

The Truth About Giving

Read Matthew 10:8 ...

One tends to believe Jesus; in fact, it's almost axiomatic that when Jesus speaks, Jesus speaks the truth. Paul reports that Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The truthfulness of this saying reported by Paul is typically not doubted, but how often is it **acted** upon?

Now, no one doubts the joy of *receiving*. In fact, the joy of receiving has been drilled into us by our societal norms. Think about all the times that in the most formative years of one's life gifts are given: birthdays and holidays abound. Truthfully, does anyone ever get over those joys? As adults, doesn't one relive the joy of those experiences thru the joy seen in the faces of children or grandchildren? Who doesn't light up a bit when there are presents to open? There is an obvious joy associated with *getting*.

But, if one really believes the words Jesus was reported as saying, *giving* is better. Further, it's the joyful and cheerful giver that appeals to the Lord, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:7. This shouldn't surprise anyone since who wants to receive a gift from a snarling face? In 2 Corinthians 8 Paul even goes so far as to compliment beggars. Now typically, one doesn't like to be around those constantly looking for a handout, but the Macedonians were begging for the opportunity to give – even from their poverty! (2 Cor. 8:1-5). The reason those Macedonians were able to give from their poverty, even as they were being afflicted, is that they gave themselves to the Lord first.

When one decides that giving is more blessed than receiving, one is becoming more God like, since God is the greatest giver humanity has ever known. Think for a moment about the way God has given. In John 3:16 one sees God giving something of extreme importance –

His only son. Paul has recorded in Romans 8:32 that God not only gave His son, but it is seen in that example that God will also give all things to the Christian freely. James also reminds Christians that God is willing to give liberally (Jam. 1:5), and not with a sneer. When the Christian gives sacrificially, freely, and liberally, he gives in the example that was set forth by God. That type of giving is only accomplished when the Christian presents his body as a sacrifice to God; one should be transformed in mind and "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

It certainly can't be denied that giving makes us feel blessed. It is never a chore to give to those that are the closest to us, and even those that are further away as sympathy for their plight becomes a motivation. Giving, helping, makes one feel good. But giving also keeps one's getting from becoming a curse. One is reminded of a prayer by a brother who thanked God for all the blessings that had been bestowed, but then also prayed that those same blessings not become a hinderance or stumbling block in the Christian walk. This thought comes straight from the words of Paul to the rich brethren in Ephesus not to become "high-minded" in their blessings nor to trust in "uncertain riches" (1 Tim. 6:17).

Money can certainly become a curse, and the love of money is the root of all evil; but, the Christian that has learned to receive the gifts of God properly has also learned that it is more blessed to give.

A Judgment Parable

A well-known judgment parable is told by _____ to
_____ (2 Sam. 2:1-13).

** A _____ becomes the _____.

There was certainly some self-righteous _____ of
the woman who is a "_____."

** The _____ becomes the
_____.

Jesus always seems to be putting his _____ out to someone
that was considered _____.

** The _____ gained something new to
_____ on.

Some surely thought _____ is this that forgives sins?

Some surely thought who is this that _____?

** What can we learn?

Sometimes when we think we have the _____ high ground,
we end up at the _____.

Sometimes when we are not even part of the _____, we
are the most _____ person present.

A confrontation with _____ tends to change our
_____ and _____.