

## The Bible on Giving

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by James E. Finney

The Bible teaches that everything a man is and has is the result of a gift. Life itself is a gift from God and, though prosperity is produced by the wisdom and efficiency of our labors, our abilities and opportunities themselves are given to us by God. Therefore it naturally follows that we who have been graciously endowed with life and the ability to successfully fend for ourselves in this world owe something to Him from whom it all has come. Only ingrates could refuse.

But it is equally evident that God does not need anything we have. *“For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness”* (Ps. 50:10–12). Hence, when He calls upon us to give, it is not because He needs to receive, but that we need to give. The best view of God’s attitude on giving is in carefully seeing what He has said.

**Giving honors God:** *“Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;”* (Proverbs 3:9)

**Giving characterizes righteousness:** *“The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare.”* (Proverbs 21:25–26)

**Giving is a grace:** *“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ... they were freely willing, ... first gave themselves to the Lord, ... see that you abound in this grace also.”* (2 Corinthians 8:1–7)

**Refusal to give is robbery:** (this Old Testament passage depicts God’s attitude, though tithing is not a part of the New Testament): *“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings’”* (Malachi 3:8)

**Hates covetousness:** *“And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses”* (Luke 12:15). *“For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire; he blesses the greedy and renounces the LORD”* (Psalms 10:3).

**Loves cheerful givers:** *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Corinthians 9:7).

God’s principles and laws governing giving are as clear as His commands on other subjects. 1 Corinthians 16:2 says *“On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, ...”* (1 Corinthians 16:2). From this (and the other Corinthian passages cited) we learn that our giving is to be:

1. Regular,
2. Proportionate to prosperity,
3. Personal,
4. Planned and purposed,
5. Liberal and
6. Cheerful.

Any failure on our part to give as commanded is to indict ourselves as either being ignorant of what God wants or else of being covetous. Let us, as grateful and obedient children, obey all of God’s commands cheerfully.

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