

Give Willingly and Cheerfully!

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"- John 6:8-9

Andrew found a boy in the crowd with five small loaves and two small fishes. Like the widow, although it was a "small amount," the boy was willing to share the little he had with others. This is similar to the poor widow who gave her two mites as an offering unto God:

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, ²and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. ³So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; ⁴for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."- Luke 21:1-4.

In comparing the widow's offering to the rich, Jesus looked at the proportion of one's wealth and possessions that is given as offerings. He surmised that the widow put in more than the rich because it was all that she had, and therefore, she gave 100% of her wealth.

Jesus also examines the heart of the giver, and both the widow and the boy gave willingly and cheerfully. 2 Corinthians 9:7 emphasizes this:

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Remember it is God who blesses us with wealth so that we can in turn give unto Him. Thank God for those who give out of the abundance of the wealth that God has given to them. 2 Corinthians 9:11 declares:

"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

2 Corinthians 9:11 reminds us that our generous giving blesses others who will give thanks unto God. But for those, like the widow and the boy, who may not be able to give as the wealthy do, still give cheerfully and willingly, and your giving can be used by God to supernaturally bless others. This will also result in thanksgiving to God. Remember, generous giving has more to do with our attitude of giving rather than the amount that we give.

Finally, note that our giving is not limited to money. The widow gave money, while the boy gave up his dinner of five small loaves and two small fishes. Whatever we gave unto God – money, time and other resources- can be used to be a blessing to others. Once we give with the right attitude - willingly, cheerfully and generously, then we can activate God's promise of divine increase. An example is seen with tithing in Malachi 3:10:

*"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me in this,**" says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."*

It is interesting how God challenges us to put Him to the test: He vows to bless us abundantly once, as believers, we give willingly, cheerfully and generously.

Heavenly Father,

“Teach me to be a cheerful and willing giver. I believe Your Word that promises supernatural blessings as I give my tithes and offerings unto You, O Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen.”

Memory Verses: *“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” - 2 Corinthians 9:7.*

Discussion Questions: Give Willingly and Cheerfully

1. What did the little boy give?
2. What did the widow give?
3. What did the rich give?
4. Why did the widow give more than the rich?
5. What three conditions are necessary for giving?
6. What is the purpose of our wealth? Refer to a scripture.
7. How is thanksgiving linked to giving?
8. Should our giving be limited to money? Why?
9. Besides money, what else can we give?
10. In relation to giving, what ‘test’ does Jesus throw out to us?