

God's Word on (Thanks)Giving

Thanksgiving to God:

Why are we to be thankful?

It is commanded: Gratitude is not an optional emotion, it is a command: (Ps 50:14; Phil 4:6; Col 3:15; 1 Thes 5:18).

It is good: "It is good to give thanks to the Lord." (Ps 92:1 NAS)

It is Christ's example: (Matt 11:25; 26:27; John 6:11; 11:41)

It is what we will be doing in heaven for all eternity: (Rev 7:12)

When do we give thanks?

Always Eph 5:20 ESV giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Forever Ps 30:12 NAS That my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

To what extent?

Ps 9:1 ESV I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;

Col 2:7 ESV rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Ps 109:30 ESV With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

NAS I will give thanks abundantly

NET I will thank the LORD profusely.

What is the source of ALL our possessions?

Rom 11:35-36 NET Or who has first given to God, that God needs to repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever! Amen.

(also Deut 8:18; 1 Chron 29:12; Job 41:11; Ps 50:10-12, John 3:27, 1 Cor 4:7)

All that exists is God's and all that is in our possession is from God.

No one can give to God what was not first received from Him! Unfortunately, the more that we get, the less thankful we typically are. (Prov 30:8-9)

For what are we to give thanks?

Everything 1 Thes 5:18 ESV: give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Phil 4:6 ESV: ... but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

What besides material possessions are we to thank God for?

There are numerous examples in the Bible of saints giving thanks for many things besides what we physically possess, but there are two things that should top our list of what we give thanks for:

For who God is: Ps 7:17 NIV I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

Ps 75:1 ESV We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds.

Ps107:1ESV Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

For what Christ has done: When we were still sinners and when we were God's enemies, when we were powerless and ungodly, Christ died for us (Rom 5:6-10).

Isaiah 53:5-6 NAS But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

For these two reasons alone- who God is and what Christ has done for us, we have a debt to thank God for all eternity!

How are we to thank God?

We are to express our thanks in corporate worship (Psalm 35:18, 100:4), in song (Psalm 17:7, 28:7, 30:12, 69:30), in prayer (Col 4:2), with praise (Hebrews 13:15), and by giving back a portion of what He has first entrusted us (Romans 11:35-36 and also Philippians 4:18).

In 2 Corinthians 9, there is a description of the Macedonians, who although in poverty themselves, responded voluntarily, eagerly, sacrificially and joyously to a need that was made known to them. The result of their giving is described in verses 12-13 NAS... is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God...

Clearly, thanksgiving to God is in part demonstrated by giving to help His people and to help accomplish His work.

Giving in general:

1. Is a privilege

2 Cor 8:4 ESV begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints

2. Is an act of worship

2 Cor 8:5 ESV and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

3. Is a source of great joy

1 Chron 29:9 ESV Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

4. Correlates with spiritual blessings

Luke 16:11-12 ESV If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

Acts 20:35 ESV In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

5. Is investing for eternity

1 Tim 6:18-19 ESV They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

6. Transcends difficult circumstances, and is not hindered by poverty

2 Cor 8:2 ESV for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

Luke 21:3-4 ESV And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

7. Is proportionate to our resources

1 Cor 16:2 ESV On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come

2 Cor 8:3,12 ESV For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will...For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

8. Is to be regular

1 Cor 16:2 ESV On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

9. Recognizes all we have is a gift from God

Deut 8:18 NET You must remember the Lord your God, for he is the one who gives ability to get wealth;

Ps 116:12 NET How can I repay the Lord for all his acts of kindness to me?

Rom 11:35-36 ESV "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

10. Recognizes the greatest example of giving

2 Cor 8:9 ESV For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

11. Reflects our love for God and others

2 Cor 8:4-5,8 ESV begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us...I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine.

12. Is done:

Joyously

2 Cor 9:7 ESV Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Willingly

2 Cor 8:3 ESV For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will...

2 Cor 9:7 NET Each one of you should give just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver....

Generously

2 Cor 8:2 ESV for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

Sacrificially

2 Sam 24:24 ESV...I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing

Luke 21:3-4 ESV And he said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

Giving to the poor/needy:

There is an abundance of instruction/admonition in God’s Word on this topic, but below is a summary taken just from Proverbs and the New Testament:

Giving to the poor characterizes the righteous:

Prov 29:7 NAS The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor, The wicked does not understand such concern.

Prov 31:20 ESV She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.

Matt 25:35-40 ESV For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying,

‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

Giving to the poor is commanded:

Prov 3:27-28 ESV Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it”—when you have it with you.

Acts 20:35 ESV In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

1 Cor 10:24 ESV Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

Phil 2:3-4 NAS Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

1 Tim 6:17-19 NAS Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Giving to the poor, if not done, is accompanied by warnings/admonishment:

Prov 11:24 ESV One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.

Prov 14:31NIV He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Prov 17:5 ESV Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

Prov 21:13 ESV Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.

Prov 28:27 NET The one who gives to the poor will not lack, but whoever shuts his eyes to them will receive many curses.

Matt 25:44-46 ESV Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

James 2:14-17 ESV What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

1 John 3:14, 17-18 ESV We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death... But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does

God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Giving to the poor is accompanied by blessings/praises:

Prov 11:24-25 ESV One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.

Prov 14:21 ESV Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.

Prov 19:17 ESV Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.

Prov 22:9 NIV A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

Prov 28:27 NAS He who gives to the poor will never want, But he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.

How do you want to be remembered?

The Bible frequently summarizes the character of an individual or church in one short phrase. Some are highly praiseworthy, others quite negative. For Tabitha and the Macedonians, the Holy Spirit inspired the following: Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha ... this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. (Acts 9:36 NAS)

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. (2 Cor 8:1-2 ESV)

Right now, what do you think would be written about you?