

FAITH IS ACTION

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Heart-Givers





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Sharon Hardy Knotts

LEVELS TWO & THREE

Luke 6:38: “Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together; and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal, it shall be measured you again.”

Last month we ministered *Tithe & Thrive*, and we learned that the measure for tithing is 10% on all our increase. In order for God to bless us financially, we must give Him a measure, and Tithing is Level One—the ground floor of giving—not the ceiling. Tithing isn’t *giving*—it is *returning*—giving back to God what is His. God said: “*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it*” (Malachi 3:10).

When we receive excessive blessings, we are able to give more and

move up to Level Two—freewill offerings, which are determined by the heart. Everyone can get in on this principle regardless of social-economic status.

“But this I say, he that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver” (2Cor.9:6-7). The Greek word for *cheerful* is HILAROS from which we get *hilarious* in English.

“According as one purposes in his heart...” God is looking for givers who give from their hearts—willing hearts: “*For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man has, and not according to that he has not*” (2Cor. 8:12). If the willing heart has its way, it will give abundantly! Heart-givers are generous and joyful.

The willing heart desires to give even if he / she does not have the funds to do so at the time. *And God*

looks upon this as though the person gave, even when he/she doesn't have it to give, but wanted to! When this person gives, he gives cheerfully—joyfully—willingly from the heart. It begins with a willing mind: when you give willingly, you give cheerfully. When you give cheerfully, you give willingly.

WE DON'T GIVE TO GET—WE GET TO GIVE!

Jesus said in Acts 20:34: “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*”! Paul said: “*Not grudgingly, or of necessity...*” Not reluctantly, under compulsion: “*I am paying my tithes, because I don't want to get in trouble with God.*”

God loves a *hilarious* giver! He loves a *joyous* giver! This means: It's not only *how much* we give—but *how* we give it!

THE TABERNACLE

When the children of Israel left Egypt, the Egyptians were so glad to be rid of them after the 10 plagues, they gave them their silver and gold and gems. Psalm 105:37: “*He brought them forth with silver and gold...*” What would they need with these in the wilderness?

Remember our Scripture from last month: Deuteronomy 8:18: “*But you shall remember the Lord your God: for it is he that gives you power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto your fathers.*” God wanted them to have these riches in order to build His Tabernacle. When the time came to gather the necessary materials, God

instructed Moses to have the people bring their offerings:

Exodus 35:5, 21, 29: “*Take from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass.... And they came everyone whose heart stirred him up, and everyone of whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for all his holy garments.... The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded...*”

I love this! The people's hearts were stirred up to give! And their stirred-up hearts made their minds willing to give! Sometimes there is a struggle in the mind: *You know if you give all that money, you may not have enough to pay your bills! You better hold on to it in case you need it.*

But when the heart is stirred up with the love of God, and the compassion of God, and the generosity of God, it overrides the arguments of the doubting mind.

God wanted *freewill* offerings from His people to build His Tabernacle and to furnish the instruments for the priesthood. He didn't want offerings from grumblers who gave begrudgingly because they felt they had to. To build His house, He wanted people whose hearts stirred them up with generosity and love for His house; who were joyful, cheerful,

hilarious givers!

THE TEMPLE

When King David was gathering materials to build the Temple, *he personally gave silver and gold and brass gemstones of incalculable value*. He then asked the people: “Who is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?”

The chief of the fathers, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and hundreds came and offered willingly gold and silver. Then the people who had any gemstones brought them into the treasury of the house of the Lord:

“Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy” (1Chron.29:9). God loves a cheerful giver, and these people rejoiced in their opportunity to give to the house of the Lord with a perfect heart.

In this setting, a perfect heart is a willing heart, a joyful heart that gives generously. The Hebrew word for *willingly* includes the idea of *voluntarily*. Again, these were *freewill offerings* which the people gave joyfully.

This happened again when years later Solomon’s glorious Temple in Jerusalem needed repairing. King Jehoash was one of Judah’s good kings who obeyed the counsel of the priesthood. Jehoash instructed the priests to use the money that came in the coffers to repair the house of God:

“All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house

of the Lord, even the money of everyone that passes the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that comes into any man’s heart to bring into the house of the Lord. Let the priest take it to them, every man of his acquaintance, and let them repair the breaches...” (2Kings 12:4).

“The money that every man is set at” refers to the mandatory tithes of 10% as well as the half-shekel that men age 20 and up had to pay yearly. Every Jewish male, including priests and Levites, were required to pay a half-shekel of silver, which was approximately the equivalent of two days’ wages for a laborer in ancient times.

