



January 20, 2020

I love to give! I love to give of my abundance. I love to give of my time, my knowledge, my long suits. I love to give my tithe to God. I love to give of the spiritual truths I know. I love to give whenever, wherever, and however possible. My husband and I have three young children, and we have been faithfully teaching them about giving and receiving by the example we set. As a family, we endeavor to be ready to give whenever, wherever, and however possible. God freely gave to us, and we are equipped to freely give to others. Let's look at *why* we give, *what* we give, and *how* we give.

Why do we give? We give because God first gave to us (John 3:16). In the ultimate expression of His love to all mankind, God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we could be saved. Because of this, we are equipped to freely give to others. We are to be followers, or imitators, of God (Ephesians 5:1), and as we give, God promises that blessings will abound in our lives.

II Corinthians 9:6:

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Luke 6:38:

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

What do we give? As children of God, we have the privilege of giving the Word of God to others (II Corinthians 5:18,19). The most important thing that we can give to someone in need is spiritual truths. We can also give of our material abundance by way of the tithe (Proverbs 3:9,10). We can give of our time and natural abilities by

helping one another. We can give away possessions we no longer need. We can also believe to have an abundance for the purpose of giving.

My husband and I enjoy hosting friends at our house at various times throughout the year. We believe to stretch our entertaining budget by planning ahead. We've even found incredible deals on small party favors by purchasing them nearly a year in advance! God has countless times blessed us with deals so we can regularly give in this way. There are many ways that each of us can give of our abundance. What can you give?

Once we've determined what to give, how do we give? We are to give from a heart of love (John 3:16). Whatever we give, we are to give willingly and cheerfully out of love.

II Corinthians 9:7:

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

God loves a cheerful giver. The Greek word for "cheerful" is *hilaros*, from which we get our English word "hilarious." God loves a hilarious giver! He loves it when we give from a heart of joyful excitement. To give grudgingly, or because we think we have to in order to please others, is self-defeating. Giving is a heart matter.

For two of our preschool children, their favorite thing right now is to "write" notes and make pictures to give to others. This is a reminder to me of how we each have something to give, and when we give with a heart of love, we'll always be richer for it.

Our oldest daughter received some money on her fourth birthday. She was ecstatic. Her immediate reaction was to declare how she would spend her money to (1) share of her abundance at fellowship, and (2) buy her sister the exact same toy she had just received. As parents we believed with her and helped her accomplish this goal—even finding this toy secondhand within her budget. What a heart she has to give!

God's Word shows us why we give, what we can give, and how we give. As parents, we believe to teach our children the joy of giving, because we know what a blessing it is to God and to us. For any of us, at any age, the more we give, the more we receive back from God. Freely we have received, so freely and joyfully let's give!

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