

Our Gifts Usher Us Into the Presence of God

*Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "**Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish...**"- John 6:8-9*

We need to recognize that giving in biblical times was always a holy act unto God. The more popular words "offering" and "sacrifice" were used. The gifts were mainly grains or animals that were killed and offered unto God for a number of reasons. The five types of sacrifices or offerings made in the Old Testament were the Burnt Offering, the Grain Offering, the Peace Offering, the Purification Offering, and the Reparation Offering.

The importance of obedience to God was even compared to this devout act of giving unto God when the Prophet Samuel said, "to obey is better than sacrifice," (1 Samuel 15:22). Even David, during his time of repentance made the comparison with sacrifice and burnt offerings, thereby showing its relative importance to God:

*"You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise." - Psalm 51:16-17*

When we give, it catches God's attention, but our giving must be done with a pure heart. God acknowledges our gifts, and sees it as acceptable once certain conditions are satisfied. For example, Jesus said in Matthew 5:23-24:

²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Our giving brings us into the presence of God. Andrew found a boy in the crowd with five small loaves and two small fishes. He brought him before Jesus. He said,

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two fishes..."

Proverbs 18:16 (NIV) is instructive, and reminds us that our gifts will bring us before great men.

"A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great."

The New King James Version puts it this way:

"A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men."

This does not refer only to the events of the natural, where our gifts (or talents) make room for us and brings us into the presence of dignitaries and other important people. Whatever we give to others, ushers us into the presence of the Divine, Our Heavenly Father.

“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.

When we give our attitude is also on display before God. He knows our heart, and God loves the cheerful giver. It stands to reason that God is displeased with the gift if the giver feels compelled to do so, and reluctantly gives in the first place.

Let us remember that our giving is a holy act, just like back in the times of the Old and New Testaments, and it should be treated as such. Moreover, our act of giving is a very important gesture since it accesses the throne of God, and ushers us into the presence of a Majestic God.

We should never treat our giving and gifts with scant courtesy nor consider our act of giving as insignificant. Proverbs 19:17 (Good News Translation) says that when we give, we lend to God:

“When you give to the poor, it is like lending to the LORD, and the LORD will pay you back.”

Can you imagine that? Who am I to lend to God? It is not that God really needs anything from us, because everything on this earth already belongs to Him. However, it is important to understand that our life’s journey here on earth depicts a relationship between man and God which is necessary for God’s divine purpose to be fulfilled. This is partly achieved by the divine act of giving to others so that God and His Son, Jesus, can be glorified. In turn, God rewards our obedience and faithfulness with his bountiful blessings – not that all may be consumed by us, but that the cycle of giving and receiving... blessings and honour, may continue throughout our lives. This epitomizes the infinite wisdom and love of God, through the sacrificial giving of His Son Jesus for all of humanity, as seen in John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

In summary, our giving should be a selfless and cheerful act which brings us into the presence of God. In giving we show reverence unto God. Thus, we should always enter his presence with joy and thanksgiving. In so doing we give honour to the Most High God. 2 Corinthians 9:7 seems clearer now:

“God loves a cheerful giver.”

Be blessed.

Heavenly Father,

“Help me to understand the significance of my giving as a holy act which ushers me into Your presence. Your Word says You love a cheerful giver. As I give, I am thankful and joyful, because You, O Lord, have blessed me with the resources that I can now use to be a blessing to others. Thank You for using me as Your conduit of love to the poor and needy, and for prospering me in all areas of my life for this cause. Lord, I reverence and bless Your Holy name with my continued cheerful, willing and generous giving unto others. May this devout act of giving continue to bring all honour and glory to You, and Your Son Jesus. Thank You for wisdom, knowledge and understanding in this area of giving. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

Memory Verses:

“A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great.”- Proverbs 18:16.