



## Giving and Receiving

*Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38, NKJ).*

**I**t is impossible to give and not to receive.

Some might say that is not true; however, God told Jeremiah: “. . . I am watching over my word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:12 RSV). God also told the prophet Isaiah: “. . . My Word . . . that goes forth from My mouth . . . shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55: 11 NKJ).

**“G**ive and it will be given to you.” It is the Word of God, so we know it is true. It is a promise spoken by Jesus and a principle we can live by. It is a principle that begins with an act on our part that sets things in motion in the spiritual realm. By our giving, the spiritual forces of God—maybe angels, but especially the Holy Spirit—begin working to bring fulfillment.

Jesus may have been speaking primarily of monetary giving when He spoke this principle. However, I believe it extends beyond giving money. We may give our time to someone. We may give a kind word, help with a project, help carrying a heavy load, or just a smile. Most of the time we don’t think about receiving something in return. We just do it. God, however, keeps a record of everything we give. He will see to it that His Word is fulfilled.

**S**ome of you have almost stopped giving because you think your part doesn’t matter. I’m not speaking in just monetary terms. Some of

you think the “little” things you contribute to your job, to your co-workers, to God’s kingdom, to this world as a whole are so insignificant that no one even notices or cares. And, you may have thought, since that’s the case why not just save the effort?

Some of you think the ministry you perform—because it’s not high profile—benefits very few people, if any. So, you’ve been feeling like quitting. Besides, the appreciation your efforts deserve simply hasn’t been forthcoming. I think we all know how it feels to be unappreciated. It’s very common. Studies on satisfaction in the workplace have shown that employees highly value feeling appreciated for their work. We all welcome genuine expressions of appreciation—not the fake kind—even if we brush them off and pretend we weren’t nearly dying to have someone say what we do matters.

**M**y premise for this letter is that it’s impossible to give and not receive. I hold to that; however, we often will give without receiving *what* we may have hoped for—or at least *when* we hoped to receive it, especially if we hoped for appreciation.

Think of Jesus, for example. He went about doing good, teaching, healing, delivering, encouraging, and so on. Many did thank Him. Remember, however, the ten lepers who were miraculously healed. Only one of the ten returned to thank Jesus. And yes He noticed. He

asked, “Where are the other nine?” (See Luke 17:12ff.)

**J**esus’ death on the Cross was undoubtedly the most important thing He did for lost humanity—and the most painful. Yet, did people gather to comfort Him by singing hymns or praying for God’s special grace? Were there thousands (or even one) kneeling in worship and thanking Him for taking their place, bearing their punishment for their sin? If so, that part of the story didn’t make it into any of the Gospel accounts. Instead, we are told His best friends left Him. He was beaten and cursed by soldiers. He—the only perfect human being that ever has lived—was crucified.

In John 3:16 we read: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God gave very generously and truly unselfishly, and the principle of giving and receiving also works for Him. He has received and will receive a host of people who love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus also received special honor and place in heaven as a gift from His Father. He had to go through a lot to receive it, however.

**T**here are some things that are impossible for God to do. One of those is to lie. The writer of Hebrews told us this (see Hebrews 6:18). That’s why I can say confidently it is impossible to give and not receive. If you by any means think what you give doesn’t matter or isn’t noticed, please join me in rejecting those thoughts and taking them captive to Christ. They are lies our enemy, Satan, wants us to believe so we will become discouraged and give up. We also need to remind ourselves often that people may not give us appreciation, but there is One who sees and keeps a good record.

I believe it is important to ask God to help us not to need people’s approval or appreciation so much. This is a spiritual growth point and may also be a healing and deliverance issue. If this is a significant issue, we need to make it a matter of earnest prayer. We need to search Scripture for

passages to help us become secure in God’s approval and love. We also need to be alert for this trap of the enemy so we don’t fall into it so much.

**O**ften when we give, what we receive in return will be of like kind. For example, give money and you often receive money. I’ve heard many testimonies of how God has done this for people who have given monetarily. However, we are warned in Matthew 6:1: “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven” (NKJ). Right motive is important.

Another example of receiving in like kind is found in the Beatitudes. Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7 NKJ). Jesus speaks here, I believe, about mercy God will give in return. Of course, God also can motivate people to give us mercy.

**J**esus encourages us to be generous givers. He says plainly—whatever you give will be multiplied back to you, “good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over . . .” Then He says, basically, if you use a small spoon, you will get multiplied spoonsful back. If you use a large bucket, you will get multiplied bucketsful back. And so on. Get the picture?

I think I’m going to throw away all my spoons. **SH**

GOD’S WORD FOR TODAY

Teaching Letter 26

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