

CHAPTER

GIVING



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Every time someone gives us a gift there is something deep inside us that simply desires to respond, we say thank you, we give something back in return, we repay their kindness with our own generosity. This is normal. This is right. This is at the heart of what drives a Christian to be generous towards God.

“ **This is real love - not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.** ”

1 John 4:10 (NLT)

JESUS MADE THE FIRST MOVE

Jesus has given us so much already, he gave us His own life and we gave him all our sin and unrighteousness. Sounds like a raw deal for Him right? Well, it would have been if he didn't rise from the dead, but he did rise and he is alive forever! The truth is, a Christian never needs anything more than the sacrifice of Jesus to be motivated and moved with an unwavering desire to give back to God in response to all he has done. He gave us Jesus, He gave us the Holy Spirit, He gives us hope, joy, peace and love, and in return we live a *life* of generosity towards Him in all that we do.

GIVING TO GOD IS ALWAYS A RESPONSE

Some people can't understand why Christians are always giving so much of their time, energy and finances to the local church they're a part of. That's because until you have received from God it's very difficult to give to Him with a good attitude. You see, giving to God is a *response* to his love, not an attempt to *earn* his love. We are already fully accepted, fully loved and fully saved and no amount of giving can earn from God what he has given to you for free as a gift. That's good news!



GIVING IS ABOUT YOUR HEART

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... for [where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...](#)

“ No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. ”

Matthew 6:19-24

God is not so much interested in your money as he is interested in your heart. He wants to know that you love him and rely on him more than you love money. And the way we demonstrate this is by freely offering him our finances knowing that as Gods children, He will meet all our needs.

“ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ”

Matthew 6:31-33



When we give to God we are demonstrating that we love and trust Him above all else, He is our supplier, our provider, our protector and most importantly, our Father. If God would not withhold from us his own Son, Jesus Christ, but was willing to give him as a sacrifice to save us, what reason could we ever have to think he would withhold from us lesser things like food, clothing, housing and daily provision.

PROMISES GOD MAKES TO THOSE WHO GIVE

God is not one to be outdone, He is the most generous person you will ever meet and it's impossible to 'out-give' God. In the Bible, God has written in ink some unchanging promises that hold true for those who are willing to love and trust him by being generous towards him in their giving. Here's just a few of the promises God makes to those who give to him:

- ❖ In **Malachi 3:10** God promises to pour out more blessing than you can contain if you bring your whole tithe (a tenth of your weekly income) to the church. This a great starting point for your giving!
- ❖ In **2 Corinthians 9:6** God talks about our giving like the sowing of seeds and says that if you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly, but if you sow generously, you will reap generously!
- ❖ In **2 Corinthians 9:10** God says that if we commit to a lifestyle of sowing (being generous towards God) that He will *multiply* our seed!
- ❖ In **Luke 6:38** Jesus tells us that with the measure of generosity we use towards God, He will use towards us! So the greater our generosity towards him, the greater generosity we can expect from him! Read it for yourself...



“ **Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.** ”

Luke 6:38

It's important to note, that *God loves a cheerful giver!* Giving is not something God wants us to do reluctantly or with a bad attitude, he wants our giving to come from our free will, overflowing with joy and gratitude towards him in light of everything he *has* done and all has promised He will do (2 Cor 9:7-8).

HOW TO GET STARTED?

1. WHEN AND HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

This is what Paul wrote to the Corinthians: *Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income...* (1 Cor 16:1-2)

Each week we bring to God a portion of our income, there is no set amount or percentage. It was commonplace to give 10%, called a tithe, and this is what the first Christians would have done to begin with.

2. WHERE DO I GIVE?

Some people like to give to charities, sponsor a child or donate to their favorite cause. While these things are admirable and worthy, they're not the kind of giving God is looking for as our first priority. God wants us to give to Him by giving to the church and in doing so, trusting the leaders He has established in the church to steward the money on Gods behalf. And remember, you're not giving *to* the Church; you're giving to *God* as *part of* the Church.



“ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet... ”

Acts 4:33-35

“ Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. ”

Malachi 3:10 [MSG]

God wants his church to be prosperous so it can be generous, why? Because we’re his children and he wants us to be just like him! Generous! The amazing thing is as we’ve seen, is that if we are faithful in bringing our finances to God, he has promised to return blessings to us, he will provide for us, he will multiply our seed and fill our life all kinds of miraculous provision!

‘TEST ME’ SAYS GOD!

There is only one place in the entire Bible where God invites us to put Him to the test and guess what it’s about... that’s right! Giving!

“ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And **THEREBY PUT ME TO THE TEST, says the Lord of hosts, [and see] if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ”** Malachi 3:10

Wow! God actually invites you to test him out in regards to just what we can expect from him as we commit to a lifestyle of giving. But remember, we

don't give just to get - we give because of what we already have been given, Jesus. This is just an added bonus! God is teaching us how to trust him as our Father by allowing us to test him... so go on, test Him! And see if the words of Paul aren't true for you as they were for Philippians when he wrote this to them,

“ **And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.** ”

Philippians 4:19

START HERE

TRY THIS OUT AS A SIMPLE TEST.

Start by committing to give God ***ten percent of your income each week for ten weeks*** and see how it affects your life and your relationship with God. When you consider all that God has done and promised he will do, it's not a matter being able to afford to give to God – when we consider his love towards us in Christ, we can't afford *not* to respond by excelling in generosity towards him and His church.