

# Giving: How You Live, Is How You Give

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**DO YOU REMEMBER THE STORY OF MARY AND MARTHA** with Jesus as a guest, and Martha preparing food while Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet listening to His words...

**Giving doesn't start with the giving itself, but the 'Giver' – BIG G – God...**

**Living isn't sourced in giving itself – But the one who is GIVING! GOD!**

**God is a GIVER!** There is nothing selfish in God!

1 Corinthians 13 – called the love chapter...is not just telling us what love is...It's telling you how God is - *'He Is Love'* – 1 Jn 4:8

- **And the word 'love' in this context has the root word** – charity
- Which means 'to give'

**If God's greatest goal in your life is for you to be more like Jesus...**

**You have two choices each...**

**Will you be a giver or a taker?**

**And Paul shares the heart, example, and experience of Christians –**

**2 Corinthians 8:1-5 NLT**

*"Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. 2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.*

*3 For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4 They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. 5 They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do."*

## Encouragement Today:

### How to *develop*, how to *grow* in, how to *live TO give*

- **It's not about what you have**
- **It's not about what you don't have**
  - God has put you in a race of life today to
  - *"And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us." – Heb 12:1 NLT*
  - *"So run to win!" – 1 Cor. 9:24*

**In 1 Cor.** Paul says, it all starts with recognizing God's grace and kindness...

*"Now I want you to **know**, dear brothers and sisters, what **God in his kindness has done** through the churches in Macedonia"*

**Giving starts, not with an act of giving, but acknowledging God's grace and kindness in your life**

**Jesus said...**

*"For God loved the world in this way: **He gave** His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."*

- *Jn 3:16 HCSB*

**Do you know...**the grace and kindness of what God has done for you?

**Paul goes on to say the church** is *"being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor"*.

**FIRST** – we chose to focus on and grow in the knowing of God's goodness and kindness.

**SECOND** – it's knowing that because giving is based on God and His grace, it doesn't matter what you are facing today.

**This can only** happen **authentically, consistently,** and **increasingly** by following the example laid out in 1 Cor 9:

*"They even did more than we had hoped, **for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord** and to us, just as God wanted them to do."*

**YOUR FIRST ACTION is to give yourself to the Lord!**

**3 questions when it comes to the giving of yourself:**

**1. WHAT ARE YOU GIVING INTO** This speaks to the **CENTRE of your life – Your SOURCE**

**Jesus said,**

*24 “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn’t collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn’t act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was great!”*

**Is your foundation solid?**

**Every person has two fundamental needs in life that can only be met by God Himself...**

- Purpose and value

Anytime you go outside of God to meet these needs in life or don’t recognize Jesus as your source for spiritual and physical wholeness...

you will find you may be **well-meaning**, but you are actually **manipulating** others and circumstances to meet your needs...

**The result** is you can’t authentically **live to give** or **overflow** with generosity.

**We battle this everyday...**

To be selfless or selfish

**Sin is defined as pride or independence from God.**

**When you give in to other things or other people, you can’t truly give!**

**That’s why Paul says 1 Cor. 13:**

*“If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s*

*secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing."*

## **2. WHAT ARE YOU GIVING UP?**

**This speaks to the CONTROL of your life. This is your SURRENDER.**

In order to give fully, we need to give up and release areas of our life that *may be managed by us BUT not maximized by God.*

**Paul said,**

*"They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to **give themselves to the Lord** and to us, just as God wanted them to do."*

**Jesus said,** *"So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say?" Luke 6:46 NLT*

Often the need to control need isn't an unwillingness to trust God, but a broken part of our lives that was violated, hurt, taken from us.

We also get tempted with the idea that we know best and head butt with God.

God doesn't want control of your life to dictate, dominate, and be a kill joy...but to develop you into your best potential and experience in life, now and in preparation for eternity!

**Jesus said,**

*"Kings and those with great authority in this world rule oppressively over their subjects, like tyrants. But this is not your calling. You will lead by a completely different model. The greatest one among you will live as the one who is called to serve others, because the greatest honor and authority is reserved for the one with the heart of a servant. For even the Son of Man did not come expecting to be served but to serve and give his life in exchange for the salvation of many." – Matt 20:25-28*

- **There's a difference to being in control and having control.**
- **Being in control is a sense of ownership and responsibility.**

- **It's also a fruit of the Spirit** – God's nature in you – Gal. 5:22-23
  - o *22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace...and self-control.*

**Pr. 16:32 says, "better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city"**

**A full life in God can give fully! It finds fulfillment in what can be given versus taken!**

### **3. WHAT ARE YOU GIVING OUT?**

**This speaks to the CONTRIBUTION of your life coming from your sense of SECURITY or lack of.**

*"Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" – Acts 20:35 NLT*

**However, you can't give what you don't have...**

**Jesus also said, love your neighbor as you love yourself...**

**It is only from a place of wholeness and security that we can give because our hearts full...**

**God Himself gives us the example of being secure AND from that contributing to life and living to give.**

**Acts 17:24**

*"24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things."*

**When you stand on the truth that you are complete in Christ – Col. 2:10...**

**You are then secure and able to contribute and be a life-giving, Christ-living vessel that God uses.**

- **Loving God, loving people – relationships**

**So, what are you giving out today? What are you giving off?**

**Insecurity always serves itself.**

**Security always serves others.**