"More Blessed To Give"

(A Christmas Message about Giving and Receiving)
Acts 20:35 and Selected Scriptures
12/18/2016

As we think about giving and receiving it is important to…
"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Receiving is a blessing!

Why is the giver blessed?

When you give ***(whether it's your time, money, a helping hand, the Gospel Message or Christian Service)…***

1. You get back <u>JOY</u> and <u>HAPPINESS</u> knowing you did right
(*John 13:12-17; Proverbs 14:21)*

2. You <u>LEND TO THE LORD</u>; and He repays well
(Proverbs 19:17; Luke 6:38; *Deuteronomy 15:7;* Matthew 10:42)

3. You are a faithful steward with what God gave you, so <u>HE WILL ENTRUST YOU WITH MORE</u> *(Luke 16:10-11)*

4. You are <u>ACTING LIKE GOD</u>, who gives & gives *(Luke 6:35-36; James 1:17)*

5. You fulfill a major purpose for your life on earth and show <u>YOU REALLY CARE</u> about others *(1 John 3:18; 1 John 3:17; James 2:16)*

What can we give to others to show that we really care for them?

- Our substance (food, clothing, etc.);
- Our service (a helping hand);
- Our Time;

- The Gospel etc.

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It's Christmas time again, and we are again looking forward to a time of giving and receiving.
An important reminder: "Jesus is still the Reason for the Season" Its all about Him and God's gift to mankind. The greatest person-God, gave the greatest gift-His Son, who made the greatest sacrifice-His life, to meet our greatest need-forgiveness, to provide the greatest blessing-Eternal Life! (John 3:16)

As we think about giving and receiving it is important to…
"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

All of us like to receive gifts, presents, help, etc.

Receiving is a blessing!

Paul is not saying that the Lord Jesus denied the blessing of receiving. It is truly a blessing to receive. For example all that we have in Christ, we have because we have by faith received it. We received Christ (Jn.1:12), and therefore we have received every blessing that comes with Him.

For example, we have freely received God's <u>Word</u>:

Mark 4:20
And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

We have freely received God's <u>Kingdom:</u>
Mark 10:15
Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

We have freely received God's <u>Spirit</u>:
Acts 2:38
Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name

of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Many times we have stingy hearts; Our natural tendency is to seek for ourselves; to store up so as to provide a sense of security for our future etc.

Selfishness our core problem:

> From what does man's sin stem? What is the common denominator for all sin? What is sin at its most basic, ultimate core?
>
> **The essence of sin is <u>selfishness in the heart</u>!**
>
> All forms of sin have their <u>root</u> in selfishness (cp. Strong, p. 569). Selfishness is the <u>underlying factor</u> behind all sin.
>
> There is a problem with someone who calls themself a Christian, yet is always on the receiving end.
>
> We like to receive because it feels good to receive. It makes us happy to receive a gift. The gift may meet a felt need or it may just say to us "someone cares"
>
> However, Jesus said that the giver is more blessed than the receiver.
>
> When did the Lord Jesus say this?
>
> Well, the Lord Jesus spoke quite a bit about giving (whether about giving money, time or talent). However, there is no exact quote in Scripture outside of Acts 20:35 of Jesus giving these exact words).
>
> This has led some to ask the question: "Since Jesus never made such a biblical statement, isn't Paul guilty of deception?" (Biblical Errancy Pamphlets by Dennis McKinsey Pamphlet 1 Q24)

One response is that Paul was referring not to sacred text, but to oral statement by Jesus that was never recorded in Scripture, but was none the less true.

"The saying was part of the oral tradition of Jesus sayings, Paul even alludes to this by saying "remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said". They do not have to be recorded in the bible to be true. Even John admits that not everything

Jesus did was written down."
http://www.apocalipsis.org/difficulties/blessedreceive.htm

John 20:30-31
And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John 21:25
And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Therefore, Paul is not referring here to an exact quote "it is more blessed to give than to receive" but rather he is speaking of Christ stating this concept but not these exact words.

When did Jesus give this concept?

The Lord Jesus described the blessing of giving help when he said: And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. *Matthew 10:42*

The Lord Jesus described the blessing of giving your wealth when he said to the rich man: If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. *Matthew 19:21*

Luke 6:38
Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Luke 12:33
Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

The Lord Jesus described the blessing of giving your <u>life</u> with the words: And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. *Matthew 19:29*

Why is the giver blessed?

