

Church of Christ

...Heart to Heart...

We need to understand a wonderful, but deep insight to walking with God. It's on the matter of giving. I'm not speaking of guilting people into giving or raking people over the coals because they don't give. I'm speaking of a sound, spiritual instruction about giving.

Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." (Luke 6:38) What's your standard of measure? To give to get is not giving at all. That's taking. To give is to allow the Lord to have His place first and He will respond. The first thing our lives should always do is **give!** The brethren of Macedonia were in deep poverty, but they gave first (II Cor. 8). They did it by first giving themselves to the Lord (8:5) and it carried over into giving to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. How could one be poorer than deep poverty? The difference was their attitude toward the Lord and giving themselves to His trusting care. The Lord supplied their needs!

Brethren have taken on the attitude they cannot give unless they have something. That's backward. You give first. From the early days of God's people, God asked them to give first from the produce of their hands. Not second or if you have anything left over. Jesus said **give...first!** It's a spiritual law from God. Just observe: the farmer plants before he harvests! He has to give first. You invest in something before you receive interest. You make friends by being a friend first. Athletes give of themselves before they can claim a crown. Nothing results in nothing! We give to give, because of the Lord, not to receive. *Be a giver, not a taker.* Listen to the spiritual law in another way, "...for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7) "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." (II Cor. 9:6)

Always be a giver...first! A non-disciplined person cannot handle money (or anything else). We don't need more money. We need to discipline our lives by learning to give first. So many in Christ think, "*If I get a big raise, I'll pay off my house and have money to give.*" That's not a proper spiritual attitude. Giving is faith in God! Giving is discipline! The more money most receives, the more money is spent and borrowed. Look how many are maxed out!

Study God's word and learn His ways. They are pure and righteous. Remember the widow who gave two little copper coins (Mark 12:42-44)? What did she get in return? The attention and praise of Jesus! He noticed and it moved Him toward her. What about us? **Give...first!** Think about it!!!

Brent