

Four Biblical Principles of Giving

What does it mean to give? How does it look? You may know intuitively that you should give but not know much beyond that.

The good news is that the Bible tells us what our giving should look like. Our generous God reveals to us four giving principles throughout Scripture.

Principle 1: Giving is to be a priority.

We are given resources so that we can give resources.

For most, giving is an afterthought. It's what takes place after all of the needs and wants are taken care of. But in the Bible, giving is a priority.

The Bible repeatedly shows us that we are to give our first and our best to him. For example, Proverbs 3:9 says, "Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first produce of your entire harvest." For the Israelites, this meant that whatever crops or livestock were produced, they were to set aside the first and best of their crops or livestock for God.

What does this mean for us? For most of us, it means that we are to give some of our gross income to God. Before taxes, before retirement savings, before debt repayment, and even before bill payments, we give.

In God's economy, amount sacrificed always supersedes amount given. [Click to tweet](#)

Principle 2: Giving is to be done proportionately.

This means that those who have more give more, and those who have less give less. Your giving should be proportional to what you have been given.

Proverbs 3:10 says, "Bring a full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house..." says the Lord of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure." Throughout Scripture we see the idea of proportional giving. As God blesses us, so should we be blessing others.

Principle 3: Giving is to be done sacrificially.

In God's economy, amount sacrificed always supersedes amount given.

When King David went to offer God a sacrifice, a man tried to give him land and animals at no cost. In 2 Samuel 24:24, we read King David's response: "No, I insist on buying it from you for a price, for I will not offer to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

He knew that God would find greater delight in an offering that cost him something.

In Luke 21:1-4, we find Jesus pointing out a widow who gave two coins as the person who gave most. Why? She gave all she had. She sacrificed. Jesus is less concerned about what is put in the offering plate and more concerned about what is left at home. God tells us to give sacrificially.

God designed us not to be hoarders, but conduits through which his generosity flows. [Click to tweet](#)

Principle 4: Giving is to be done cheerfully.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul says, “Each person should do as he has decided in his heart – not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.” God does not want a bunch of grumpy givers. You would refuse a gift if it was accompanied with bitterness and reluctance. God is not interested in those types of gifts either.

What I love about these four principles is that God does not only tells us how to give; he leads us. God gave his first and best, his one and only. He gave us Jesus. Giving was a priority. The creator and owner of all things gave us an unfathomable gift, one that can never be matched. He gave us Jesus. He gave proportionately. The Father sent his one and only Son to die on a cross for our sins. He gave us Jesus. He gave sacrificially.

At times the principles of sacrificial giving and cheerful giving may seem to contradict each other. How can you give out of sacrifice and still be happy?

God shows us how.

Isaiah 53:10 reads, “Yet the Lord was pleased to crush him severely. When you make him a guilt offering he will see his seed, he will prolong his days, and by his hand the Lord’s pleasure will be accomplished.”

God found pleasure in the crushing, or the crucifixion of his Son. But how? How can God find delight in the midst of the pain?

He focused on eternity.

He focused on the lasting outcome that would result from the crushing of Jesus; his seed, us, will be with him for all eternity. And it is through the lens of eternity, storing up treasure in heaven, that we can be cheerful givers, even in the midst of sacrifice.

God designed us not to be hoarders, but conduits through which his generosity flows. Giving is to be a priority. We are to give proportionately and sacrificially. We are to give with cheerful hearts. We are to reflect the generosity of our generous God.

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