



## Love and Giving

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Today we want to focus our thoughts on love and giving. What is it that motivates you to give? What compels you to give money, time, energy, something you consider valuable to someone else? Giving is an expression of love. We control what we give, who we give it to, when we give it and how much we give. We own whatever we give away. If we don't own it, it is not ours to give.

I was in a seminar once and the speaker said, "Today we are going to take an offering. First of all I want you all to take out your wallet or purse. Then I want you to hand it to the person sitting next to you. Now after you have done that, I want you to give like you have always wanted to give. Don't hold back." You might think it is easier to give away what doesn't belong to you. My point is that if everything that we consider ours really belongs to God, then we don't own it and it should be easy for us to give it away.

Love has to be the motivation behind giving. Giving that is based on need is one kind of giving but giving based on love takes giving to a whole other dimension. So often when we think of giving, the element we think of most is money. That is a part of giving, but that is not all there is to giving. There are other things that can and should be given. Things we can give include encouragement, time, energy, prayers and spiritual gifts. Those resources are not ours to keep for ourselves only. They are to be managed resources to advance the kingdom of God. Giving communicates to people in a way that nothing else can. Giving loudly declares, I care and I will do what I can to make a difference. Giving involves obedience, faith and love. What God has given to me is His to use as He best sees fit.

### **I. There is more blessing in giving than receiving.**

Paul is preparing the elders for his journey to Jerusalem and what he will face there. There is no

doubt that those who receive what is given are blessed but those who give are blessed in a far greater way than those who receive. **Acts 20:35 (NLT)- And I have been a constant example of**

**how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’**

Paul had set an example of helping people in need. He worked hard and by doing so, he had extra to share with those who did not have. I believe Paul had learned to be guided by Jesus’ words about giving. It is fun to receive. There is blessing in being the recipient of someone’s gift, but there is greater blessing in giving. I find delight when I give to someone and it touches them.

## **II. There is no value in what I give without love.**

I said it last week – you can give without loving – and there is no value in that gift, but you can’t love without giving. If your heart is engaged, if you are full of God’s love, then you will be motivated to give.

Parents – when God’s love is in your heart, you will give of yourself, your time and your resources to your child. Why? Because of love. You can give all kinds of things to your kids, but it would be better to give them your time, your attention, your support at school events, your prayers for their success than all the things that money could buy.

Nothing is gained by giving without the motivation of love behind it. The apostle Paul wrote these words in his first letter to the Corinthian believers. **I COR 13:3- If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.**

These are tremendous sacrifices that Paul writes about. It is extravagance to the max. Think of that – if everything that you call your own was given away to those who were poor and you even went so far as to give away your life, without love, nothing would be gained. What benefit or profit is gained from giving out of obligation, not because your heart is passionate about giving? The benefit of that gift is lost.

## **III. Giving is not about the amount – it’s about the heart.**

Giving can be done with little or much. We can give out of our abundance or out of our need. **Mark**

**12:42-44 (ASV)-And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.**

The widow was poor. She did not have much. What she put in the treasury was two of the smallest valued coins in circulation. It was a very small amount. The whole point here is not the amount of giving. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed with time. There are so many demands and not enough hours in the day to accomplish everything we need to do.

Sometimes we feel overwhelmed with the need we see and feel helpless to really make a difference. This widow did not concern herself with the money she had here to live. She was trusting God to meet her needs. She was giving from her heart. She gave all that she had, even all she had to live on.

You don’t give everything without love being the motivating force behind your gift. There is no way we are motivated to give to that extent or to that depth without love being involved. When Jesus pointed out the gift here, he said she has given more than those who cast in great amounts of money, because they had a great abundance left over, but she gave everything. Do you give like your heart wants to? Measure what do you have left over?

## **IV. Giving starts with what you have.**

Peter and John – what I have I will give you. At the beginning of the third chapter of Acts, it’s recorded that Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer. There outside the gates of the temple, a lame man was there asking alms of those who came to prayer or worship. Everyone knew this man. He was a local man who had been brought to the gate of the temple everyday for years because there he would receive gifts from people going to the temple.

When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter got this man’s attention and told him that they did not have silver and gold but what they did have they would give him. With the authority of Jesus’ Name, Peter told

the lame man to stand up and walk. He lifted him up by the hand and the man received his healing. He stood and began to walk and entered the temple leaping and praising God. What a wonderful miracle took place. Because Peter and John were willing to give what they had, the man received healing that no amount of money could have paid for.

So often we feel if what we have to give doesn't meet the obvious need present or the person we are attempting to bless has expectations beyond our ability to meet, that we can't give anything. Do not let that keep you from giving. Don't be cheated out of the greater blessing of giving. Giving what you have is far more beneficial than offering the excuse that what you have is insufficient. The place of miracles is the place of giving what we have in the Name of Jesus; giving time, faith, prayer, or resources.

(I Kings 17:12) - There is a story of a widow who had a handful of flour and a bit of oil in a jar. Elijah

### **Conclusion:**

Jesus Christ demonstrated God's love toward us. While we were still sinners, unbelieving, alienated from God by our sin, rebellion, disobedience, resistance to truth and self-centeredness, Jesus died for us. Because of His example to us, we should be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers. To give to that extent involves our head but also our heart.

was a prophet of God and God spoke to him during a famine and told him to go to Zarephath and there through this widow, he would supply food. Elijah did as God instructed. When he came to the gate of the city, there was a woman gathering sticks. He asked her for some water and a piece of bread. She did not have any bread and told him that she was gathering sticks to make a fire to cook the handful of flour and oil that she had to eat with her son and then they were ready to die.

Talk about dire straits. This was a matter of life and death. Elijah told her not to be afraid and to first make a small cake for him and then make something for her and son. If she gave with a willing heart, in obedience and faith, God would take care of her. So much blessing is missed because we don't trust God's word. So much blessing is forfeited for us and others because we fear and hold onto the little that we do have, rather than giving and believing God for Him to miraculously sustain us until circumstances change in our lives.