

GIVING IS WORSHIP

Worship is one's expression to another of their worth, value, or benefit to them. As Christians, we use this word in reference to God, our Father and Creator, our Savior and Redeemer, our Helper and Comforter. Naturally, we understand that God doesn't need our worship, however, worship is necessary for us and for the development of our relationship with God.

From early biblical times, humans have expressed their worship and thankfulness in giving. We can read in Genesis that this was a very natural, almost instinctive response. Cain and Abel both turned to God, their Creator, and gave offerings to Him. Further, after the great flood abated, Noah, without any instruction from God, in a very natural way turned to Him, built an altar, and gave offerings which were pleasing to Him, in acknowledgement of God's benevolence and protection. Later on in history, we can see that God stipulated how He would receive the offerings of His people.

As we move through the Bible towards the New Testament, one can see that giving as worship also takes on a spiritual nature. The Psalms speak of sacrifices of joy, Jeremiah talks of sacrifices of praise, which is also further highlighted by the writer of Hebrews. Paul speaks most definitively of giving one's total being in Romans 12:1: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

Thus, we can ascertain that giving as a form of worship means to give something back to our Benefactor; not as an even exchange of services, or gift of equal value, but as a token to express our feelings. Because we know that the Lord looks at the disposition of our heart (Samuel 16:7), this expression includes our:

HUMBLENESS BEFORE HIS OMNIPOTENCE AND BENEVOLENCE

RELIANCE ON THE ONE WHO PROVIDES AND PROTECTS

NEED FOR HIS DAILY GRACE

ADORATION FOR HIS LOVE, COMPASSION, AND FORGIVENESS

THANKFULNESS TO HIM WHO IS THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD GIFTS (MATTHEW 7:11, JAMES 1:17)

GENEROSITY KNOWING ALL HAS COME FROM HIM

Simply put, it is a means for us to show our Father what He means to us. And this giving is not only regarding our offerings and sacrifices directly to Him, but as Jesus taught in Matthew 25:40, giving to others out of His love for us, is an expression directly to Him ... *Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.*

Many of our brothers and sisters understand this godly principle and have given unsparingly to others. They have discovered the wonderful mystery of giving; we do not give for notability nor ulterior motives, but rather giving in the

mind of Christ humbly results in a joy that fills the heart, unlike any other. Their giving also is a strong manifestation of their absolute trust in the Almighty, assured that His provision will always sustain them.

Thus, it becomes our privilege to give before our gracious Father as a firm declaration that He alone is the blessed source of all we are and all we have. What better way to worship God and tell Him what He means to you than by taking what He has given you in your life and using it to bless and serve others? Through our giving, we glorify our God. - LRK