

EXERCISE:

Read the four Bible texts and answer the 3 related questions.



Acts 2:41-47



Acts 20:32-35



Luke 6:30-38, Matt 23:23,



Mark 12:14-17,42-44

What do you learn about giving in the four stories?

Read the four stories and write down what Jesus taught about giving and what you learn about giving in the early church.

What can you learn about the giver's heart attitude?

Acts describes how the apostles declare the kingdom of God. What were the practical consequences regarding righteousness?

Remember, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness!

What are the conditions to giving?

Read all the texts through once more and discover what Jesus says about the condition to giving.

What is important to God according to the texts?

Is it difficult for people to carry out Jesus' commands? If yes, why, if no, why not?

Jesus spoke about the importance of giving, do you want to learn that too?



Luk 6:30-38

1. Is there a word from God for me personally in this text?
2. Is there a promise from the Father for my life?
3. Does Jesus ask me to do anything?
4. Decide to act upon this and ask Jesus to help you with this.

Going deeper

Giving is from God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

When God created man we were made in His image. As we look at the character of God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit we see that giving is at the centre of God's being. Let us look at a few texts in which we can read about what God gives.

What does the Father give?



John 3:16



John 14:16,17

What does the Son give?



Luke 9:1



Matt 14:19



Luke 5:17-20



John 10:10,17

What does the Spirit give?



John 16:13



Acts 6:10



Rom 8:5,6



Eph 1:17-19

What does Jesus say about giving?

Giving and money are important to Jesus. He talks about it in a normal way. If you look at what Jesus says about it we see something very important. It is not about what or how much you give, but something very different.

What is then important to Jesus?



Mark 12:42-44



Matt 19:16-22



Matt 6:1-4



Matt 6:19-21,25-34

In the texts we see that Jesus looks at giving very differently to what you see in the world around us. He looks first of all at what is in your heart. Is Jesus really our King? Is He seated on the throne of our heart or is our money and/or possessions?

If Jesus is then king of our life, give in secret. It is not about receiving honor from man when giving something away. Jesus also says that God will provide for us if He is seated on the throne of our heart.

The early church is an example of the Father heart of God.

In the texts from Acts we immediately see the result of people who have turned to God. People change their behaviour. They are no longer focussed on themselves; it is now about each other. The early church gave to each other and those who were in need. This was a powerful witness.

A father who cares for his children.

It was a strange feeling when I became a father. Immediately there was a desire in me to look after our son and later our daughters too. Before the birth lots of things needed to be bought to prepare for the arrival of our children. As a father you want the best for your children.

One of the things we quickly taught our children was to give things to others. We were once in Africa with our son David, aged 4. He had taken a few of his nicest toy cars with him. One day just before we were about to leave, David asked if he could give his cars away to his African friends. I wanted to say no straight away, but God's spirit showed me that God is a giver and that it was a good thing that my son wanted to do.




Fourteen years later when David got his driving licence, I was called by a friend. He asked me if I could use an old car, still in good condition. David gladly drove around in this car and God showed me that if you give, God will not forget.

Assylum Seekers Centre

A few of our friends fled to the Netherlands from Iran. They had gotten to know Jesus in Iran. We quickly noticed that they spoke very differently about the center where they lived as a family. Lots of people moaned about the building and their homes. This family was different. They cleaned the hallway to their flat and kept it very nice. This place which was first dirty and ugly had a whole new appearance.

Many people asked them why they did this. It gave them an open invitation to talk about the kingdom of God.

EXERCISE:

-  How do you look at giving? Is this something you learned in your family or not at all? Look back at your life. Who have been your examples? How has this influenced you? Have there been greedy people in your life? How has that influenced your life?
-  Ask God to help you take a look at your heart. Are you holding on tightly to money or possessions? Will you ask him to make you a true disciple who can and will give with their whole heart?
-  Discuss with your mentor the things you have learned from the first four questions on the first page. In which areas can and will you give? Is that time, help, money, encouragement?

Going deeper, part 2

God is the owner

When God made man He let Adam and Eve see the garden and gives it to them to use. Everything is given to them but they do have to look after it. There is however one tree from which they must not eat.

In other stories we see that God is the owner and that He gives people such as Abraham, Moses, Nehemiah land and everything in it to own. It is His and they are allowed to look after it and enjoy the fruit of it. We also read that the blessing of God is given to these people.

People bringing sacrifices to God



Gen 4:1-5



Gen 8:20,21



Gen 12:7

What does Abraham give to Melchizedek, and the people of Israel later to the priests?



Gen 14:17-24



Lev 23:10

This is the first time in the Bible that the first part of your possessions is talked about. We find this principle time and time again in the Bible. God is the owner of all things, we receive it from Him, but God asks for the first part for Himself. Abraham is the first person who does this and he gives it to a priest of God the most High. This priest gave Abraham bread and wine, a sign of a covenant. We will talk about this symbol in lesson 8.

In the law given to the people of Israel by God, we see that God gives the people the command to give 10% of their earnings to the priests so that they can carry out the work in the temple and all the others tasks which they are to carry out.

What does Jesus say about these laws?



Matt 23:23

Jesus touches a sore point here. People think if they do what the law says, giving their tithe, everything is fine. But Jesus says that giving is normal, and that actually living in righteousness is what belongs to being a disciple of the kingdom. Here Jesus is talking about meeting people's rights, for example looking after the poor, helping those who cannot provide for themselves. Widows and orphans, asylum seekers, addicts also fall under this category. Jesus thinks it important to do all these things with your whole heart, not simply doing it out of duty or because you have to.

What do the apostles learn about giving?



Acts 6:1-6



1 Tim 5:17,18



1 Cor 9:9-14

In the NT we read lots about extra gifts, giving voluntarily.

Both Jesus and Paul speak about the attitude of the heart when giving. This is when giving extra gifts to help others in need. People are also asked to give according to their means. People who have lots can give extra. Others who are less well-off contribute whatever is possible.



2 Cor 8:1-5,9-15

Are there others to whom we give?



Rom 12:20






Rom 13:7



Eph 4:28

EXERCISE:

-  In the second part of the lesson we talked mainly about giving money away. Have a good think about your spending patterns. Is this in line with what Jesus is teaching you in this lesson?
-  Take time to talk with God about your giving. Is He asking you anything?
-  Ask your mentor how they learned to give. Discuss the lessons to be learned on giving.

Lined area for writing answers.