

The Beauty of Giving

II Corinthians 8:7-9; Proverbs 11:24-25

I. Giving is first and foremost a matter of the heart.

- A. God is the ultimate giver. Giving is in God's character—in His very heart (John 3:16; II Corinthians 8:9).
- B. God began the whole plan of redemption with a giver. His name was Abraham, and God called him His friend (James 2:21-23).
- C. God is not just a giver. He is a cheerful giver (Hebrews 12:2). God wants you not only to give, but to experience his cheerfulness and joy (II Corinthians 9:6-8, Acts 20:35).
- D. As you learn to give, you share the cheerfulness and happiness of God. In the parable of the talents of gold (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus not only says, "Well done, good and faithful servant." He also says, "Come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:19-23).
- E. Paul describes the corporate joy of God's people sharing with one another in II Corinthians 9:12-15 ("overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God") (vs. 14).
 1. Notice the release of prayer and blessing back to the giver. There is a joy exchange.
 2. The reward of a generous church is God's joyful presence.

II. There is an order to giving: first, a seed sown in weakness, and then the multiplication of the seed for a harvest (II Corinthians 9:6-8).

- A. Even Jesus had to cope with the weakness of sowing (John 12:23-28).
- B. In Luke 6:37-38, Jesus describes giving first then a good measure received in return. Notice, "For the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
- C. Our first steps with generosity start with honoring God and His cause first with the tithe—giving the first 10% of our income to God (Malachi 3:6-12).
- D. There are tithes; there are offerings (Malachi 3:8); and there are radical offerings.
 1. Jesus, the Son of God
 2. David—\$21,000,000,000 for the temple
 3. Solomon—1,000 bulls at his inauguration
 4. Jesus watching the different offerings of the rich and poor (Luke 21:1-4)
 5. Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22:1, 2, 9-19)
 6. Mary of Bethany (John 12:1-8)

III. There is a multiplication factor to giving. You cannot "out-give" God (II Corinthians 9:6-11).

- A. You can sow and receive multiplication in every area of life. You can ask God how to sow toward a particular need in addition to general financial giving.
 1. When I sow forgiveness, I receive forgiveness and peace (Matthew 6:14-15).
 2. When I sow worship, I reap God's presence.
 3. When I sow prayers, I see answers. When I pray for others, they often pray for me.
 4. When I am selfless, friendly, and giving toward others, I reap relationships.
 5. If you need healing, pray for others to be healed.
- B. After sowing it is important to expect and watch for multiplication. You can water seed sown by expecting and praying for progress (Mark 4:26-29). Many people give up and don't see the answer when it comes. Don't get weary. You will reap at the proper time (Galatians 6:7-10). Many people give up and do not see the answer when it comes. You will reap at the proper time (Galatians 6:7-10). Miracles often grow in stages.

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