“And all that comes into any man’s heart to bring” refers to free-will love offerings above the tithes, which is Level 2 Giving.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

After the day of Pentecost, in the NT Church at Antioch, it was noted

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that many of the new believers in Jerusalem were suffering poverty.

Acts 11:29: “*Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren, which dwelt in Judea.*”

“*Every man according to his ability*” shows that this was an *individual, voluntary, willing offering*. Unlike tithes, which is a mandatory—10% across the board for everyone, this was determined by their *ability* to give, and their *willingness* to give.

After we pay our tithes, we decide in our hearts how much we will give above the tithe. *These are freewill offerings*. The amount we give is up to us. Where we give it is up to us: We may give to our church where we pay our tithes, especially if they have outreaches like we do here at Faith Tabernacle: Radio broadcasts, *Faith Is Action, Fishes & Loaves Pantry*. (This is not a plug for you to give to SOF Ministries, although we are very grateful to every one of you who does.)

We may give to other ministries: I give to several ministries that support the Gospel to the Jews and that provide humanitarian relief in crises both at home and globally. We may give to brothers and sisters in Christ whom we see in need as John wrote:

“*But whoever has this world’s good, and sees his brother has need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth*” (1John 3:17-18).

It has been said: You can give

without loving. But you can’t love and not give!

God told the Israelites: “*If there be among you a poor man of one of your brethren within any of the gates of your land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother: but you shall open your hand wide unto him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wants.... You shall surely give him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him: because that for this thing the Lord your God shall bless you in all your works, and in all that you put your hand unto*” (Deut.15:7-8).

This constitutes Level 2 giving and in some cases Level 3 giving. When we enter into these levels, God blesses all of our works and all that we put our hands to.

An example of this is *the Good Samaritan* who cared for the Jewish man who fell amongst thieves. *The priest and Levite* had passed him, having no compassion on him, and they were his fellow Jews and ministers of God. The despised Samaritan had compassion on him and took care of his wounds, then took him to an inn and paid for his board. He went beyond that, promising to pay the bill if the man had to stay longer to recover.

This came from his heart, because his head would have told him: *You don’t need to help this man. He is a Jew, and Jews hate you!*

James 2:15-16: “*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them,*

Go in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit?"

Basically, this is saying that *if you see a need and you can meet it, don't walk away feeling sorry for the person, but not giving them the help they need.*

Of course, we know that there are people who are in the predicaments they're in because of their own foolish choices, and they are always looking for a handout from everyone to get them out of the bind.

I believe God will put it on your heart when He wants you to help someone financially. When He does, do not delay to obey. He wants to bless you to be a blessing, and to use you as the instrument to supply their need. When you obey, it will be multiplied back to you, and then you will have the ability to help someone else. In Level 2 giving, the cycle will continue.

THE GRACE OF GIVING

We have the choice to sow little or to sow a lot, keeping in mind that we will reap accordingly. When we have the desire to be a generous giver, God will enable us to become a generous giver, but we have to begin the process by giving Him *a measure above our 10 % tithing.*

"And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2Cor.9:8). This is one of my all-time favorite verses, because it is filled with superlative descriptors: *all*

grace, always, all sufficiency, all things, every good work.

In addition to these, the word *abound* is used twice. In the first instance, it is *God's grace abounding towards us.* In the second instance, it is *our giving that abounds towards God.*

As we learned last month, the Greek word for *abound* means *to exceed a fixed number of measure, to be left over and above a number or measure; to be great in abundance, to overflow.*

I love to use this verse to cover many situations in my life, spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally, but in its context, it is referring to *the grace of giving.* When we have the desire, when we have a willing mind to be generous, God will make us able to become generous givers. In order to do this, He must supply all of our needs and go beyond our supply, so that we may abound in the grace of giving.

Paul was trying to get the Corinthians to move into a higher level of giving. We saw last month how he praised the Philippian church for their extravagant giving, because they were one of the poorest churches and yet they supported Paul more than the richer churches.

"Therefore, as you abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that you abound in this grace also" (2Cor.8:7). This church had all the nine gifts of the Spirit operating in their midst in abundance. Now Paul

is exhorting them to also abound in “*the grace of giving*.”

“THE GIFT OF GIVING”

Romans 12:6-8: “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: for he that teaches, on teaching; or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that rules with diligence; he that shows mercy with cheerfulness”

These are referred to as *the seven motivational gifts*. They tend to be the outstanding attribute of a believer. Not everyone will have all of these gifts, but we all should have at least one that identifies our service to the Body of Christ.

