

Giving Has Benefits

“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

We all want to receive. Gifts, raises, promotions, favors, all are something we love to be given. But, how many of us actually like to give? Or, if we do love to give, how many of us actually practice giving on a regular basis? In Luke 6:38, Jesus makes a profound statement. In essence, he says that if we would like to receive we need to give in the same proportions that we would want to be given. One problem with this promise, however, is the direction people's hearts go in trying to live it out. Selfishness is quite an easy character trait to acquire as human beings. We need to be careful in giving that our heart is to bless and to serve those people and the Lord, not in order to indirectly serve ourselves.

We do not want to give in order to receive. We want to give in order to bless people. Jesus said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”¹ Jesus heart was not, what can you do for me? His heart was, what can I do for you? And he was the son of God! We, as children of God, need to be on guard. We need to watch our hearts to be sure that we do not have wrong motives. Sometimes this can be a very difficult task. To help accomplish this task, we can ask others (those who know us best) to express their opinions on our motives based on our actions. “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”² Jesus mentioned our speech, but the same concept applies to our actions. We need to be careful not to be defensive, so be careful in who you choose to critique you and be prepared to be critiqued.

We also want to give to others in order to bless and please God. God, our great, loving, and merciful father is so much more worthy of anything we could ever offer. Really, the only thing we can offer to the Lord is ourselves: our lives, hearts, minds, and bodies. If we want to live for the Lord and bless him and grow as believers, we must follow his commands. Not only that, but we obey cheerfully, completely, and immediately. Our motivation, in all that we do, needs to be to bless the Lord. Giving, even if we do end up receiving, needs to be about blessing the Lord as well.

¹ Mark 10:45

² Mathew 12:34b

I have said this before, but our primary motivation for giving should NEVER be to receive. That is selfishness. God calls us to be humble servants. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."³ It seems quite inadvisable to do something that will cause God to oppose us. So, instead, let's try to live humble lives.

God wants to bless us and there are scores of promises in the Bible attesting to the fact. One such promise is about giving and receiving. We all enjoy receiving, but we must all be careful not to give with the wrong motives. We must give in order to serve God and bless people and NOT merely to receive.

³ James 4:6b