When you give ***(whether it's your time, money, a helping hand, the Gospel Message or Christian Service)...***

1. You get back <u>JOY</u> and <u>HAPPINESS</u> knowing you did right

John 13:12-17
So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said *unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

If the sovereign God of the universe would humble Himself to wash our feet, who do we think we are not to do likewise toward each other?

If Jesus were here today, would you wash His feet if He asked you? He is not asking you to do so, but He is commanding us to wash one another's feet.

Does this mean I should purchase a portable ceramic or stainless steel tray and buy towels to literally get on my hands and knees to scrub the dirty toes of the saints? Well, in a figurative sense, yes!

To wash feet back in the Bible days was a <u>practical service</u> rendered to a people who walked dusty roads with sandals.

Note: Foot-washing is not an ordinance (as baptism or the Lord's Super) as some might think.

1) Its practice was not part of the early church in the book of Acts

2) Nor was it commanded by the apostles in the epistles

"One another's' feet" - Note the reciprocal nature of the service. It's two-way service.
Note: All of the "one another's" in the book of Romans

How should we take care of each other?

1. **BE MEMBERS with one another (Rom.12:4-5)**
   (A plea to contribute our gift to each other)

2. **HONOR one another (12:10)**
   (A plea to show family honor to each other)

3. **LOVE one another (13:8)**
   (A plea to pay the dept of love to each other)

4. **EDIFY one another (14:13,19)**
   (A plea to be a stepping stone, not a stumbling block to each other)

5. **BEAR with one another (15:1)**
   (A plea for patience toward each other)

6. **PLEASE one another (15:2-4)**
   (A plea for unselfishness toward each other)

7. **UNITE with one another (15:5-6)**
   (A plea for oneness with each other)

8. **ACCEPT one another (15:7)**
   (A plea for impartiality toward each other)

9. **ADMONISH one another (15:14)**
   (A plea for loving confrontation with each other)

10. **WARMLY GREET one another (16:16)**
    (A plea to show loving affection to each other)

"One another" – Some of you want to have your feet washed, yet you never wash the feet of anyone else. You like it when they serve you, yet you rarely go out of your way to do something for someone else.

What practical service can you render for another believer?

Whether it be helping, teaching, cleaning, giving, or forgiving others, all this is part of the humble service we can render for others.

v. 16
Jesus says, "You are not greater than Me, and yet I did it for you; how then could you refuse to do even the most humbling of tasks for someone else?"

v.17
This verse contains God's formula for happiness (blessedness) –

Knowing what's right
Plus doing what's right
Equals happiness

Just knowing what's right does not bring happiness; nor does rare occasional doing. But continual obedience is the well-spring of blessing.

If you know the truth and do the truth, you have found the secret to real joy.

Depression comes to those whose focus is on self. Get your attention on the needs of others, and you will see your problems melt away (as you reap for what you sow).

Proverbs 14:21 - He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

You will experience the happiness that comes from making others happy.

Ill. The little boy and his small lunch: Matthew 14:17-f

When you give

2. You LEND TO THE LORD; and He repays well

Proverbs 19:17 - He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

God pays us back on EARTH:

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again

Ex. The widow of Zarephath: I Kings 17:7-f

Deuteronomy 15:7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:
8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.
9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.
10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

God pays us back in HEAVEN:

Matthew 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.
Matthew 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

You reap for what you sowed:
Galatians 6:7 - Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
2Corinthians 9:6 - But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
Proverbs 11:24-25 - There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.
Proverbs 28:27- He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.
Ecclesiastes 11:1 - Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

Ill. J.C. Penney – a Christian who gave and the more he gave, the more God gave to his business.

More Scripture on the Consequential Blessings of Giving

Psalms 37:21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.
22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.

Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.
26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

Psalms 41:1 Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.
2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.
3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

Psalms 112:5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.
6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.
9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.
10 The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

Proverbs 3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:
10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Proverbs 11:24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.
25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.
26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

Proverbs 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

Proverbs 14:20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.
21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

Proverbs 19:17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Proverbs 25:21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

Proverbs 28:27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.
2 Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

When you give

3. You are a faithful steward with what God gave you, so <u>HE WILL ENTRUST YOU WITH MORE</u>

Luke 16:10-11

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

When you give

4. You are <u>ACTING LIKE GOD</u>, who gives & gives

Luke 6:35-36

But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

James 1:17 - Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Ill. The dead sea (takes, takes & takes but never gives) it receives water from the Jordan river and other sources but because of its depth nothing flows out. Therefore, nothing can live in the dead sea.

