

Receiving Kindness and Service

Acts 20:33-35

³³ I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me. ³⁵ In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

There is a blessing in giving, and there is a blessing in receiving. Jesus unequivocally states that it is better to be on the giving side!

When we are working hard and there is plenty, it is such a joy to give to a person in need.

When we are the ones in need, it really is a blessing when the answer to our prayer comes in!

Giving is easy- the blessing is built in. Receiving is much harder- it means that I must admit weakness.

Deuteronomy 8:1-3

⁸ "All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore *to give* to your forefathers. ² You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 2:7

⁷ For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing."

In God's mind, a temporary season of need ultimately replaced with a season of abundance means we have not lacked a thing!

In the meantime, what did we learn? That the provision is not the point- God is our provider and He never fails!

Jeremiah 20:7

⁷ O Lord, You have deceived me and I was deceived; You have overcome me and prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me.

Lamentations 3:21-25

²¹ This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. ²² The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." ²⁵ The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him.

Ecclesiastes 1:12-15

¹² I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³ And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. *It is a grievous task which* God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with. ¹⁴ I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind. ¹⁵ What is crooked cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

¹³ The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to every* person. ¹⁴ For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Mark 6:7-9

⁷ And He *summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits; ⁸ and He instructed them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belt— ⁹ but *to wear sandals*; and *He added*, “Do not put on two tunics.”

Matthew 10:11-13

¹¹ And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave *that city*. ¹² As you enter the house, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the house is worthy, give it your *blessing of peace*. But if it is not worthy, take back your *blessing of peace*.

They were learning to trust God absolutely by having to lean on other people a God’s means of provision!

How to be at peace with receiving:

Philippians 4:15-20

¹⁵ You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; ¹⁶ for even in Thessalonica you sent a *gift* more than once for my needs.

Acknowledge the gift with thankfulness.

¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

Recognize that even though you cannot repay the gift, God is laying up a rich reward for all that is given.

¹⁸ But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Realize that you are not the sole recipient of the gift- it is given to God first, and He is receiving it gladly!

¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Trust that God will be rewarding the giver in due time with material blessings- they will not lack for having shared with you.

²⁰ Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Praise God! When the giver gives and the receiver receives, and all is done for Christ’s sake, He will receive all the glory!