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Dear Partners,

March 2017

*What does the Bible say about giving? Is it really better to give than to receive? Should I expect anything back after I give? Are we grudging givers or gracious givers? We will dive into the answers to these questions this month find Bible based proof to back them up. With so much confusion and misinformation about this subject going around today, God's people need to know the truth! In order to know the truth, we must go to the Word. And when we know the truth, it will indeed set us free (John 8:32). For all of you who may have been misinformed about giving or if you still have questions regarding this topic, we pray that this teaching will be a blessing to you and more importantly we pray the Holy Spirit, the ultimate Teacher, will guide you into all truth (John 16:13). In order to live out our full, God-ordained potential here on earth WHILE being a hand extended in the Kingdom of God, we must understand what the Scriptures say about giving.*

### 1. Giving represents God's heart

As children learn to imitate their parents at a young age, so we must learn to be like our heavenly Father when it comes to all things, especially giving. God is a giver. His nature should be reflected in us and be manifested through us. **God is love, love requires giving; God's heart is giving.** The first example we have of God's giving is in the Garden of Eden. God handed over dominion of all fish, birds, living creatures, plants and trees to Adam. Without hesitation, **God gave Adam and Eve charge of the entire world.** James 1:17 tells us that EVERY good and perfect gift comes down from the Father. There are many examples of God's giving heart in the Word but perhaps the most important, both to Him and to us, is the gift of Jesus; the ultimate gift. **Never has there been or will be a more perfect gift than Jesus.** He was God's greatest treasure and yet He did not withhold Him from us. He gave His ONLY begotten Son; He gave His very best (John 3:16)!

**"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?"** Romans 8:32

### 2. Giving trusts God's provision

When we become faithful givers we show God that we trust Him to take care of us. There is a saying that goes something like this, "you can't receive when your hands are clenched tight." That's so true. **When we open our hands to give, we now have open hands to receive even GREATER blessings from God.** Holding on tightly to what we have will result in only what we have. It won't result in anything greater. What prevents some people from giving? **Fear. Fear that we give too much away we won't have enough for the things we need.** Fear is a lie from the enemy that can hold you back from your greatest harvest! When we give more than what is "comfortable" we are expressing our faith and trust in God to provide for us and our family.

### 3. Giving advances the Kingdom

**Giving is an essential part of expanding the Kingdom of God on earth.** Without the act of giving, the Gospel would not be able to go around the world. We know this firsthand here at JMM because we see our dear partners sowing to further the Gospel through JMM each month. Even if we had all the zeal in the world to preach the Gospel, we would be going nowhere fast without your partnership. **It takes finances and prayer to take the Good News of the Gospel all around the globe.** Whether it's through Christian television, radio, missionaries, books and magazines, etc, the Gospel is only able to travel to the depths of the world with finances. The Gospel is free; but taking the Gospel requires finances. A great example of this is in Philippians 3, where Apostle Paul thanks the church at Philippi for their generous offerings in his early days of ministry. They were the only ones that entered into partnership with him and contributed towards the spreading of the Gospel not once but twice. Paul

**“Not that I seek *or* am eager for your gift, but I do seek *and* am eager for the fruit which increases to your credit [the harvest of blessing that is accumulating to your account] ... They are the fragrant odor of an offering *and* sacrifice which God welcomes *and* in which He delights. And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (vv17-19).”**

#### 4. Giving sets us up for receiving

This final point is perhaps the most controversial of them all. The above verse leads us right into this last point. **Paul was eager for the Philippians to receive the harvest of blessings for their offerings, sacrifices and giving.** Giving to God and not expecting His blessings in return is like a farmer planting a seed in good soil and not expecting anything in return. When a farmer (or anyone) plants a seed into the ground and waters it, he will ALWAYS expect a harvest in return for his sowing. He doesn't leave the seed in the ground and say, “oh that was fun but I'm not expecting anything to spring up from it”, and then walks away. NO! He waits patiently to see what will come of that seed. The same is true for us when we sow into the Kingdom. When we give and don't expect a blessing from the Lord in return we are robbing ourselves of His blessing. When we do this we are telling God, “No thank you Lord, I don't need to be blessed in return for my giving, I'm ok.” **Giving isn't only money. Giving can be anything you offer to someone when it's needed.** It can be your time, an encouraging word, blessing someone with something, serving in your local homeless shelter or Sunday school class, etc. When we sow a seed we're not only expecting financial harvests but we expect provision, protection, health, food, clean air, favor, etc! When we don't expect anything in return for our sowing, God will not force it onto us. Psalm 27:14 says, **“Wait for *and* confidently expect the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for *and* confidently expect the LORD.”**

Since the beginning of time there has always been seed—time—harvest. Even the land understands this principle, so why can't some Christians understand it? Most people will argue that giving (especially our tithe) is in the Old Testament and therefore doesn't apply to us anymore. That couldn't be further from the truth. Jesus came to fulfill the law not destroy it (Matt. 5:17). This is what Jesus Himself said about giving:

**“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.”** Luke 6:38

Some would argue that this isn't talking about money. The truth is that when people find excuses to give to the work of God, they don't want to understand. That's why we pray that each person who sincerely wants their eyes to be enlightened on this subject will seek the help of the Holy Spirit. He will never go against what the Word says and Jesus promised that He would be our Teacher and He will guide us into all truth.

Some final words we want to leave all our partners with are these: God will never require you to give what you don't have (Deut. 16:17). He will never tell you to give passed your means and get into debt just to give (2 Cor. 8:11). He will however stretch your faith through giving. Giving comfortably isn't a sacrifice at all. But **how can we give comfortably when God has given us so much?!** Give wherever you are spiritually fed and where the Holy Spirit tells you to give. If you are being fed through our programs, newsletters, YouTube channel, teachings and preaching then help us take this Gospel further with your giving. God **loves a cheerful giver** and the attitude behind the giving really matters to God. Giving should not be done forcefully or grudgingly (Deut. 15:10, 2 Cor. 9:7)). And lastly, **give because you love God and giving is an act of love! Then expect God to come through for you! Let God show you His goodness, kindness and favor. He is our heavenly Father and wants to bless us.**

**Thank you! You might hear this simple message from us often, but we have to keep saying it because we are so thankful for you. It is so important for you know that your support makes the difference for many lost, hurting, and forgotten people who need to hear the Gospel and experience the love of Jesus. We could never accomplish the work that we do without your generous support. May God bless you as you share Christ and love people through your giving! Your continued giving is changing the lives of people around the world, every day.**

*-John & Alexandra*