

Giving

Giving is not just about material wealth, but about the heart and attitude behind the act. Here are some key Biblical principles on giving:

1. **Giving is an Act of Worship and Obedience:**

- In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth (tithe) of their income to support the work of the temple, the priests, and the poor (Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:10). Giving was part of their covenant relationship with God, showing faithfulness and obedience.
- In the New Testament, Jesus affirmed the importance of giving but also taught that the heart behind the gift matters more than the amount (Matthew 23:23). Giving should be done cheerfully, not out of compulsion (2 Corinthians 9:7).

2. **Generosity to the Poor and Needy:**

- The Bible teaches a special focus on caring for the poor, the widow, and the orphan. In Deuteronomy 15:7-11, God commands generosity toward the poor.
- Jesus taught in Matthew 25:35-40 that acts of kindness to those in need—such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick—are considered as service to Him.
- Proverbs 19:17 says, "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done."

3. **Cheerful and Sacrificial Giving:**

- Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 that God loves a cheerful giver, encouraging believers to give freely and with joy. He also emphasized that the amount isn't as important as the attitude and willingness to give.
- In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Paul commends the Macedonian churches for giving out of their poverty, demonstrating sacrificial giving as an example for others to follow.
- Mark 12:41-44: Jesus commends the poor widow who gave all she had, even though her offering was small. "This poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others."
- Sacrificial giving is valued more than the amount given. God looks at the sacrifice and heart of the giver, not just the quantity.
- The ultimate example of sacrificial giving is Jesus Himself, who gave His life for the salvation of humanity (John 3:16). His life and sacrifice model the kind of selfless, sacrificial love that Christians are called to reflect in their giving.

4. Storing Up Treasures in Heaven:

- Jesus taught in Matthew 6:19-21 that believers should not store up treasures on earth but rather store up treasures in heaven through acts of kindness and generosity. What we give, especially for the kingdom of God, has eternal value.
- Luke 12:33-34 speaks about selling possessions to give to the poor, noting that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- Giving to God's kingdom and using resources to bless others is an investment in eternal treasures, not temporary earthly wealth.

5. Giving in Secret:

- Jesus emphasized the importance of giving without seeking recognition. In Matthew 6:1-4, He warned against giving in order to be seen by others, teaching that giving should be done in secret, where only God sees, and God will reward those acts in His time.

6. Giving Should Be Motivated by Love

- 1 Corinthians 13:3: "If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."
 - The Bible emphasizes that giving without love is meaningless. Our motivation for giving should come from a heart of love, not from obligation or for personal gain.

7. Stewardship of Resources

- 1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."
 - This teaches that everything we have belongs to God, and we are to steward our time, talents, and resources wisely for His glory and for the benefit of others.

8. The Principle of Sowing and Reaping:

- Galatians 6:7-9 and 2 Corinthians 9:6 emphasize the idea that we reap what we sow. If we sow generously, we will reap generously, both in material and spiritual blessings. However, it's not about giving with a selfish motivation, but rather with a heart that seeks to bless others and glorify God.

- Luke 6:38: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
- This passage suggests that generosity leads to God's abundant blessings. It is not a transaction, but rather a reflection of God's generosity toward us.
- Philippians 4:19: "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."
- God promises to provide for those who are faithful in giving, ensuring that their needs are met.

Summary of Biblical Principles on Giving:

- **Generosity:** Give generously, without a begrudging spirit.
- **Sacrifice:** The heart and sacrifice behind the gift matter more than the size of the gift.
- **Stewardship:** All we have belongs to God, and we are called to manage our resources wisely.
- **Love:** Giving should be motivated by love for others and for God.
- **Blessings:** God blesses those who give, both in this life and in eternity.