



Teaching Letter 42

Giving, God's Way

"Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits" (Psalm 68:19 NKJ).

Our God is a gift giver. The key verse for this letter is from Psalm 68:19: "Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits" God is constantly giving to His children and to the world. Scripture records from Genesis to Revelation God's "good and perfect" gifts (James 1:17). His "mercies are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23 KJV). It is God's nature to give, and it is His will that we be like Him in our giving—thus, the title for this letter: "Giving, God's Way." We can "be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). And His nature is love.

Scripture describes God's giving in numerous ways. He gives richly, abundantly, generously, gladly, faithfully, and in many other ways. And all these virtues rest on the one which is foundational to everything He does—His love.

God's gift-giving overflows out of His love. That's the only way God can give because "God is love" (1 John 4:16). He does not merely have love, but He *is* love. Everything God does—not just some things—springs from His love, because love is the very essence of who He is. He has been and always will be perfect love.

Although we were created like God—in His image and in His likeness—we must be taught to love (see Romans 12:9-20) and taught to give. The person who truly gives out of love does so by God's enablement. We are not naturally born givers, as any parent can attest who has taught their toddler to share or their young child to give of their own things happily.

We all must be taught what love means (see 1 Corinthians 13) and to demonstrate our love by our actions. God is our supreme example. Paul wrote: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for

us" (Romans 5:8 NKJ). He gave to those who did not merit it and could not do anything to earn it. And it's when we remember we too are part of the unmeritorious group, having no innate right or claim to God's gifts, that we can begin to give to others whom we may have deemed unworthy.

We read in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 NKJ). God made salvation available to everyone—He gave His life for those who would believe in Him and for those who would not. The only criteria for receiving was believing. He loved everyone and made the gift of eternal life accessible to everyone through faith.

Every issue of life with God is first and foremost a heart matter. Our goal in giving as Christians is to be motivated by love as God's giving is. God's heart was touched when He saw the world (us) in desperate need of a savior, and He gave us a Savior. (Of course, this was no surprise to Him. He planned to save us from before the foundation of the world. See Luke 11:50 and Revelation 13:8.) And His giving to us continues, for He will never cease to love us. If we desire to give as God gives, God will help us to give with love if we ask Him.

True love will be motivated to give. We know it is possible to give without loving. We can give out of a sense of duty or responsibility. We can give out of habit. Duty, responsibility and habit are certainly not bad things. They can motivate us to do good things for others. We can even be motivated by guilt and also by selfish motives. Giving without love, however, will fail eventually. It falls short of the kind of giving which love prompts. And none of these lesser motivations caused God to give His Son, nor anything else that He has given us.

God has no duty or responsibility to us, for all of us turned away from Him through sin. When we chose the forgiveness He offered, relationship with God was re-established. And though He had no duty or responsibility or guilt, He chose to love and to give. This is a higher level of giving, for it has been elevated from the human plan to the divine plane.

Having been so elevated, **giving also benefits the one who gives with love.** Giving without love “profits” nothing.

Paul wrote: “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:3). In other words, giving out of love benefits the giver. Although we do not give merely to receive, we will be blessed if we give with love. There was benefit to God when He gave His Son to die for us. He received countless lost souls to Himself. Through Christ’s sacrificial giving of Himself He had the joy of knowing we would one day come to Him, love Him, receive eternal life through Him, live our lives by His grace and eventually be with Him forever.

Being able to give with love requires having our hearts filled with God’s love. We can give only that which we possess, so we need a deep knowledge of God’s love for us. We must be swimming in it, scuba diving, even—not ankle wading. If we are not, our giving will be mostly on the human plane. This is a dilemma for many who feel unloved by God at a deep level. Head knowledge will not suffice. To be able truly to give as Christ does requires that we be immersed in God’s love.

The ways I know to gain a deep-level knowledge of God’s love if you don’t have it include seeking God in prayer and meditating on Scriptures about God’s love for you—for a long time. Confess God’s love to yourself regularly (confessing=saying the same thing God says). Be around people who consistently demonstrate God’s love. Love yourself in a healthy way as God loves you. We cannot love others well nor give as God would have us give if we don’t love ourselves.

Do you know God loves you though you are imperfect? Do you know that at a deep level? Do you happily serve others, and are you a cheerful giver (see 2 Corinthians 9:7)? When trouble comes,

do you remain confident in God’s love for you or do you become resentful or angry? When Jesus spoke of the promised coming of the Holy Spirit, He said: “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of His heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38 NKJ). God’s Spirit within us wants to flow out of us in giving. God’s love does that.

In the verse preceding that statement, Jesus said: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (John 7:37). If you would like to drink more deeply of God’s love so that you can give God’s way even more, let me pray for you:

Father God: I thank You for Your great love with which You have loved my friend. I ask You to fill my friend with Your love at a deeper level. Let your love heal every hurt, offense, or feeling of being unloved or forsaken. Let Your love heal every wound of heart or spirit. Let us all be enabled to give to others and to You through Your love. Please do this today and every day. In Jesus name. Amen.

May we all grow in the grace of giving God’s way. **SH**

GOD’S WORD FOR TODAY

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“Give What You Have”

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