

The Lord is Our Financial Advisor

Part 2

Introduction

In the first part of this study we looked at God's economic plan for our success, including the tithe and offerings. In this part we will continue our search on the relationship between giving and receiving.

Our Study

Giving and receiving--these are two sides of the same coin in God's economy. But Christian giving does not end with the tithe and offerings.

Giving to the Poor

The Scripture: Proverbs 19:17

"He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done."

Fill in the blanks:

1. "He who is _____ to the _____, _____ to _____ and He will _____ him for what he has done."
2. What will God give the person in return? _____

The Scripture: Proverbs 28:27

"He who gives to the poor will lack nothing."

3. What is God's promise? _____
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The Scripture: Psalm 41

*1 Blessed is he who has regard for the weak;
the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.*

*2 The LORD will protect him and preserve his life;
he will bless him in the land
and not surrender him to the desire of his foes.*

*3 The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed
and restore him from his bed of illness.*

*4 I said, "O LORD, have mercy on me;
heal me, for I have sinned against you."*

*5 My enemies say of me in malice,
"When will he die and his name perish?"*

*6 Whenever one comes to see me,
he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander;
then he goes out and spreads it abroad.*

*7 All my enemies whisper together against me;
they imagine the worst for me, saying,*

*8 "A vile disease has beset him;
he will never get up from the place where he lies."*

*9 Even my close friend, whom I trusted,
he who shared my bread,
has lifted up his heel against me.*

*10 But you, O LORD, have mercy on me;
raise me up, that I may repay them.*

*11 I know that you are pleased with me,
for my enemy does not triumph over me.*

*12 In my integrity you uphold me
and set me in your presence forever.*

*13 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.
Amen and Amen.*

4. In this psalm God makes many promises to the person who gives to the poor. List them.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

The world has never been particularly interested in the welfare of the poor, but from the time God began to prepare the Israelites for their homeland, He made special provisions for the poor, the widowed, and the orphaned.

The Scripture: Leviticus 19:10

¹⁰ "Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God."

The Scripture: Leviticus 23:22

²² "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God."

The Scripture: Deuteronomy 15:7-8

⁷ "If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. ⁸ Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs".

No one seems to understand the principles behind giving better than Microsoft chairman Bill Gates and Warren Buffet. Newspapers were filled recently with the accounts of Bill Gates "retirement" from much of His work at Microsoft to devote his time and energy to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the largest philanthropic organization the world has ever known. Shortly after, Warren Buffet followed suit when he donated the equivalent of 31 billion dollars to the Gates' foundation.

I don't know if any of these people are Christian, but God is obviously using them to help millions of people.

The Future

God tells us that there will be terrible famines in the end times, and many believe that those days are fast approaching. Some Christians today are stockpiling food, trying to make provisions for "tomorrow." But all this preparation for the terrible days ahead rings a false note to me.

The Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

²⁸"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

5. What does Jesus tell us not to be concerned with? _____

6. Why? _____

7. When we are concerned about such things, who do we take after? _____

8. What is the condition for God's provision (v. 33)? _____

9. What will be the result when we do? _____

The Scripture: Matthew 25:41-46

⁴¹"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

10. What is the "crime" of those denounced by the King? _____

The Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves do break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

11. What happens to the treasures we store up on earth? _____

12. What will happen to us if we store up treasures in heaven? _____

My favorite story concerning our hearts following our pocketbooks was told by Pastor Emmanuel Cannistrace. Counseling a husband who complained that he no longer loved his wife, Pastor Cannistrace told him, "Take her out, buy her gifts. The Bible says, 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' Spend money on her and you'll start loving her again."

I believe his advice is as practical as it is funny. We love and are interested in the things we invest in. If we want our hearts focused on heaven, then we must make a large investment in heaven. When we invest in the Lord's work or in the poor, we are building up treasures in heaven.

Many scriptures refer to some kind of financial protection from the Lord. I want you to search your Bible for them, because they will have more meaning to you if you do the work. However, we do want to pursue one more thought along this line.

The Scripture: Psalm 34:9-10

"Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing."

13. What is the key to having everything we need? _____

To fear the Lord is to reverently worship Him.

The Scripture: Psalm 37:19

"In times of disaster they (the blameless) will not wither; in days of famine they will enjoy plenty."

14. What does the psalmist promise blameless (godly) people? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 111:5 in The Amplified Bible

"He (the Lord) has given food and provision for those who reverently and worshipfully fear Him; He will remember His covenant forever and imprint it [on His mind]."

15. What is promised to them who reverently and worshipfully fear the Lord? _____

Our Motives

When we give with the idea of receiving something in return, aren't our motives wrong? I believe the Lord doesn't care. In Malachi He specifically tells us to test Him. He knows our natures, our frailties. Of course, He would prefer that we give because we desire to do so, but He has provided an "incentive plan" for those times when we might not be anxious to give. We learn by doing. Until giving is worked into our natures, God wants us to give anyway.

Initially I started giving because God had promised to take care of me if I did, and I badly needed someone to take care of me. I know many others who began their giving similarly. Let those who can give with no hope of receiving anything in return do so, and God bless them! The point is, we can't afford not to give.

The Answers

1. Kind, poor, lends, the Lord, reward
2. A reward
3. That the one who gives to the poor will lack nothing
4.
 - a. The Lord delivers him in times of trouble.
 - b. The Lord will protect him and preserve his life
 - c. The Lord will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes.
 - d. The Lord will sustain him when he is sick and restore him.
 - e. The Lord upholds him and sets him in His presence forever.
5. Our life, what we will eat or drink or about what we will wear
6. Because life is more important than food and the body, more important than clothes
7. The pagans
8. To first seek God's kingdom and His righteousness
9. What we need will be given to us.
10. They did not feed the hungry nor give drink to the thirsty; they did not offer hospitality to the stranger, clothes to those lacking, nor visit those in prison.
11. They are destroyed or stolen.
12. Our hearts will be there, too.
13. Fearing the Lord
14. Plenty in times of famine
15. Food and provision

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