

The Benefit of Giving

Dear Friend,

It takes faith to turn loose of something of value and give it to someone else. Faith that God will re-supply that which we have given. As a result, each gift given in response to a need presented to us enables us to discover the benefit of trusting in our Heavenly Father.

God measures true greatness through the spirit of growth in faith, humility, and service. The benefit of giving is a result that comes from trusting God as our provider to the extent that we are free to give Him daily ourselves in service and gifts from all He has given us.

It is God's will for you to discover the benefit of giving. Paul expressed this in Acts 20:35 when he said "...We must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The benefit of giving touches the very core of our existence. It blesses us as givers with purpose and reconnects us with the heart of God, the giver of all things.

Jesus says in Mark 10:43, 44, "***Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.***"

To be honest, I do not often feel much joy early on Friday mornings surrounded by hundreds of desperate homeless people. Sometimes, my body would rather be in bed then facing such overwhelming needs. When a container of clothing is brought out, the crowd rushes the one carrying the container to the point that person must set it down as these homeless, hurting people grab in hopes of finding something they can wear. As bus tickets are given out there are always some who want more than they are given.

Among the hundreds of hurting there is always two or three who are loud and confrontational. Now you tell me what benefit there is in giving in the midst of what may appear to some as chaos. I find the benefit not in dwelling on the most desperate and angry, which is about 5% of those served, but focusing on the 95% who are truly in need and most grateful.

To experience the benefit of giving I must pray before I engage in service. Then The Holy Spirit is able to open my eyes and heart to the extent I can see that giving to those in need is not a job but rather an opportunity to let the love of God flow through me.

This love cannot flow when selfish ambition is the motivating factor for giving. That is why Philippians 2:3, 4 says, "***Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others.***"

When I don't feel much joy from my giving. I have to step back and analyze both my motives for giving my gift, and my expectations from the person or group that I have given my gift to. There have been times when I have given to a person who is so broken in mind and spirit, very little if any gratitude is expressed. Instead of being disappointed over this I know I should be rejoicing over the opportunity God has given me to help someone, who at this moment may even be incapable of expressing gratitude. My gift needs to be given as an expression of gratitude for all God has given me. I must consistently strive to reflect His love.

Giving out of selfish ambition or conceit is paternalistic giving at best. There is no benefit in such giving. It is when we give out of humility, with respect for others, who are made in the image of God, that we can experience the full benefit of giving.

One promise after another is given to those who, out of humility, value others and share with them. Psalm 41:1 says, ***“Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble, the Lord delivers him.”***

God gives us three ways to give:

- 1. Financially**
- 2. Ourselves (volunteering)**
- 3. Prayer**

By sharing with others, we discover the benefit of storing up our treasures where it really matters. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:19, 20, ***“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”***

Storing up treasures in heaven involves investing our gifts and time in the Kingdom of heaven. It is easy for us to feel totally overwhelmed by the needs that are presented to us. For that reason, God gives us three different ways that we can give. These include giving our financial resources, or money to the individual in need or an organization directly assisting them. When we give to a church or a faith-based organization assisting the poor and homeless we know that the organization we are giving to will evaluate the authenticity of the need. They will then share in a way that will be of greatest assistance to the one in need.

Another way to experience the benefit of giving is by the giving of ourselves through volunteering our services. This gives us opportunities to build relationships and see from first-hand experience how our gift is making a big difference.

Finally, God gives us the opportunity to give of ourselves through prayer. It is through prayer that I can help the homeless and hungry in India, Africa and America at the same time. As I pray for those individuals and organizations in need, I am able to experience the joy of knowing I am making a difference for good in the lives of the hurting and homeless as I follow my prayers with my gifts of love.

When I am giving financial help, volunteering or praying, I am able to put my heart on that which really matters in God's eyes. As that happens, I am able to experience the benefit of giving.

So, the question is where is your heart at most of the time? For the Macedonian church in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 it was in the joy of giving. *“And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.”*

These people knew the benefit of giving so extensively that they pleaded for the opportunity to give. In order to experience this kind of joy they had to first give themselves to God and then by the will of God to meeting the need that was presented to them. “Their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.”

In order to give in this way, and experience the benefit of giving, they had to remove themselves from being the center of their own universe and let God take over their lives. By trusting Him the Macedonian churches were free to give even at a time of great personal need.

