**12 Prayers for the Offering**

1.

Father in heaven,

Thousands of years ago, one of the wise teachers you inspired looked at the way people are with money and he called the whole project “a chasing after the wind.”

He said things like, “whoever loves money never has money enough and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.” He said things like, “The sleep of a poor labourer is sweet, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.” He said things like, “I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth is hoarded, to the harm of its owner, or lost through some misfortune.”

“This, too, is vanity.”

God, thousands of years later we still stand under those all-wise words. And if we’ve been losing sleep over our money, or hoarding money to our own harm, or never satisfied with our income, Lord, I invite your gracious, loving Spirit to convict us of that vanity today.

Set us free from chasing after the wind, and set us, instead, to chasing after the Way of Jesus. With all our heart, soul, mind and strength may we live as his servant-followers and sibling-friends.

It’s in his name and for his sake we pray, amen.

2.

Perfectly-Wise God,

We remember how the Book you inspired tells us so bluntly:

“Keep yourselves free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God himself has said ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

You asked us there, God, to long for your faithful presence in our lives more than any material thing this world has to offer. And you asked us to let your faithful presence in our lives teach us to be content with the stuff we already have.

God, that goes so against the grain of this world we live in, where “discontent” seems to be the only measure of things and “more” the only thing worth desiring.

So we invite your Spirit to set us free from the love of money today, and ask you to give us deep contentedness. Make us fully satisfied in the promise of your unfailing love.

Cut against the grain in us we pray, so that we might give this offering today out of that contentedness; the peace of Christ which passes all understanding.

It’s in his name and for his sake we pray. Amen.

3.

God, We think about the all-wise Law that you gave your ancient people long ago.

You told us: When we’re harvesting the land and we’ve missed some of the grain in the field, just leave it there. That way the homeless, the orphan and the widow will have something to gather too...

And when we’re picking the fruit off our trees or grapes off our vine, don’t go over the branches a second time. That way there’ll be something there for the homeless, the orphan, and the widow.

And God, in that all-wise Law, you taught your people to remember: The outcast. The powerless. The downtrodden. And to remember that we were once where they are now. Or we might have been. Or we might one day be.

And you reminded us that wringing every last drop out of life—just for ourselves—squeezing every last bit out of the land—just for ourselves—grabbing and hoarding and consuming– just for ourselves. That’s just not your way.

So God, as we make this offering of money today—in this world where so few of us actually gather grain or grapes anymore—God, can you make this offering of money today a reminder of those very same things?

And then, God, can you give us the wisdom we’ll need to use this money in your mission in the world: to include the outcast, to lift up the powerless, to defend the downtrodden. And to show the world that wringing out every last drop for ourselves alone... that not the way of Jesus.

It’s in his name, and for Your glory we pray. Amen.

4.

God, In this act of offering today, can you show us where our hearts are at?

Because we remember how your Son Jesus told his followers: don’t store up treasure on earth, where things rot and fail and get stolen. Instead, he said, instead store up treasure in Heaven—imperishable, unfailing, unsteal-able treasure in Heaven— “Because where your treasure is, that’s where your heart will be, too.”

That’s what he said.

So God, can you show us where our hearts are, today, by showing us what our treasure really is? Let this moment here be about more than just putting some money in the plate as it passes by; let it be about discovering where our treasure really is—what we really trust in, and what we really hope for.

And God, if we’ve stored up earthly treasure, as a substitute for heavenly treasure, O God, as hard as it might be to see, can you show us that, too? Because we want hearts fixed on heavenly treasure today: the imperishable hope, the unfailing faithfulness, the unsteal-able love that you’ve offered us in Jesus Christ. It’s in his name, and for Your glory we pray, Amen.

5.

God: you taught us that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

So we pray now that you would increase our blessings: give us many opportunities to give, deepen the wisdom we show as we give, and multiply the joy we discover when we give.

Teach us to distinguish between uses of money that enrich life, and uses of money that actually kill the life in us. And save us from making these gifts today a substitute fo the gift of ourselves. Instead, may they be outward signs of our inward commitment: an act of total self giving, for Jesus' sake, in whose name we pray, Amen.

6.

God, behind this offering lies the busy world of our working life—the market, the classroom, the office, the shop, the home, the open road. You gave us this work to do and you were present with us in it all. So we ask your blessing on those places, now, and the people we work with: bosses, clients, colleagues, partners and peers. Can you make us lights of your grace and goodness towards them all?

