

GIVING AND RECEIVING

(Not Law—But Grace)

The integrity and accuracy of the Word of God continues to be man's greatest spiritual and, consequently, his greatest material problem.

A believer's unbelief usually shows up most clearly in the category of money.

The word "tithe" means tenth. If you earn one dollar, the tithe is ten cents. It's that simple. God knows that you can't receive without first giving. Noah knew it—Genesis 8:20. Abraham knew it—Genesis 14:20. Ananias and Sapphira didn't. They cheated and died—Acts 5:4,5,9,10.

Minimum giving (the tithe) helps to guarantee:

1. Financial abundance—Malachi 3:10, "open you the windows of heaven"; getting your foot off the hose
2. The thief or Adversary is rebuked for your sake—Malachi 3:11
3. The thief won't destroy your material things—Malachi 3:11
4. No miscarriages—Malachi 3:11 and Deuteronomy 7:13-15
5. Rain for your land on time
6. Lands yield productively
7. Fruit trees yield abundantly
8. Dwell in safety—no fear
9. Peace in the nation

—Leviticus 26:3-6

If you don't tithe, you will see what you see in our nation today: goods are increased, but they are also increased that EAT THEM—Ecclesiastes 5:11.

Abundant sharing (which starts beyond the tithe, one-tenth) is:

1. Your way of thanking God financially, in a very material way, for His blessing
2. It demonstrates to God that you do believe Him to be your sufficiency, your source of supply to life
3. It shows God that you are believing Him to be the protector of the material goods you have accumulated and are to take care of in life, including your family

In this our Grace Administration, Romans 12:1 is great:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The word "sacrifice" indicates the believer should go beyond the basic call of duty. We are not to be a dying but a living sacrifice, giving abundantly to live abundantly.

Philippians 4:19 is a great truth:

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The word "need" is in the singular. The unlearned quote it as "needs." The believers in Philippi were sharing abundantly so God met EVERY need as their NEED occurred. Christians stockpile "needs" when they are not believing or practicing getting each NEED met as it comes along.

The church at Corinth needed the example of the Macedonians' abundant sharing to see their practical error. Read II Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 and note carefully verses 3 and 4 of chapter 8. Note very carefully II Corinthians 8:7:

Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace [abundant sharing] also.

The people at Corinth were abounding in some things, but not in giving and receiving, and this neglect stopped them from attaining an abundant life. Furthermore, giving and receiving is in keeping with God's calling. The believer called of God under Old Testament times gave a minimum, one-tenth. A born-again believer called under this, our Grace Administration, should give more and receive more. That is abundant sharing. Now note II Corinthians 9:6:

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

A person receives according to his giving. In the Grace Administration a person determines how much he will give, setting the standard for his receiving.

II Corinthians 9:7:

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

God does not command the Christian to give a set amount. However, if the Christian gives less than the ten percent which was required by Old Testament law, he is dishonest with God, cheating and robbing God (Malachi 3:8 and 9), and will not "prosper and be in health" (III John 2). Your call of God as sons, in this our Grace Administration, is not one of less commitment than the Old Testament calling of servants, but more.

As the Christian believer operates the principles of giving and receiving, God promises that the believer will always have sufficiency in all things.

II Corinthians 9:8:

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

Any born-again believer who does not operate the principle of abundant sharing keeps God from blessing him to the fullest extent (Philippians 4:17) and allows the Adversary to steal more and more.

The teaching to the elders of the church in Acts 20:18-35 concluded with the following reminder:

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to . . . remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Those words of the Lord Jesus were applicable in the Old Testament days, and they are applicable to us today. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" because then the receiving will be more abundant. If God can't trust me with one-tenth, He certainly wouldn't trust me with more abundance.

So let us seek first things first (Matthew 6:33) to have everything added to us, and let us not neglect God's first and greatest commandment of love (Mark 12:29 and 30). Also remember the law of receiving is based on believing (Mark 11:23 and 24; Hebrews 11:6), and start with nothing less than the tithe (Malachi 3:8-12). Speak in tongues much (I Corinthians 14:18), and guard the unity of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 1:10). This is God's call to love to each believer.

He who has ears to hear will hear.

Victor Paul Wierwille

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