One of these is *the gift of giving*: “*Let the one who gives do it with simplicity.*” The Greek word for *simplicity* means *honesty, free from pretense and hypocrisy, not self-seeking*.

In the verses that follow, Paul described the activity of the various gifts, and in verse 13, he described *the gift of giving*: “*Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality.*”

There are people in the Body of Christ whom God has blessed with *the gift of giving*, and many will become Level 3 Givers.

SOW: SUPPLY & MULTIPLY!

Scripture likens Giving to God to sowing seed in the ground. Because

Israel was an agrarian society, God used agricultural terms to explain financial principles. Jesus’ seminal parable was the Parable of the Sower. He said that it was the key to understanding all of His parables and teachings.

“Now he that ministers seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness. Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causes through us thanksgiving to God” (2Cor.9:10-11).

God will give us seed to eat! He will give us bread for our food! God does not supply seed to *the keeper*—but to *the sower—to the giver!*

God will supply our seed to sow. He will supply our food to eat. And then He will multiply the seed that we have sown. If we tithe our 10% on this, and go beyond it by giving freewill offerings, He multiplies it, giving us more to sow.

We sow from our excess, and it multiplies. Some people think the reason why some Christians are generous givers is that *they can afford to be generous givers, because they have a lot of money*. They’ve got it backwards: The reason why they may have a lot of money is because they are generous givers.

As we continue this generous giving, we develop a lifestyle of giving generously and enter into a *cycle of giving and receiving unto all bountifulness*—this is Level 3—*extravagant giving!*

THREEFOLD RESULTS:

1. The work of God is supported.
2. God receives the glory.
3. We increase unto all bountifulness.

It's like putting money in a savings account that accrues compound interest. This means that the interest you accrue is not just on the principle, *but on the principle plus the interest*. Every month interest is added, based on the new balance, including the interest. When you gain interest on interest, and continue to gain interest on interest, your money accrues quickly.

This is how God repays His people who enter into a cycle of giving and receiving. There is no greater investment plan than to give to God. He guarantees a return no earthly bank or stock market can match. God will be no man's debtor!

The Law of Reciprocity is exponentially wonderful when you are in partnership with God. It's like the law of gravity: *What goes up must come down!* The Law of Reciprocity is: *What goes out will come back!* And not only will it come back, *it will come back multiplied and compounded!*

The Law of Reciprocity is compounded by the Law of Multiplication: This goes all the way back to Genesis and the account of creation. When God created everything: grass, trees, flowers, fruits, fish, birds, animals, creepers, He put the seed of reproduction within them. Then He said: "*Be fruitful and multiply!*" It is so basic that many Christians over-

look its power and potential. They apply it in a hit-and miss fashion, so they never see the Law of Reciprocity and multiplication kick in.

GET THE CYCLE GOING!

"Cast your bread upon the waters: for you shall find it after many days. Give a portion to seven and also to eight; for you know not what evil shall be upon the earth" (Ecc.11:1-2).

We don't know when hard times will come. We saw that with Covid 19 and how many people were out of work. But when they come, the one who has been *casting his bread upon the waters* will receive a return. (Giving a portion of seven or more is an idiom. In Hebrew, anything seven or more denotes plentitude, meaning here *to be generous*.) *You will find it in many days* means it will return to you with profit: you will reap the harvest when you need it the most. This is how we can lay up blessings for hard times.

Vv.3-4: *"If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falls, there shall it be. He that observes the wind shall not sow; and he that regards the clouds shall not reap."*

The person who waits for favorable conditions will never give.

Don't wait for perfect weather to get your seed in the ground. If you wait for your financial situation to be perfect so you can start giving to God more generously, there will never be

a perfect time. There will always be something to eat up your money.

Storms come. Hurricanes arise. Disasters come to all. These are things we cannot predict. No one could have seen Covid-19 coming! No one could have predicted the whole country would be locked down and many businesses would fold altogether. But if we've got our seed in the ground, we will reap the harvest.

V.6: *"In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand: for you know not whether shall prosper, or either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."*

If it is in your heart to become a generous giver, you have to begin by sowing your seed, give whenever a need presents itself. Jesus said that God is *the Lord of the Harvest*, and He will multiply your seed back to you exponentially—*But He can't multiply nothing!* Zero x zero is still zero.

The universal law is *you reap what you sow*. Not only that, *you reap more than you sow*: Plant a kernel of corn in the soil, and it will produce a stalk with several ears. Each ear contains hundreds of seed kernels, approximately 400 in each ear. This is exponential increase.

