

GOD'S PLAN FOR BLESSING (3)

“The Act Of Giving”

Corinthian 8:10-15

What is your view of money? The truth is, whatever our view of money has a great bearing on every other area of our lives. Some individuals view money to be “hoarded” therefore they live to make as much money as possible, and even in the process, they fail to make themselves comfortable and they also fail to be a blessing to others through their finances.

The divine truth of Scripture reveals that God entrusts us with “finances” or “money”, and He watches from heaven how we respond to “finances”. How we respond to finances plays a great bearing on what He can entrust us with for eternity. God has a wonderful plan to bless our lives, and part of His plan in blessing involves our response to money.

The Father watched from heaven how this early church in Corinth responded to their brothers in Christ in need through giving. And what they did or did not do would determine the blessings of God over them.

1. THERE IS WONDERFUL INTEGRITY IN GIVING. When you examine this one particular chapter in Corinthians, you will immediately discover that the saints in Macedonia, were giving, not out of their prosperity, but out of their poverty. But why? They had come to know and love the wonderful truth of God's giving in Jesus Christ. They had been radically changed by the “giving” of God through Jesus Christ, and they had come to understand, that just as they had “freely received” of the grace of God, eternal life, they were to “freely give” to others.

First, giving is an act of integrity because we are “following” the directives of our Lord Jesus. Almighty God didn't withhold His very best...but literally “gave” His best for us that we could have what we could have never earned. All throughout Scripture Jesus was giving Himself away to others. He directed His first disciples to “give” in Matthew 5:42 “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” Since we are the recipients of God's abundant “giving”, how in the world can we be people of integrity, if we fail to give away, as the Father has given away to us.

Second, giving is an act of integrity because we are obeying the commands of the Father. Sadly, Paul was watching this church at Corinth fail in giving, unlike the church at Macedonia. The church in Macedonia was by no means rich, but they gave “out of their poverty”. When we were changed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, we entered the family of God. If you are a child of God, you are in the family of God, and He is your Father. His commands to all His children are out of love and for their best. Yet sadly so many misunderstand and fail to walk in obedience. While the Father loves all His children, sadly only certain ones are positioning themselves to receive His blessings... those that walk in obedience.

Third, giving is an act of integrity, because we are showing “trust” in the very Word of God. Chances are you would not stand in the very presence of the Living God and say these words, “God, I simply don't trust You”! Yet, the sad reality is this, many are failing in the area of obeying God with their finances for this one simple reason... they have been deceived into thinking they cannot trust God's ability to provide and supply. The church in Macedonia gave...and experienced the deep abiding power of the Living God among their fellowship, because they took seriously their “vow” before God regarding giving. When God redeemed us, He redeemed us into eternal life, a life of His divine blessings, and He redeemed us to “obey Him” for obedience always under all circumstances delivers the best of God's blessings.

Fourth, giving is an act of integrity, for we are honoring the very Word of God. Is it heavy on your heart to live a life of honor to the Lord God? Sadly, in so many ways, believers all across the world, claim one thing and do another. Yet, Jesus made it abundantly clear that we are showing honor to Him, and a love for Him, as we obey Him and “give”. **John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.** The church at Macedonia revealed a life of integrity, as they “gave not only what they could afford but far more”. (2 Cor. 8:3)

Fifth, giving is an act of integrity as it keeps us from being “self centered”. Sadly the greatest cause in the church through the centuries has been the reality of “self centeredness”. When a church is honoring the Father,

they are focused on others, focused on honoring Him. Imagine if God Almighty was “self-centered”. We would still be in our sins, the world would still remain in darkness, and we would be without hope. The reality is, the more “self centered” we are the less we give, and in the end when we stand before the Lord, He may well allow us to see “all the lives” that we could have touched but never did touch, because of “a life of selfishness”.

2. THERE IS THE WILLING ABILITY TO GIVE. As Paul spoke of “giving” to the precious saints of God, one thing was abundantly clear, just as God had given abundantly to them, He held them accountable and responsible for their measure and willingness to give. In truth, God has endowed all men with the ability to “give”. The truest test of generosity and faithfulness is not our wealth, but rather our willingness to give. Paul declared, “For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted”.

First, God has given us the ability to give. God by His very nature has given to us. It is through His very giving that we are what we are and have what we have. Without His energizing the body, we could not work. Apart from Him providing for us a mind, we could not think. Apart from Him we are nothing. “It is through Him we live, move and have our being.” All through Scripture, God reveals His giving nature to mankind, then calls mankind to respond in worship through giving. Consider it this way...if you have the ability to create a being, provide for that being, give to that being, would you not desire that being respond in appreciation and gratitude. It is God that has given to us, and calls us to respond in obedience.

Second, God calls us to the very act of giving. The very words of God through the apostle Paul are these, “**God wants you to give what you have, not what you haven’t**” (2 Cor. 8:12 LB) The very truth of God’s Word is that He calls us to give. Giving is a directive from Almighty God unto ALL His children. However, there are several attitudes that we may have: 1) we may shirk our responsibility, 2) we may shelve our responsibility, 3) we may shoulder our responsibility begrudgingly, 4) we may shed them (tried giving and then quit), 5) we may sincerely accept our responsibility in obedience to God.

When we sincerely obey God, then and then are we walking in the will of God, and allowing Him to provide and bring about His blessings in and to our lives. To think that God saved us, by giving His very best, namely Jesus Christ, and then to believe that we have no responsibility before God to honor Him with our best is a complete violation of God’s Word, and the reason so many “believers” find themselves in want and in need. For the Father cannot bring His blessings on a disobedient home.

3. THERE IS A DIVINE PURPOSE FOR GIVING. “Why in the world should I give?”, is the question that many ask, and the Father has a sobering answer to all with a listening heart.

First, God’s purpose through giving is to provide legitimate needs. In the very foundation of the early church, believers were in need, while others had abundance. Through giving, needs were provided, wants taken care of, lives ministered to, and the purpose of the Kingdom of God advanced. In the very early church, those who had possessions sold their goods and divided them, not for show, but to provide to “those who were in legitimate and real need”. Sadly, in our day and time many consider their possessions “mine”, when there is “need” all around.

Second, God’s plan of giving delights His heart when followed properly. Giving literally delights the very heart of the Father. When the Father sees His children obeying and following His pattern of giving, He is pleased, honored, glorified, and His Kingdom is advanced. When our children do things out of love and obedience, our hearts are delighted and filled with joy. How much more so does the Father delight in those saints that follow Him out of love and obedience. It is one thing to give out of duty or drudgery, but another to give out of “deep abiding love” for the Lord and all that He has done.

Third, God’s plan through giving, is a call to remember an “ALL GIVING GOD”. When Paul spoke to the saint regarding giving, He could not help but think of all the Father had given Him. When we give properly...it is a call to remember that we have what we have and are what we are, all because of the “giving” of Almighty God. We would have no eternal life, no eternal security, no relationship with God through Christ, apart from the “divine giving” of Holy God. It is always on the heart of God not only that He IS, but to remember what type of God He is. God by nature is a “giving God”. Since God’s nature is never to withhold His best from us, the question that we must ask is this...will I choose to honor the Father by my life and my giving or will I choose to dishonor Him? The choice is ours to make.