

There is a difference between money belonging to an individual and what has been given to the Lord:

Acts 5:1-4 A certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. ² And he kept back [part] of the proceeds, his wife also being aware [of it,] and brought a certain part and laid [it] at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back [part] of the price of the land for yourself? ⁴ "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

The church's role:

To provide for its widows . . .

Acts 6:1-3 Now in those days, when [the number of] the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, . . . ³ "Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

. . . but only after their families have been given the opportunity, and then only certain widows

1 Timothy 5:3-16 Honor widows who are really widows. ⁴ But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. ⁵ Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. ⁶ But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. ⁷ And these things command, that they may be blameless. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹ Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, [and not unless] she has been the wife of one man, ¹⁰ well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if

she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. ¹¹ But refuse [the] younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, ¹² having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. . . . ¹⁴ Therefore I desire that [the] younger [widows] marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. ¹⁵ For some have already turned aside after Satan. ¹⁶ If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

To provide for needy brethren and brethren only

Acts 2:44-45 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

Acts 4:34-37 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, ³⁵ and laid [them] at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. ³⁶ And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷ having land, sold [it,] and brought the money and laid [it] at the apostles' feet.

Acts 11:27-30 . . . There was going to be a great famine throughout all the world. . . . ²⁹ Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. ³⁰ This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Romans 15:26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

Money may be set aside in a treasury to send to needy brethren

1 Corinthians 16:1-3 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ² On the first [day] of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. ³ And when I come, whomever you approve by [your] letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

The extent? To provide equality

2 Corinthians 8:1-15 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³ For I bear witness that according to [their] ability, yes, and beyond [their] ability, [they were] freely willing, ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And not [only] as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and [then] to us by the will of God. ⁶ So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. ⁷ But as you abound in everything -- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us -- [see] that you abound in this grace also.

⁸ I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. ¹⁰ And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; ¹¹ but now you also must complete the doing [of it;] that as [there was] a readiness to desire [it,] so [there] also [may be] a completion out of what [you] have. ¹² For if there is first a willing mind, [it is] accepted according to what one has, [and] not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For [I do] not [mean] that others should be eased and you burdened; ¹⁴ but by an equality, [that] now at this time your abundance

[may supply] their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack -- that there may be equality.¹⁵ As it is written, "He who [gathered] much had nothing left over, and he who [gathered] little had no lack."

The individual's role:

Note: The following scriptures apply to what individuals do with their personal resources, not what the church does from its treasury.

To give without hesitation or discrimination

Matthew 5:40-42 "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have [your] cloak also.⁴¹ "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.⁴² "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Luke 10:29-42 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"³⁰ Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain [man] went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded [him,] and departed, leaving [him] half dead.³¹ "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.³² "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.³³ "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.³⁴ "So he went to [him] and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.³⁵ "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave [them] to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you."³⁶ "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"³⁷ And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

To help widows and orphans

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit* orphans and widows in their trouble, [and] to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

* (Greek <episkeptomai>: "to look upon in order to help or to benefit; to look after, have care for, provide for" - Strong's Greek and Hebrew Lexicon)

Is unlimited

Galatians 6:10 As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Will be compensated

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.⁷ [So let] each one [give] as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.⁸ And God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all [things,] may have an abundance for every good work.⁹ As it is written:

*"He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever."*

¹⁰ Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have [sown] and increase the fruits of your righteousness,¹¹ while [you are] enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

(Scriptures quoted from the New King James Version, Holy Bible © 1983 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.)

Some Scriptures Relating To **BENEVOLENCE**