In the midst of our troubles there is joy to be discovered in helping others. In order to do this we have to take our eyes off our own problems and look to God, trusting Him to meet our needs as we respond to the needs of others.

I know it is so easy to be consumed by the needs I am presently facing. If I only look at my own needs soon all my money, time and prayers will be dedicated to meeting those needs. If I do this for any period of time I will feel like I am in a never ending rat race, that even if I win the race I will still feel like a rat.

The solution to this problem involves stepping back and surrendering each and every thing that is troubling me to God. As I do this I must take my eyes off my needs, look to God who is bigger than these needs and then let Him show me a need somebody else has He wants me to address. As that happens I will be placing my trust in God. He is then free to provide the miracle I need. As a result of God meeting this need a new spirit of gratitude will come forth where worry once existed.

Real joy is the manifestation of the heart of God in our lives as we do His will. It is this joy which supersedes circumstances and allows the love of God to be expressed through our lives into the lives of others.

Yes, God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). He desires to pour His joy into the heart of such a giver. ***“And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: ‘They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.’”***

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God” (2 Corinthians 9:8-11).

What benefits are awaiting both you as you give, and those who are receiving God’s blessings through you.



“This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you” (2 Corinthians 9:12-14).

Thank God for the privilege of giving for it is truly more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

There are so many in need right now who would love to have the resources to give. Many are homeless, unemployed, have their utilities shut off and the mortgage is overdue. They would love to have money to give but because they don’t have such they are still giving their time in volunteer service and praying. I know this is the case because I have the privilege of working with such individuals each day. Their dedication and service is an inspiration to me, and a constant reminder of what a privilege it is to give.

It is truly more blessed to give than to receive. As we give in whatever form that we are able to, may we discover the joy of letting God’s love flow in us and throughout us. That is why Paul says in I Thessalonians 5:17, ***“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”***

Now look for opportunities to be blessed, for it is God’s grace that provides sacrificial giving. Such giving creates in us the confidence that God’s eyes are on us and we are pleasing Him.

Now we need to connect our heart to God’s heart. He has a heart of giving. He proved this by giving His only begotten Son (John 3:16) and now “*whoever believes in Him shall not perish but will receive the gift of everlasting life.*”

It brings joy to the Father’s heart as we give.

In Acts 10 we meet Cornelius whose gifts gave God great joy. “*He and all his family were devout and God-fearing, he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, ‘Cornelius!’ Cornelius stared at him in fear. ‘What is it Lord?’ he asked. The Angel answered, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God’*” (verses 2-4).

If we desire to be great in God’s eyes we will be great givers. In Acts 10 Cornelius is found giving. He feared God and believed that his possessions belonged first to God and then to himself. An Angel tells Cornelius – God has seen your giving, go and bring Peter to your home. The next day God gives Peter a vision and shows him to go to Cornelius because he had it in his heart to serve people.

God sees all that we do. When we see that God sees and provides we can step out and confront the fear that paralyzes us and let Jesus free us to help others.

Cornelius’s giving resulted in Peter coming to his house and sharing the message so that the entire household was saved. What a great benefit there was in giving and what a manifestation of the Spirit followed; “*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have”* (Acts 10:44-47).

It is truly God’s will for you to discover the benefit of giving for He has promised, “*Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the LORD delivers them in times of trouble. The LORD protects and preserves them—they are counted among the blessed in the land—he does not give them over to the desire of their foes. The LORD sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness*” (Psalm 41:1-3).

What a joy it is to know that God will bless, deliver, protect, preserve, sustain, and restore those who give. Since it is God’s will for us to experience His joy, let us strive to give, as giving unto the Lord.

Hebrews 12:1-3 tells us that there are so many who lived before us that are now watching how we will respond to the opportunities that God gives us to live and give. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

There was no joy in the cross for Jesus. It was when He looked beyond the cross that He saw the need for our redemption and the eternal joy awaiting us as He paid the price for our sins.

Now if we are going to experience the benefit of the giving of ourselves to God and others we must fix our eyes on Jesus. He is the one who will give us the strength not to grow weary and lose heart as we continue to give and live in His love.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Rice". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Rice".

Larry Rice