It is true in creation, and it is true in the kingdom of God: *"Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over..."* The blessings start *after* you give. As we taught last month: The Hebrew word for give is NATAN which is a *palindrome* (pal-lin-drome): *a word spelled the same forwards and backwards*.

The hidden meaning in NATAN: *When we give to God, it comes back to us*. If we don't give God a measure, there is nothing to come back.

We can all become Level 2 givers. Begin by giving above your tithes. When it comes to Level 3 giving, God will instruct you when, to whom, and how much you should give. The enemy will fight you with doubt in your mind. Ask God for wisdom, direction, and confirmation. One thing is certain: the devil will never tell you to give to the work of God, or to someone in need whom God wants to bless.

ZIKLAG BOUNTY

In First Samuel 30, is the episode of Ziklag which provides an example of extravagant giving. This occurred during the time when David was running from Saul who was trying to murder him. In order to avoid capture, David and about 600 men who were joined to him fled to the Philistines for refuge. This, of course, was a huge risk, because the Philistines were Israel's archenemy.

To his embarrassment, David actually feigned madness before King Achish so he would have mercy on him, and he did. He gave David and his men the town of Ziklag to live in with their wives and children. David and his men would go to nearby towns where enemies of Israel lived and attack them. They were careful not to allow the Philistines to catch on. All was going well until the day they came home to find

Ziklag on fire and their women and children kidnapped by the Amalekites, one of Israel's worst enemies.

Still in shock and sorrow, David and his men went to the place where their families were in captivity, slew their abductors, recovered their wives and children, and took back everything they had stolen from Ziklag. But that's not all: They also took of the spoils: their herds, their flocks, their cattle, and their riches. They took back what the devil stole from them, *and they took more than the devil stole from them, because God rewarded them.*

After they had collected of all the spoils, David sent offerings to the Tabernacle in Judah. But that's not all he gave. He also sent bountiful offerings to Bethel, Jattir, Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, Rachal, the cities of the Jerahmeelites, the cities of the Kenites, Hormah, Corashan, Athach, Hebron, and all the places he had previously fled to for safety.

Now that was extravagant giving! Extravagant giving comes from extravagant gratitude!

MARY OF BETHANY

John 12 records her story and provides an example of extravagant giving from a heart of gratitude. After Jesus raised her beloved brother Lazarus from the dead, the family held a celebration dinner. Of course, her sister Martha, homemaker supreme, was busy in the kitchen preparing a delicious meal for Jesus and the guests.

Mary brought out an alabaster box

containing a pound of ointment, very costly spikenard. She broke the box, poured the ointment on Jesus' head and anointed His feet; then wiped His feet with her hair. Spikenard was a fragrant plant grown in the Himalayan Mountains at 11,000 to 17,000 feet elevations. It had to be transported over 6000 miles to Palestine, adding to its exorbitant cost. It was worth a year's wages—it was truly an extravagant gift.

Judas protested that it should have been sold and the money given to the poor. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, *"Let her alone. She has done this in preparation for my burial."* Of course, Mary did not know, nor did anyone know that in six days Jesus would be crucified.

Such extravagance was birthed out of Mary's extreme gratitude for the gift of her brother's life. The Scripture says that the whole house was filled with its perfume. But there were two people that left that house that day smelling like that precious perfume that clung to them: Jesus and Mary.

In Matthew 6:21, Jesus said: *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* Mary's treasure was Jesus. Judas' treasure was money.

Jesus said: *"Truly I say unto you, Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken on for a memorial of her."* (Matt. 26:13, Mk. 14:9). *This also*—in addition to the preaching of the Gospel—this account of her extravagant giving will be preached

throughout the whole world.

What a testimony! What a memorial! *Memorial* means the thing for which a person is remembered. It is only used one other place in the Greek NT: Acts 10:4.

The Roman centurion, Cornelius, was introduced to the Jewish faith and became a man of devout prayer. He also was a generous giver to many people. One day he had a vision and an angel spoke to him: “*Your prayers and your alms are come up as a memorial before God.*”

It was not just his prayers that God had taken notice of—but his prayers and his alms—*his offerings to the poor!*

At the same time, Peter had a vision in which God instructed him to accept Gentiles who wanted to become believers in Jesus. Obediently, Peter went to Cornelius’ house and preached the Gospel. While he was speaking, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and all of his household was saved and received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Our giving can be memorialized in the books of Heaven! Our giving can bring spiritual blessings as well as financial, because giving is a spiritual *principle*, a spiritual *grace*, and a spiritual *gift*.

HEART GIVERS IS THE SEQUEL TO THRIVE & THRIVE FROM JANUARY. THE AUDIO SET IS AVAILABLE ON PAGE 15.
