

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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## The Blessing of Giving

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At this time of year, we are reminded to give thanks for what God has given to us. Some of the first settlers of our country modeled this during the first Thanksgiving Day feast. They showed God their appreciation for all the blessings He had given them by blessing others' lives through giving. They did not just speak of a blessing from God; they modeled it by being a blessing to others.

Where did they get this model? It was not just a great idea someone came up with while brainstorming. This is a model set out to them by God through His Word. Deuteronomy 15:7-8 states, "If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks" (NAS). Why does God command His people to not withhold from the poor, but give generously? Because God had generously given to them the land they were occupying. God had already modeled the generosity that He required of His people.

Israel received the land directly from God's hand, but He knew that after many years it would be easy for the people to forget who provided the land for them. Giving was a way to remind them of their God's generosity towards them. How easy it is for us to also forget that what we have is from God. Because God has not directly handed everything to us, we sometimes believe that our earthly possessions come from our own prowess and skill. God gave us these skills and abilities that we have to provide us with possessions, and God will reward us when we use them with excellence. Today, we must also be vigilant in the practice of

giving because it reminds us, as it did Israel, that what we have is given from God.

God also knew that a person's heart could become a place of selfishness that may cause giving to cease. Verse 9 says, "Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the Lord against you, and it will be a sin in you" (NAS). When we begin to focus on our needs, we begin to forget God's provision and detest others that need help from us. We show this disdain by giving the poor nothing, and our hearts can deceive us to think that apathy is of no benefit or harm. But doing nothing can be of harm to us, as we can see in God's Word. Giving is a way for us to fight the selfishness we all have.

We must also remember that we will be blessed for our giving. Verse 10 says, "You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings" (NAS). I think Proverbs 11:25b says it well, "He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (NIV). When we are a blessing to others, God is glorified and He rewards people for this. It may be on earth; it may be in heaven. We leave that to God. It is wonderful that in our finances there can be much blessing.

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