lord Jesus knew from the beginning that His disciple Judas Iscariot did not believe in Him. In John 6:70, He said Judas was a devil. On the other hand, although Peter disowned Him three times, He knew Peter to be a believer and that Peter's failure was a weakness of the nerve. (Mathew 16: 13-19).

How does a believer then know if he is living a spirit-filled life? I shall list a few guides from the Word of God:

- 1) In 1 John 2:3-4 & 6, the Apostle John wrote "we know we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. The man who says, "I know Him" but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Whoever



claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did".

- 2) In Galatians 5:22-25, the fruits of the Holy Spirit would be manifested in a believer for others to see.
- 3) In James 2:14-26, the author explained that genuine faith in the Lord would be reflected in a believer's deeds.

Therefore, if a believer does not read the Bible, does not allow Jesus to mould him as a potter would to his clay, but persists on his sinful habits, and above all, doesn't see a need to be baptized after years of attending church, he may wish to examine whether he should have accepted Christ. There are not many external signs of conversion pointing to his acceptance.

For the words of our Lord in Mathew 7:21-23 is a stern counsel. And I quote. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Although these people prophesied and did many mighty works in Lord Jesus' name (ie many external signs of conversion), the ability to do such works did not guarantee that they were Christians. Jesus says, "I never knew you!" Isn't it worrying for those who show less?

Let us serve our Lord faithfully. And allow the Holy Spirit to work within us and through us, in accordance with His Will. May God bless us all, His children. Amen.

Leong Kok Hwa

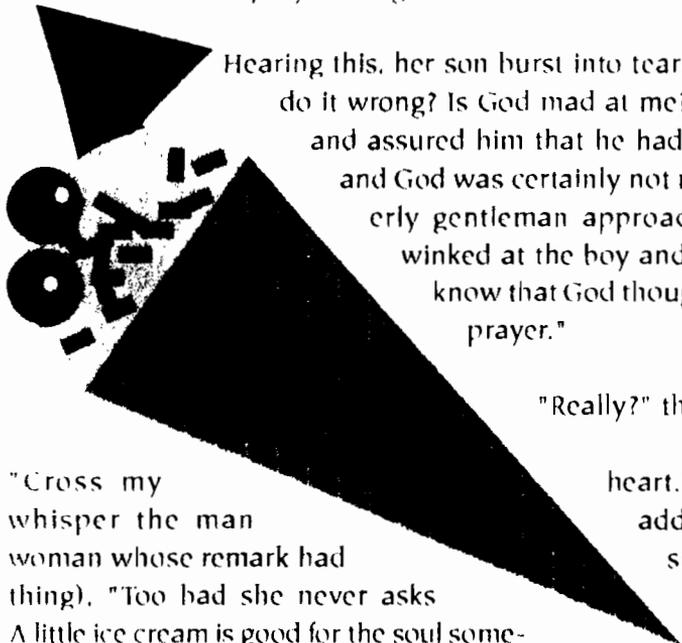


Even Ice Cream



As they prepared to eat dinner at a restaurant, Kim's six-year-old son asked if he could say grace. As they bowed their heads he said, "God is good. God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if mom gets us ice cream for dessert. Amen!"

Along with the laughter from the other customers nearby Kim heard a woman remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice-cream! Why, I never!"



Hearing this, her son burst into tears and asked, "Did I do it wrong? Is God mad at me?" As Kim held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job and God was certainly not mad at him, an elderly gentleman approached the table. He winked at the boy and said, "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer."

"Really?" the boy asked.

"Cross my
whisper the man
woman whose remark had
thing). "Too bad she never asks
A little ice cream is good for the soul some-

heart." Then in theatrical
added (indicating the
started the whole
God for ice cream
times."

Naturally, Kim bought her kid's ice cream at the end of the meal. What happened next came as a complete surprise.

"My son stared at his for a moment and then did something I will remember the rest of my life," Kim explains. "He picked up his sundae and without a word walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, "Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes and my soul is good already."

Author: Unknown

*Selia
Chong*

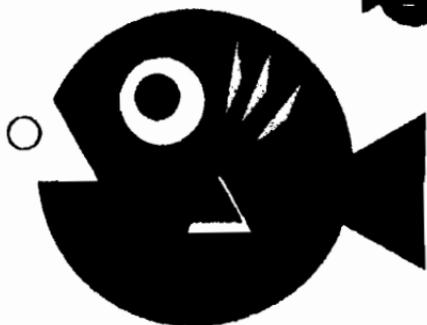
*Mike
Onikka
Nagelsen*

*Michelle
Wee*

*Jonathan
Foo
Zhi
Bao*

WELCOME!

We were glad to meet you in November. May we continue to share in the Lord's blessings as a community in Jurong Christian Church.



Financial Advice From The Bible



What reminder are we given about borrowing money?

Proverbs 22:7, NIV. "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

God expects fairness in business dealings.



Proverbs 16:11, TLB. "The Lord demands fairness in every business deal. He established this principle."



Honesty and fairness are always expected of those who wish to please God.

Isaiah 33:15, TLB. "I will tell you who can live here: All who are honest and fair, who reject making profit by fraud, who hold back their hands from taking bribes, who refuse to listen to those who plot murder, who shut their eyes to all enticement to do wrong."

It is important to work to earn a living.



II Thessalonians 3:11-12, TLB. "Yet we hear that some of you are living in laziness, refusing to work, and wasting your time in gossiping. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we appeal to such people--we command them--to quiet down, get to work, and earn their own living."

How do you spell...



What does it mean

A TITHER IS...

T

houghtful. A tither is prayerful. A tither is a person who carefully considers God's will in the matter of giving.

I

ntentional. A tither plans. A tither sets aside ten percent to give and then carefully determines how to use the remaining ninety percent in faithful, responsible ways.

T

enacious. A tither stays with it. A tither operates on the basis of faith in God. A tither believes that God will provide enough so that a basic gift of ten percent can be given, and enough will still be available for all other needs and purposes.

H

ope-filled. A tither is more than just hopeful. A tither is hope-filled by the Holy Spirit. Filled to overflowing. Filled with so many good things that ten percent is a minimum response. Not an upward limit, but a starting point for upward giving!

E

ffective. A tither performs real ministry by providing adequate means to minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

R

esponsive. Giving is a response to what God has already given—the Good News: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..."