

DAYS
27-33
OF THE  40 DAY
CHALLENGE

WEEK OF
GIVING



"IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE
THAN TO RECEIVE."

ACTS 20:35

DAY 27

LEND. EXPECTING NOTHING
IN RETURN
LUKE 6:35

How many times have you truly given something and not received anything in return?

In their book *Super Freakonomics*, Stephen Levitt and Stephen Dubner write, "At the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in England, a psychology professor named Melissa Bateson surreptitiously ran an experiment in her own department's break room. Customarily, faculty members paid for coffee and other drinks by dropping money into an 'honesty box.' Each week, Bateson posted a new price list. The prices never changed, but the small photograph atop the list did. On odd weeks, there was a picture of flowers; on even weeks, a pair of human eyes. When the eyes were watching, Bateson's colleagues left nearly three times as much money in the honesty box. So the next time you laugh when a bird is frightened off by a silly scarecrow, remember that scarecrows work on human beings too."³¹

It may appear altruistic when you donate \$100 to your local public radio station, but in exchange you get a year of guilt-free listening (and, if you're lucky, a canvas tote bag). U.S. citizens are easily the world's leaders in per-capita charitable contributions, but the U.S. tax code is also among the most generous in allowing deductions for those contributions.

Economists say most giving is "impure altruism": You give not only because you want to help but because it makes you look good, or feel good, or perhaps feel less bad. You've done it before, and so have I. You don't have to feel bad if you do get something back in return. But I think the heart of what Jesus is saying

is that the reason and **the attitude behind our giving should never be to get something in return.**

The reality is it's actually hard to give without getting something in return. Even our verse in Luke 6:35 says, "Lend without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High." Jesus tells us that when we give and expect nothing back, we will eventually get something back from God!

Ultimately **we worship a God who gave up His most prized possession for us!** He gave His very own Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us. Through His death and resurrection, He paid the entire price for all the sin we've ever committed and ever will commit. He didn't pay 99% of it and ask us to pay the last 1%. He paid it all.

As a follower of Jesus I know and believe in the reality of Jesus' death and resurrection. How disappointing it must be for God to look at me and see that I still fail Him. If He sent Jesus expecting that after His death and resurrection we would be eternally grateful and therefore live lives of complete holiness, He must be very disappointed. However, God sent Jesus not because He expected perfection from us, but simply because He loves us. However, God sent Jesus knowing that even after His death and resurrection we would fail Him.

That's what it means to lend, or give, without expecting in return.

We do not give because we have to. We give because we want to be like Jesus. We want to follow in the footsteps of our Savior who laid the foundation for us to give even when we may not get anything back in return.

I love this story because of its simplicity. There were no synagogues or places for the early Christians to meet in Philippi and so after being baptized Lydia offers her house to the church. She expects nothing in return. All she wants is to be a part of what God is doing in her city. She knew what the church needed; she knew she had it; and so she gave it to the church and her house became the headquarters for the church and mission work in Philippi.

ACTS 16:11-15

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.



AS WE START OUR WEEK OF
GIVING, LEND OR GIVE TO
SOMEONE AND DON'T ASK
FOR OR EXPECT ANYTHING
IN RETURN.

27/40

