

LIFE-GIVING

WEEK 1 – JOYFUL GIVING

Deuteronomy 26: 1-15

MONDAY – Why should we give generously?



Genesis 1: 1 (NIV) *In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth.*

Psalms 24: 1 (NIV) *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

Genesis 1: 26, 28 (NIV) *Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the creatures that move along the ground." God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

1 Peter 4: 10 (NIV) *Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and everything on it. On the sixth day, God created man in His image and appointed man (mankind) as stewards over the earth and all on it, meaning that God has given mankind the responsibility to take care of earth and all on it. For each of us this includes financial

blessings and spiritual gifts. We are called to give out of our own free will, as an overflow of our gratitude and joy, and as an act of faith.

Reflection: Have you ever considered that giving back is a logical outflow of man's stewardship over all things?



Prayer: O Lord, giver of life and source of freedom, I know that all I have received is from Your hand. Gracious and loving God, You call us to be stewards of Your abundance, the caretakers of all You have entrusted to us. Help me to always use Your gifts and blessings wisely and teach me how to share them wisely. AMEN

TUESDAY – Biblical guidance on giving



2 Corinthians 9: 6-7 (NIV) *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Mark 12: 42-43 (NIV) *But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.*

Malachi 3: 10 (NIV) *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.*

Matthew 6: 1 (NIV) *“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

The Old and New Testaments contain numerous references to and guidance for giving. Giving is a key part of our stewardship role and should be done intentionally, cheerfully, proportionately, secretly and with gratitude. Just as we tend to plan everything in advance, we should also be intentional about our giving (2 Corinthians 9: 6-7). Mark 12: 41-44 shows us that it is not how much you give, but the attitude with which you do it that is

important. The widow gave her last two coins, knowing that it was all she had to live on. Malachi 3: 10 tells us that regular tithing is richly rewarding, whereas Matthew 6: 1 reminds us to not make our giving a public demonstration because we will get our reward in heaven.

Reflection: Cheerful giving starts with gratitude. Are you a cheerful giver?



Prayer: O Lord, we thank you for generously opening the floodgates of heaven. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Giving of the First-fruits



Deuteronomy 26: 1-2 (NIV) *When you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, take some of the first-fruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the Lord your God is giving you and put them in a basket.*

Nehemiah 10: 35 (NIV) *“We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the Lord each year the first-fruits of our crops and of every fruit tree.*

1 Corinthians 15: 20 (NIV) *But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

In the Old Testament, first-fruits were material things the Jews offered to God as a form of worship and sacrifice. In Deuteronomy 26 we see that first-fruits was a community act of saying “thank you” in response to God’s future blessing of leading them to the Promised Land and giving it to them as their inheritance. They believed in His promise and thanked Him in advance.

First-fruits already differed between the Old and New Testaments. In 1 Corinthians 15: 20 Paul likens the risen Christ as the first-fruit of those who had died. So then, if we are giving

today, what would be considered first-fruits?

We may not have harvests from the land, but we do engage in all sorts of endeavours. It would be a wonderful way of following the example of the Deuteronomy 26 today if we in every new endeavour brought the first-fruits, our first successes in the endeavour, as an offering to God.

Reflection: Think of those projects you are currently engaged in, at work and/or at home, and of joy we can bring by giving food and clothing to those who are in less fortunate circumstances than us.



Prayer: Abba Father, please guide me to always remember that everything I have is from Your hand and open my eyes to opportunities to give to the less fortunate. AMEN

THURSDAY – Giving proportionally, that is tithing



Malachi 3: 10 (NIV) *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”*

1 Corinthians 16: 2a (NIV) *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up.*

2 Corinthians 8: 9 (NIV) *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*

2 Corinthians 8: 12 (NIV) *For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.*

The Old Testament scripture most quoted about proportional giving is Malachi 3: 10, but proportional giving was already a key part of the instructions (commandments) given by God to the Israelites and listed in the Torah. Some of these references to tithing can be found in Leviticus 27: 30-33, Numbers 18: 25-32 and Deuteronomy 26: 12-15.

Jesus said to His disciples “when you give” and not “If you give”. Hence, Christian giving is not an

option, it is essential (Matthew 6: 2a). Paul makes it very clear that tithing, that is, proportional giving, should be in proportion to what one has (2 Corinthians 8: 12), but of course it is at the same time also in proportion to the need (Mark 12: 42-43).

Reflection: I have to ask myself whether I am only interested in God because of what I can get from the relationship, or do I rather think of what I can give?



Prayer: Compassionate Father, we give our offerings to You with gladness and joy. Everything we have belongs to You. Bless the tithes and offerings we give to You. AMEN

FRIDAY – The joy of giving



John 3: 16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Matthew 6: 21 *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Acts 20: 35 *“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

James 2: 15-16; 18 (NIV) *Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.*

Jim Sheppard of the Generis Group USA says that Christian giving is not financial, it is spiritual. Giving is a measure of one’s love for God (see Matthew 6: 21). If we lay up treasure in heaven, our heart will dwell on heavenly things. Similarly, giving is an expression of one’s faith. The believer is not saved by works, but

shows faith by works (James 2:15-16; 18)

Reflection: “Giving is first and foremost a spiritual issue – not financial. Our giving back to God for the work He wants to do in this world is a reflection of who He is in our lives” Jim Sheppard. *What does your giving say about your relationship with God?*



Prayer: Father, I come to Your throne with a humble heart as I am so thankful for the blessings You give me on a daily basis. Father, I pray that as I give You my tithe I will remember that it belongs to You. May I never withhold what is Yours? I give you this tithe with joy in my heart, Lord. AMEN