

# Giving

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**God Gives Generously.** *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:4-7* God generously blesses our lives. Advertising and culture often help us to focus on scarcity. As Christians, it is helpful to stop and focus on the gifts that we have been given.

Take three minutes to intentionally focus on God's generosity and make a list of all the blessings in your life. Post your list somewhere in your house and add to the list on a regular basis. Take some time now to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for your blessings.

**Called to Give:** God's nature is amazing grace and generosity. People can develop and maintain a natural spirit of generosity because we are created in the image and likeness of God. When we are at our best, we share life with grace and generosity. Giving is an essential aspect of the life of discipleship. When the followers of Jesus become miserly, we turn from the best of ourselves. We have not been created simply to watch out for our own needs. When we claim God's gifts and hoard them for ourselves, we deny the destiny God has planted within us. Things that clutter our lives and our hearts keep us from discovering the joy of giving.

**Being Generous Givers:** An important biblical principle we embrace is equal sacrifice, not equal gift. The point is that God has blessed some with more financial resources than others, but God has called all of us to experience the joy of sacrificial giving. In response to God's generous gifts to us, we give generously. Being a generous giver does not require lavish resources, but rather a rich understanding of God's love and forgiveness in your life.

## Ways to Give:

*Time* - One of the most valuable gifts we have is time. Find something that you are passionate about and give some of your time in support of that ministry.

*Talents* - Claim the gifts God has given you. If you are a talented woodworker, look for a project that lets you share your faith through woodworking. If you love gardening, teach others how to care for God's creation. If you enjoy meeting new people, volunteer to greet new people in worship after each service. God has blessed you with talents. Use them to build up the community.

*Financial Resources* - Take time each year to prayerfully consider your giving. Give out of your blessings not your scarcity. Decide what you are going to give and give it before you pay bills or buy extras.

*Try Proportionate Giving* - Sometimes it is helpful to look at your giving in terms of a percentage of your income. Compare that percentage to the percentage you spend on other things in your life. Where does "giving in response to God's love" rank in the overall way you spend your money? Simply start giving. The amount given is less important than the act of giving.

As Pastor Foss notes, *"When Christians give, God takes our giving and places it alongside the giving of others. Soon what seemed a small thing becomes a world-changing generosity."*

