

Blessed to be a Blessing

God . . . richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. I Timothy 6:17c

General Sam Houston, the hero of the Texas republic, came to believe in Christ as his Savior late in life. When Houston was taken to the stream where candidates for church membership were being baptized, he was reminded to remove his personal valuables before he went into the water.

Houston took off his glasses, removed some papers from his vest pocket, and handed over his watch. The pastor asked Houston if he might want to remove his wallet so that his money didn't get wet. Houston stopped for a moment and then replied to the pastor, "It has been my observation that the one part of a Christian most in need of baptism might well be his wallet." With that Houston went into the water.

Martin Luther is quoted as having said, "A man needs three conversions: First of the head, then of the heart, and finally of the pocketbook."

Houston and Luther were making the same point. Despite our faith in God, generosity on our part does not always come easily. We can often make the needs of others and the needs of Christ's church low priorities in life when it comes to our money. Our wallets may well be in need of baptism.

God blesses us, so that we can be a blessing to others. God is generous to us, beginning with forgiveness in Christ, so that we can be generous to others. Because God has so richly provided for us, we can find enjoyment in sharing His gifts. That, however, is a difficult lesson to learn. Satan would make of us Scrooges—the character in Charles Dickens' famous Christmas story, a "grasping, clutching, covetous old sinner." Our God would have us be like Him—generous, joyful, loving givers.