GIVING BACK TO GOD AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Dennis Piwowarczyk

Giving is so important to Christianity that God has ordained an office to see it carried out in the church: the office of deacon. Deacons have been given a responsibility to handle gifts which have been given for the Lord’s work. They are charged with passing on gifts to those who have a particular need. Giving is important to the Christian church.

When we give a gift it is to express love, concern, appreciation and thanks. You might give a gift covered with special wrapping paper and a lively yellow-colored bow, which you know is your friend’s favorite color. It could be a hand-made quilt for their bed. Maybe its a dozen long-stemmed roses for your spouse with a special card. A practical gift for your aged Uncle and Aunt would be a gift certificate at a local supermarket.

Yet all these are virtually nonexistent in comparison to God’s giving of Himself. James 1:17 states: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

What has God given to you? Different skills, talents, a marriage partner, jobs, health, fellowship in His house. But most of all God gave you His Son Jesus, who offered Himself up on the cross for the sins of those who know Him as Lord and Savior, that you would have eternal life (John 3:15). God gave us redemption from sin (Heb. 9:12), salvation through Christ (Heb. 5:9), a kingdom (2 Peter 1:10-11), everlasting joy ( Isa. 51:11), and comfort (2 Thess. 2:16-17). In the Lord’s prayer we ask God to give us His kingdom, exercise His will, provide our daily bread, forgive our sins, and to deliver us from temptation and all kinds of evil.

Do you ever take for granted all or much of what God has given you? Are you becoming lax in daily prayer, daily study of the Scriptures, participation in the Lord’s house, or in tithing? The temptations of this sin-filled world become more attractive, and your spiritual sword becomes dull. Before you know it, your giving as an act of worship is nonexistent. You find yourself becoming fat with the deceitful lusts of this world. Yet you also find yourself unfulfilled, spiritually empty, and far from God. Do you need to review your giving back to God as an act of worship? The following are examples from the Bible which address this important issue.

I. You worship God through giving to the Lord’s work. The Israelites gave to God through worship (Ex. 35:21-29).

A. Their hearts were stirred, their spirits were willing, and they brought out of love and repentance (v. 21).
B. They gave sacrificially; things which they treasured most (vs. 22-24).
C. The Israelites gave their personal talents for use, out of love (vs. 25-26).
D. Israel’s rulers brought precious stones, spices, and oil (vs. 27-28).
E. The children of Israel gave a freewill offering (v. 29).

The Israelites gave obediently to the Lord. Do you?

II. You must give sacrificially. The poor widow was noticed and commended by Jesus (Luke 21:1-4).
   A. Jesus watches as those who have extra riches cast but a portion of it into the treasury; a portion not given sacrificially but from their abundance (vs. 1,4).
   B. The widow, though poor, was lively in her giving. She gave out of poverty as an act of worship (vs. 2,4).
   C. The widow will be rewarded for her giving to God out of her heart (vs. 2-3).

The widow was commended by Christ for her unselfish giving. She will hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”(Matt. 25:21). Do you give out of your abundance, or sacrificially?

III. You must give joyfully. The Macedonian churches were commended for their unselfish giving (2 Cor. 8:1-5).
   A. They sought God’s will, and received His grace (vs. 1).
   B. Despite being poor, their belief in God gave them a joy and abundance which they sought to share with others (vs.2).
   C. They gave beyond their ability (generously and sacrificially), and begged Paul to let them participate (vs. 3-4).
   D. They gave freely for God’s glory and desired His will to be done (vs. 5).

As you review your life and what God has done for you, do you openly share your joy and abundance with those less fortunate? When you give, do you expect something in return? Is this Biblical giving? Is your giving for the glory of God, or for a tax write off at the end of the year?

IV. Jesus gave back to God the Father as an act of worship.
   A. Jesus was obedient to the Father, and did His will (John 6:38).
   B. Christ’s mission was to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:1 0).
   C. Jesus gave glory to the Father (John 17:1-5).
   D. Jesus came to serve the Father, and sacrifice Himself for us (Mark 10:45). He rendered Satan powerless (Heb. 2:14).

Does your act of worship include obedience, giving glory to, asking God to use you in service, and to sacrifice your time or resources for His glory? After all, your time and resources are gifts from God.

V. There are many benefits from giving back to God.
A. A deeper love and commitment in serving God will develop in you.
B. In times of stress your faith will be stronger.
C. You will have inner peace, joy, and grace ... a sense of fulfillment.
D. Your focus will be less on physical provision, and more on worship.
E. There will be a greater desire to share what God has freely given you (1 Cor. 2:12).

As God has given to you generously, you are to give cheerfully, not by necessity or grudgingly. For God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).

**Conclusion**

In the examples studied today, there are several characteristics common to all. The party involved had first given themselves to the Lord as an act of worship. This desire to give glory to God resulted in their giving freely and willingly from their hearts. This giving was not just in money, but in time, effort, and special skills and talents given by God for His glory. God treats you very special and blesses you with countless daily gifts. Are you giving back to Him what He has given to you in His house, your job, and your family? Are you giving to the Lord’s work obediently, sacrificially, and joyfully? I encourage you to grow in your giving back to God as a daily act of worship and lifestyle.