And Jesus, can you spare us from creating a world where wealth accumulates, but our souls shrivel. Let this act of offering today remind us of what you taught us so beautifully: that if we gain the whole world but lose our souls, we`ve really profited nothing.

Because it`s in Your name and it`s for Your glory we pray. Amen.

7.

God, we remember how your word says:

“The one who’s stingy with the seed at planting time will have a stingy harvest; And the one who’s generous with the seed at planting time, will have a bountiful harvest."

We want a bountiful harvest, God;

so can you help us to sow seed generously today?

Not just our money,

but our time, and our talents, and our spiritual gifts

our availability to each other and our encouragement of each other

our availability to you, and our commitment to your ministry in this world

our laughter with those who laugh, and our tears with those who mourn

our love for Jesus, and for his people, and for our enemies

forgiveness and compassion and reconciliation and peacemaking

God, can you make us generous sowers of these kinds of seeds today?

So that we’ll also reap these kinds things richly at the harvest?

And can you make our act of offering today that kind of a seed-sowing?

And a sign of the generosity that you’ve begun to sow in our hearts.

Make us into the bountiful people of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

8.

God,

In your book, the Apostle Paul told us:

here’s what I want you to do, God helping you:

Take your everyday, ordinary life—

your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—

and place it before God as an offering.

Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

That’s what we want to do today as we give: place our everyday lives before you as an offering you’ll be happy with. Can you help us do that? And can you make these gifts of money here be a sign of that desire in us?

In Jesus name and for his sake we pray.

Amen.

9.

God,

You are the Giver of every good and perfect gift:

You gave us your Son Jesus, to find us when we were lost.

You gave us your Spirit, to fill us when we were empty.

You gave us all sorts of spiritual gifts to heal and strengthen and build up what was fallen and weak and broken.

And you gave us the very money that we're now offering back to you.

So as we give now, will you remind us once more that every good and perfect gift comes from you? And will you give once more? Out of the infinite riches of your love for us, will you give us the imagination and skill we’ll need to use this money for your plan in the world. May it be used to bring fellowship where there is enmity, and peace where there is fear, and hope where there is despair.

We pray this for glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.Amen.

10.

God,

We live in a world that continually weighs and measures things by asking "how much." How much did you... earn? win? accomplish? How much did you give?

But your Son Jesus stood by the offering plate in Your house a long time ago, watching as the rich came and gave out of their great abundance.

How much did they give? Well, your book didn't write down the sum.

But then a poor widow came and only gave two pennies. Humble and devoted and trusting, she gave all she had. And Jesus pointed to her and said: "She gave more than all the others combined."

Your book wrote down the two pennies.

And their Your Son taught us that you don't ask "How Much." You weigh and measure things by asking "how." How did you earn? How did you accomplish. How did you give?

God, can you make us like that widow today? As we offer back to you only what you;ve already given to us, can you make us humble, devoted, and trusting? So that our gifts-- whatever the sum-- would be pleasing in your sight?

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

11.

God,

As we put money in the offering plate today,

Show us how the spiritual and the material,

worship and work,

How in some mysterious way they’re coming together here.

Remind us today as we give,

that you invite us to love you,

mind, heart, soul and strength,

with our hands as well as our hearts,

our substance as well as our spirits.

And then give us eyes to see those places where we earned this money—on the jobsite, in the classroom, at the office, the storefront, the boardroom, the market, the home—wherever it was—to see them as sacred places where your grace is at work, and your Spirit is present, and your love has staked its claimed.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

12.

God,

Your Son Jesus taught us that we can’t serve two masters.

We remember how he said it: you can’t serve God and money, because either you’ll love one and hate the other; or you’ll be devoted to one and despise the other.

God, if we’ve been trying to serve two masters like that—you and money—will you show us that today?

Will you show us? So that in your great love for us you can redeem us from that half-hearted, double-minded, willy-nilly kinda of life with you, and lead us into the life that is life indeed: a life of rich, deep, full fellowship with you?

We ask this because we’re about to give an offering of money today, and we don’t want it to be about going through the motions, dropping a few pennies in the jar, patting ourselves on the back for what we did or didn’t give. We want to be serving the right master.

Can you make our offering today an act of whole-hearted devotion to you, an act of cheerful, eager partnership with you and what you’re up to in the world?

In Christ’s name and for his sake we ask it. Amen.