

Giving Is Based On Having A Relationship With Jesus and Not On What We Can Get!

¹⁴After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” – John 6:14.

After witnessing the miracle of the multitude being fed with five loaves and two fishes, the people were convinced that Jesus must be a prophet that was prophesied to come.

The next day after the crowds were fed, they went in search of Jesus and found Him in Capernaum.

Before being fed, recall that they followed Jesus because of the signs and wonders they witnessed:

“... a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick.” – John 6:2

One day after being fed, Jesus made this remark concerning the crowd:

“Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

*²⁸Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” ²⁹Jesus answered, “**The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.**” – John 6: 26-29.*

Now that the miracle of feeding the thousands had personally impacted upon the lives of each individual in the crowd. They were not so much interested in following Jesus because of seeing the sick healed. They were more interested in following Him for selfish gains, that is, for what they can get. Jesus met their needs. He immediately set the record straight with them. He said something like this:

“My giving was not so that you can follow me for the wrong reasons – to satisfy your selfish desires. Instead my giving was to point You to the Son of Man, so that you can believe in Me. So, instead of following Me for what you can get, follow Me to have a relationship with Me. Become one of My disciples.”

Wrong and misleading messages on giving are preached by some pastors and religious leaders of God. Their “prosperity message” is solely of a “Gimme Gimme God!” – Someone to Whom we pray just to get something – a car, a house, a job, a wife, a husband and so on. And to further pollute their messages, they say that you will **only** get these things if you give your money to them: “Sow a seed for your husband to return, or for that house that you always wanted, or for a new job etc..” This is heresy! These are very dangerous and misleading messages which are not found anywhere in the Bible. And God will judge these false teachers!!

Yes, God desires that we be prosperous, but he never said that our receiving should be conditional upon our giving of money as previously described. This what the Bible teaches about prayer in **1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)**:

*“¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything **according to his will**, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”*

Prayer is simply a confident request made to God, and **IF** it is according to **His will** for us, **THEN** He hears our prayers and then our requests will be granted. Once we are living a life that is pleasing to God, then **praying according to His will for our lives** is the only condition to answered prayer.

There is nothing in the above scripture that says that God will **only** give us what we ask of Him if we give \$500 or any other amount to the man or woman of God! I am not saying that you should not give your offerings to the man or woman of God, nor pay your tithes. But when it is preached that God will give us our heart’s desires **only if we give money**, then that is heresy! It is non-scriptural, and cannot be found in the Bible. My friend, the truth offends. But the Word of God is still the Truth.

God will only give us what is **His will** for our lives. Our part is to approach Him with the confidence that we are asking according to His will (and not with selfish or greedy motives).

Further, the wrong interpretation of God’s Word for selfish motives and the use of psychology by some religious leaders have caused many unsuspecting, trusting and, at times, gullible believers to be led astray. That is why it is important for us to search the scriptures – read God’s Word for ourselves – and to ask God for wisdom, knowledge and understanding when reading the Word of God! And don’t be afraid to question the pastor after service about any aspect of his message if it does not line up with the Word of God. If you feel a conviction by the Holy Spirit that you should not give under those circumstances, then do not give.

Jesus said to the multitude of people:

“²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”

Jesus is more concerned about having a relationship with us than He is in meeting our selfish needs. The Bible is clear that God already knows what our **daily** needs are. Our focus should be on FIRST seeking to have a relationship with Jesus and on living right, and then all our needs will be met. Matthew 6:31-34 states:

31 Therefore, take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 (For the Gentiles seek after all these things.) For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. 33 But *seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you.* 34 Therefore, take no thought about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take thought about the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the trouble thereof.

So Jesus reinforced this point when He said: *"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*

As stated above, Jesus is preaching to the crowd, and saying:

"My giving was not for you to follow me and to be entertained by my signs and wonders, or for what else you can get to satisfy your selfish needs. My giving was for you to follow me because you believe in Me and, you want to have a relationship with me."

The conversation continues:

²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." ' – John 6: 28-29.

Why did Jesus say that believing in Him is "the work of God?" First, believing in Jesus is not just about giving lip-service and saying "I believe in You, Jesus." Believing in Jesus is more of an attitude which is reflected in our lifestyles. Our lifestyles should testify to the fact that we are indeed children of God. This is where the "work" comes in. Believing in Jesus is a 24/7 job where every effort should be made to ensure that His teachings impact upon the way we think, the things we say, and what we do. We must therefore spend sufficient time in His Word to understand what is expected of us, as believers.

This is the basis upon which we should give. Our giving should be as a result of us having a relationship with God. We give based on what the Word of God says, and not because we believe that our \$1000 offering must get us a new house, or some expensive jewellery.

This is what Jesus cautions us about. Our works – our giving – should not be to get the worldly, material possessions – money, house, car, job, wife, husband and so on. Surely, all these things are expendable and will eventually return to the dust. Jesus says in John 6:27:

"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life."

Our "food" and our giving – should be as a result of us having a sound relationship with Jesus, and that we stand ready and willing to share the gospel of salvation with the those who receive our gifts. Our message is simple yet profound: "Believe in Jesus! Truly, make Him the Lord and Saviour of your life. " Once again, as we give we should be willing to share this message with those who receive, just as Jesus did with the crowd that He earlier fed.

Jesus reminded the crowd that they should not be solely pre-occupied with what they can get – the food, the house, the car, the job, the wife, the husband, the promotion and so on. Further, our giving to God should never be based on getting, in return, these material things from Him. Instead, if we are following Jesus, it should not be about what we can get from God. We give because we believe in His Son, and have a good relationship with Him. Everything else will be given unto us in accordance with the

will of God for our lives, and in due season, as stated above in both Matthew 6:31-34 and 1 John 5:14-15. Be blessed.

“Heavenly Father,

*I pray for us to have the right attitude towards You, and Your Son, Jesus, as we give to others. Let our giving not be based on the wrong teachings that we must receive, in return, material possessions from You. Instead, let us give because we desire to reflect the character of Jesus Christ - one of love and compassion. O Lord, I stand in the gap for those pastors and other church leaders who have misrepresented Your Word for their own selfish gains. I pray that Your Holy Spirit convict their hearts, and that there is true repentance on their part. May we continue to believe in Your Son Jesus, and let our lifestyle depict an understanding and the application of Your Word. O Lord, Your word says that if we ask anything **according to Your will**, that You will hear us. In confidence, I pray in Jesus’ name and with thanksgiving, that this request has been granted. Amen.”*

Memory Verses:

’²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” ’– John 6: 29.