Just a simple study of the giving nature of God's creation is a lesson enough on the importance of giving. The Sun gives; the ocean gives; the trees give; the clouds give; plant-life gives; the bees give honey, cows give milk, etc. are all designed to give some benefit or blessing.

When you give

5. You fulfill a major purpose for your life on earth and show <u>YOU REALLY CARE</u> about others

1John 3:18 - My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.
1John 3:17 - But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?
James 2:16-18 - And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Conclusion:

God blesses a people and a nation that gives:

Example: The Pineapple Story – A ripped off missionary becomes angry, lets go of his goods and the people he is trying to reach now open up to him.

More Blessed to Give Than Receive
By Wendy Griffith
CBN News Senior Reporter
December 16, 2007

CBNNews.com - A new book out explains how giving not only makes you rich - it makes you healthier and happier.

There is now scientific evidence supporting the Scriptures that discuss the benefits of charitable giving.

In the past 25 years, America has seen an explosion of personal wealth. In the early 1980s you needed only $82 million to make the Forbes 400 list. Today, you need $1.3 billion to be considered really rich, according to Barrons magazine.

SPECIAL SECTION:
CBN Christmas Page
Still, out of this booming prosperity there's come an equally great explosion in giving. In 2006 Americans gave away $295 billion. That's greater than the gross domestic production of Sweden.

So Who Are America's Biggest Givers?

The stereotype holds that conservatives are mean and don't care about the poor, and that liberals who do care for the poor give more. But in his book, Who Really Cares, economist Arthur Brooks says that's not the case.

"The average conservative-headed household gives 30 percent more money to charity than the average liberal-headed household, despite earning six percent less income," Brooks said.

Brooks also found that the biggest givers in America are religious people from traditional families.

"If there's one question I can ask you that will predict more than any other whether or not you're going to be a giver, it's whether or not you attend your house of worship weekly," he said.

Brooks says that after religion, the biggest predictor of giving is a person's attitude about the role of government.

About one-third of Americans want the government to take care of the poor and tax the rich more in order to do so. But Brooks says those who oppose this view are the real givers by more than 4 percent.

"So people who believe that the government should not be re-distributing money might seem awfully hard-hearted to the political left in this country, but they're putting their money where their mouths are," Brooks said.

And they're not just giving to their churches.

Brooks says religious people are just as likely to give to secular causes as well, giving 50 percent more money each year to social welfare charities than the average secularist.

Giving Changes Our Brains

"What we find is that basically, charitable giving changes our brains. There's evidence that we reduce our stress hormones and improve our level of endorphins, which is to say the chemicals in our brains that makes us feel good. This leads us to be more effective and happier in our lives. We can't help but become more successful and effective when we give," Brooks said.

One woman agreed, saying, "It's the most wonderful feeling when you give - and it will come back to you."

Brooks says giving also makes you more prosperous. Many of the rich claim it's the secret to their success.

"John D. Rockefeller even said that. He said 'God gave me my money to use as I see fit for the good of my fellow man.' He honestly believed, that the day he stopped giving was the day he would start to get poor because God would take his money away from him," Brooks said.

As an economist, Brooks said he used to think you had to have money before you could give it away.

"Turns out that's wrong," he said. "When I started actually looking at the data on this, the entrepreneurs, the successful people and the religious folks throughout history have been right all this time. Because what you find is - when you give -- you can count on, not necessarily right now, but sooner or later - a significant pay back, return on your investment," he said.

"What I'm saying is, that it's an amazing thing - the science backs up the Scripture," he said.

Giving is Good for America

Brooks says charitable giving is also good for America as a nation.

"When Americans on average give more, we can actually feel the impact in an increased GDP -- we get better national growth. This is one of the reasons that the U.S. is a richer country than other countries - because Americans give more," he said.

According to Brooks the average American gives 3.5 times as much money to charity as the average Frenchman, seven times as the average German, and 14 times per year as the average Italian.

"The only country that comes even remotely close to the U.S. is Israel, but everybody else is far behind," he said.

And it is the season of giving. During December, Americans will give away as much as a third of the $200-plus billion we give away each year.

What can we give to others to show that we really care for them?

- Our substance (food, clothing, etc.);
- Our service (a helping hand);
- Our Time;
- The Gospel etc.

Why does God bless giving and the giver? Because when we give we show **FAITH**. Some (like the widow who gave her last mite) more than others.

It takes faith to know that God will supply your needs.

The Prayer attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi (13th century)

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.