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Walt and Carolyn Barton have been working hard to inform and transform our church so that we all have a Biblical foundation for giving to God's work through our church. Here is the first of several messages from Walt and Carolyn. Read the content. Grasp the passion in their spirit as they talk about something I am also very passionate about. Then, go out and do what God is calling you to do. And thanks, Walt and Carolyn, for sharing your heart and passion with all of us!

Our Church is starting our Gratitude Campaign for 2008. In our first meeting it only took us a short time to come up with the name for our campaign.

"Changing Lives for God"

Then the question that followed was: How do we do that? Simple enough question don't you think? We answered the first question with another question.

"What if we all said yes to God?"

Another simple and easy enough question, or is it? One interesting thing that has happened to Carolyn and me since we agreed to be involved in this campaign is the input we have received from others. It's amazing how not one person we have asked to do something has said no. People in our Church are willing to sacrifice to "Change Lives for God". Did I say sacrifice? Pastor Randy will have more to say about that in upcoming sermons.

Nothing comes cheap does it? Discipleship, "Changing Lives for God", occurs best in the application of the principles of truth to the living of life. In other words, to sit a bunch of people down in a room and try to disciple them doesn't really get it. What we have got to do is apply biblical wisdom to the flow of life. And this is what Jesus did with his disciples. They walked through the world and He taught them from what He saw happening.

Mark 12:43-44 tells us when Jesus saw the widow's mite given as compared to the large contributions of some, He called his disciples together and said: "I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living."

He solved their problems with spiritual solutions. That's discipling. Also it answers another simple question. What should we give? The widow gave it all. Zacchaeus gave half of his wealth and repaid four hundred percent to any he had taken from wrongly. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 says, "The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

In Christ,
Walt Barton

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