

True Disciple #13 – Giving

Welcome back to the weekly True Disciple message. This is Rod Nichols and I'm glad you're listening. I'm also enjoying hearing from you about how these messages are impacting your lives. Email me at rod@truedisciple.info and let me know how your life is changing because of True Disciple.

This is message #13 and I'm going to be teaching on giving. Okay, I can hear some of you groaning and thinking, not another "the church wants my money message". Actually, the church does want your money. Keeping in mind that you are the church. God wants you to learn how to be good stewards of what He has given you, so He can give you more and more and more.

In this message, I'm going to be talking about having a giving spirit, which we all have. This will result in giving more than just money, also your time and talents.

Let's start with a scripture, one that everyone knows, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

God loved us so much that when we messed up our lives and the whole world, He gave us His one and only Son, Jesus, to take the penalty of death for our sins. So, out of love, God gave.

We also know, from our last message, that God is love (1 John 4:8) and that God lives in us in the form of the Holy Spirit. That means that love lives in us and when we let God love through us, it will result in a giving spirit.

We also know that giving is part of the personality of God, because He gave us this amazing world, gave us life, gave us everything good in our lives, and gave us salvation and eternal life. Since we are made in God's image and likeness, we are like God in that innately, we want to be givers.

When you read about someone in need or hear about a ministry that needs help, isn't your immediate response to give, but then you rationalize yourself out of giving or reducing the amount you give? That's your soul (mind, will, and emotions) getting involved to the detriment of God's plan for you.

Here's the truth of God from His Word:

Luke 6:38 teaches us, "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."

I think this scripture and concept is best illustrated by a story I often tell in sermons on giving.

There was once an amazing kingdom, with a wonderfully generous king. Because of his generosity, no one in the kingdom lacked. As was common, the king decided to have a banquet and invited all of his subjects to attend. Since the water level in the moat was a bit low, the king asked people to bring some water as their ticket of entrance.

On the day of the banquet, massive tables were set with the finest gold table settings and incredible food. The finest musicians were hired to provide top level entertainment for the entire night. As the subjects began to arrive, some brought water in cups and bowls, while others in pans and buckets. Some even brought animal troughs full of water. It didn't matter how much water they brought, all were admitted.

After an amazing night of music, eating and drinking, the king stood and thanked his subjects for coming to the party. He said that to end the night he wanted to give each person one last gift. At that, he waved to a couple of his servants who opened massive wooden doors and inside was the kingdom treasury filled with gold and silver. The king announced that each person could fill the container they had brought water in with as much treasure as would fit. Those who had brought water in cups were greatly disappointed, while those who brought water in animal troughs were greatly pleased. Each person began filling their containers with gold. They would press it down and shake it to get as much as possible in their container.

The lesson of the story is that the measure in which we give, will dictate the measure in which we receive. God will pour into our container and He will shake it and press it down until it's running over. He will never give you just enough,

always more than enough – just like He did when Jesus blessed the few fishes and loaves to feed more than 10,000 people and after everyone had their fill, there were baskets full left over.

A quick caution. God does not want us to give to get. Rather, He wants us to give out of the love inside us. He also doesn't want us to give out of compulsion or pressure. That kind of giving will not benefit anyone.

2 Corinthians 9:7 reads, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

The greek word that is translated as cheerful means hilarious, so we are to be hilarious givers. Offering time at the church, should be the most exciting and joyous times.

Keep in mind that God doesn't need your money, He walks on streets of gold. Rather, he wants your heart.

Matthew 6:21 says, "For where you treasure is, there your heart will be also." If your heart is to give to God, then you will give of your treasure and God will return treasure.

So, when it comes to giving money, there are three areas:

1. Tithe – 10% of your gross earnings and increase. All of the money you receive belongs to God and He's going to let you keep 90%. That's a great partnership. When you get paid, write the first check to where you are being fed the Word of God and where you fellowship and serve with other believers. If you think you can't afford to tithe, I can relate. We struggled with that for a year, but when we started writing the first check to God, everything changed and we've never lacked since.
2. Offering – any amount above the tithe. This can be given to any church, ministry, or person.
3. Alms – this is money you keep on hand to give to those who are begging. Don't be judgmental, instead listen for the voice of God as to whether you are to give and how much. Don't be concerned about what they will do with the money, that's between them and God. Your job is just to give.

Now, we're also talking about giving of your time and talents. You can serve at your church services as a greeter, usher, on the worship team, in children's and youth ministry or you can serve outside the church in feeding, clothing, and helping those in need. You could go on a missions trip and serve the less fortunate in other countries.

God wants you to give your money, time and talents to help His children who are less fortunate than you. He wants you to give to grow the Kingdom. He wants you to give, so you will be more like Jesus and so He can feel confident that you have a spirit of generosity, so He can continue to bless you with more.

That's it for week #13. I hope you will take this message to heart. If you aren't tithing, test God (as it says in Malachi 3:10) and see if He will not throw open the flood gates of heaven (same ones He used to flood the earth) and pour out so much blessing that you don't have room enough for it. Write that first check to God and watch the other 90% go even further. If you are already a tither, increase your giving of offerings and alms. Give more of your time and talents. God wants to expand you. He wants to expand your faith. He wants you to be more like Jesus.

Thanks for listening. Next week's message will be an interesting one on invading. You definitely don't want to miss it, so if you aren't subscribed to our email update list, go to www.TrueDisciple.Info and subscribe on the front page. Just look for the red starburst in the upper menu or near the bottom of the page. And, if you missed any of the messages or want to review them again, you can click on the green Weekly Messages button under the current audio message on the front page.

Thanks for committing to becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Have an abundantly blessed week and we'll talk again next week.