



The Aroma of LOVE

Mary went to the party without an invitation. It didn't matter to her that all the self-important guests sneered at her.

All that mattered was that she get close to Jesus, the guest of honor. She brought a gift for Him, a treasure way beyond her budget, but that didn't matter, either. All that mattered was that she deliver her gift.

Mary had been an immoral person, but Jesus had forgiven her and helped her start a better life. Now she wanted to do something to show her gratitude.

Spotting Jesus in the dining room, she made a beeline straight to Him. In her hand was a bottle of the most expensive perfume she had ever bought. It was intended to be used only a drop or two at a time. But Mary emptied the entire bottle! She doused Jesus' feet with the perfume.

In Jesus' time, putting perfumed oil on a guest's feet was a special act of honor. But Mary did even more. Over and over she kissed His feet and wiped them with her long hair. She was so thankful for His kindness to her that she wanted to do something very special.

Meanwhile, the guests scowled. The host publicly humiliated her by bringing up her bad reputation. But Jesus told him, "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing for me. Wherever the gospel is

preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her” (see Mark 14:6-9).

And so today people are still telling the unusual story of Mary and her expensive gift to Jesus.



1. What was the motive for Mary's gift? Luke 7:47.

Giving grows out of love

Love makes the difference! Without love, giving to Jesus is a burden. With love, it is a joy! Because Mary recognized how much she had been forgiven, it was easy for her to give Jesus an expensive gift.

Jesus has done the same for us. Like Mary, we have been forgiven of our sins. We should be just as grateful as she was. But often we're too selfish and busy with our own lives to express our thankfulness. God has to continually remind us to demonstrate our love to Him in practical ways. So He has provided a way for us to learn to be generous and thankful.

2. What is God's plan to help His people learn generosity? Leviticus 27:30.

Tithe is one-tenth of a person's income or earnings. God says that the tithe belongs to Him. Actually, God is owner of everything (see Psalm 24:1), but He specifically asks for ten percent of our income.

Test your understanding of this concept of tithe by solving the following case study:

“Can you mow our lawn while we’re gone on vacation?”

Mr. Wade asked. “We’ll be gone for the entire month of August, so you’ll need to mow it four times. I’ll pay you \$25 each time.”

“Sure,” said Kirk.

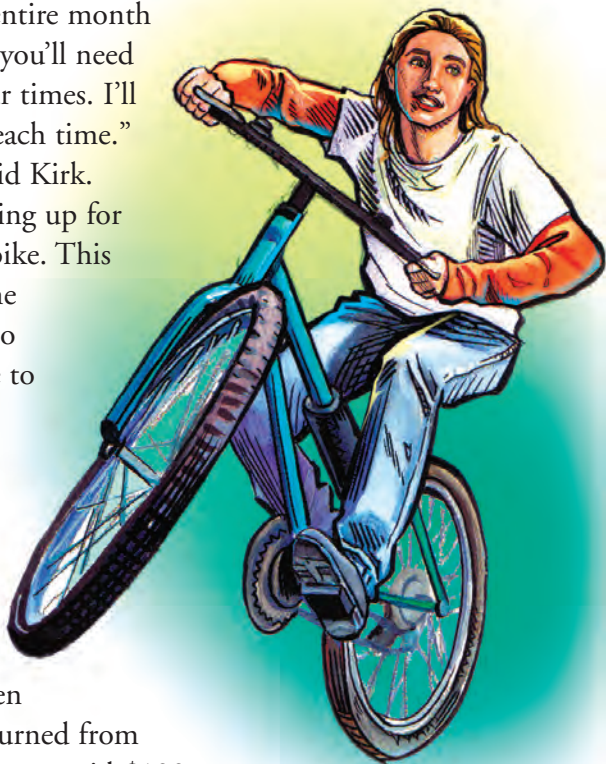
“I’ve been saving up for a new BMX bike. This job will net me enough cash to finally be able to buy it.”

“Great!”

Mr. Wade replied.

Kirk faithfully cared for the yard. When the Wades returned from vacation, Kirk got paid \$100. His pocket bulged with cash.

Before Kirk purchased the bike, however, he wanted to give tithe back to God. Because he was so thankful that Jesus died for him on the cross, Kirk wanted to express his gratitude by doing what He asked.



3. How much would Kirk give as God's tithe? \$

If you answered \$10, then you're correct. But now suppose that Kirk is so thankful to Jesus that he wants to give something above and beyond the tithe. This would be called an "offering." The amount of an offering can vary. It's simply an extra token of love.

Numbers 18:21 tells us what tithe is used for. In Bible times the Levites, who cared for the spiritual needs of God's people, were supported by tithe. Today tithe supports people like pastors and missionaries so they can spend their time sharing the good news of Jesus.

4. What does God promise to those who faithfully give tithe?
Malachi 3:10.

Giving is a response to love

Just a little while after the party where Mary poured the perfume on Jesus' feet, Jesus and His disciples went into Jerusalem to participate in the Passover feast. This Jewish holiday celebrates the time when God delivered the Jews from Egypt. Jesus used this occasion to introduce what today we call the "Lord's Supper" or the "communion service." Read about it in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Pay special attention to verse 26.

5. Write below why we are to continue this practice of the Lord's Supper.

Just as giving tithes and offerings shows our gratitude for Jesus' love and blessings, so we are invited to use the symbols of the Communion Service to "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). For the Christian, it's like getting rebaptized in the sense that we once again identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It's just another way to show Jesus how thankful we are that He died on the cross to save us from our sins.



The "bread" and "fruit of the vine" (grape juice) of the Lord's Supper represent Jesus and His sacrifice for us. The unleavened bread (bread made without yeast) represents Jesus' body. The grape juice represents Jesus' blood. (See Mark 14:22-26.)

As a person eats the bread and drinks the juice, he or she should remember in a special way the death of Jesus for us all. It is only because of Jesus' wounded body (symbolized by the bread) and His spilled blood (symbolized by the "fruit of the vine") that we can go to heaven someday. Now that's something for which we ought to be very thankful!

Giving to others

Another important part of the Lord's Supper is washing one another's feet. In Jesus' time servants washed their master's feet because they would be dirty from traveling. The reason many Christians still practice footwashing at the communion service is because Jesus did it. It's a great reminder to show our love for others by serving them.

6. Read John 13:1–17 and check each statement that you think is a good reason for practicing footwashing when we take part in the communion service.

- It shows that we are clean from sin through faith in Jesus.
- It represents our desire to serve others, much like Jesus served his disciples.
- It represents a rebaptism.
- It is a good way to develop a humble attitude before eating the bread and drinking the wine.

All of the reasons listed above are valid reasons to participate in washing one another's feet before the Lord's Supper. But it doesn't stop there. Our love for Jesus should overflow in practical acts of service every day!

The next time you are present at the Lord's Supper, picture Jesus washing His disciples' feet. Imagine Him hanging on the cross. Think about the power of Jesus' resurrection. Just focus on Jesus! And don't forget to say "Thank You" by giving your tithes and offerings and by serving others.



Talking to God

Dear Father, Thank You for dying for me. I want to express my gratitude by giving You my tithes and offerings, by participating in the Lord's Supper, and by serving people around me. Keep my heart always focused on You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

kidZone

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Scriptures are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted:

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