

How you receive is typically how people feel when you give to them. (June 5, 2025)

It is Paul who quoted Jesus as saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35) It was also Paul who wrote, “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you...” (1 Cor. 11:23) These two great realities of life and service have led many to the conclusion that “you cannot give what you do not have.” In God’s kingdom, giving and receiving are connected.

There are two main ways we get things. The first way is to work and earn it. In this case, we get what we deserve. The other way is to receive it as a gift. In this case, it is grace and leads us to gratitude. As Christians, we understand that all we have received is of grace. Again, it was Paul who wrote, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Cor. 15:10)

One of the ways to see how deeply grace has affected our lives is to become aware of how other people receive from us. What is it like being on the receiving end of you? Do you make people feel like subordinates...always looking up to you as smarter, stronger, wealthier, or better? Do you make people feel like projects...someone to be pitied and felt sorry for, but never seen as equals? Do you make people feel like dependents...lucky to have someone as benevolent as you in their lives, but afraid you might go away at any time?

Or do they feel more alive, more empowered, more free, more wise, more daring, and more hopeful?

Becoming aware of how people feel when they receive from you will give you loads of insight into how you are receiving from God and others. You must receive gracefully to give grace.

It was Jesus who said, “Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.” (Luke 7:47)