

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

BETTER WAY GIVING SERIES STUDY GUIDE

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Lesson Six

AN EXPECTANT GIVER

This expectant giving characteristic may be last in our *Better Way Giving Series*, but it is anything but the least of the six giving characteristics. In fact, it is this expectant giving characteristic that can turbo-charge our giving beyond anything we are currently aware of. You see, giving is not just about having the right attitude, or even about giving properly and effectively, it is also about having very specific expectations about what is going to happen when we give.

The New Testament is very clear that giving is not a one-way street – not done in a vacuum – isolated, with no results beyond the blessing to the receiver. Things literally happen in heaven and on earth when we give. When we fully comprehend this, expectations in our giving will soar. So let's examine the three New Testament giving expectations we ought to have each time we give.

We Can Expect to be Resupplied

Let me ask you: If you knew that you had an *unlimited* supply of financial and material resources from which to give and regardless of how generous you were in deploying them you would never run out, would the amount you give change? In other words, if your “well” of material possessions could never run dry, would you gladly increase how much “water” you are drawing from it to quench the thirst of those who had too little to drink? I think we would all say, “Yes, I would definitely be more extravagant in my giving if this was the case.”

The good news is that this *is* the case. We do have a well from which to draw that will never run dry. Listen to what Paul says in II Corinthians 9:6, 8-10:

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, ‘He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor. His righteousness endures forever.’ Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.”

Here, Paul is describing what I call the *Law of Resupply* – that God continues to resupply us enabling us to continue to deploy resources to serve others. Do not miss what he has said here: “*he who sows bountifully, reaps bountifully...that we might have an abundance for every good deed...and multiply your seed.*” We deploy, He resupplies – and often He resupplies us with even more than we actually deploy!

Can we be totally honest with ourselves? Our greatest fear in giving is that we might give away too much and end up not having enough for ourselves. You see, this *Law of Resupply* addresses this exact fear. It reassures us that we cannot give too much away. We cannot ever run out.

One of my favorite illustrations of this *Law of Resupply* is the story of R. G. LeTourneau, the man who designed and built the massive earth moving equipment that we see. By the latter part of his life, he was giving 90% of his income away and living on 10%. Yet, in spite of this, his net worth continued to climb. A gentleman once asked him, “Mr. LeTourneau, how is it that if you are giving 90% of all your income away, you continue getting richer?” His answer is classic. He said, “I shovel it out and God shovels it back, but God has a bigger shovel.” The *Law of Resupply* at work.

Remember what Anne Frank said, “No one has ever become poor by giving.” And do you know why? Because it is *impossible* to become poor by giving. The *Law of Resupply* is our “safety net” and God will never allow us to run out for ourselves because we gave too much away. Much like the widow of Zeraphath in I Kings 17 who used her last bit of flour and oil to give bread to the prophet Elijah, then prepared to lie down with her son and die of starvation. She didn’t know about the *Law of Resupply*. Because of what she had given to God’s prophet, God miraculously kept her jar of flour full and her jug of oil from ever running dry. She gave, God resupplied.

The spiritual and emotional challenge for us regarding the *Law of Resupply* is that we must first give in faith trusting that the *Law of Resupply* exists. In other words, we need to be fearlessly distributing what is already on our “gift card” before God is going to reload it for us for additional giving. This is one of the most powerful giving concepts in the entire Bible. We can expect to experience the *Law of Resupply*.

We Can Expect to be Provoking

Unfortunately, the word “provoke” in our culture almost always carries with it a negative connotation. If someone “provokes” us, it is never a good thing. However, the New Testament uses the word in both a negative and a positive way. The word itself simply means to “stimulate or incite” someone to a response. For example, Paul tells fathers not to “*provoke your children to wrath*” (Ephesians 6:4). Hebrews 10:24 uses it in a positive light. It says, “*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works....*” This verse tells us that we should be provoking (stimulating or inciting) other believers to join us in our giving adventures – provoking them to excel in “*good works.*”

I have discovered that the single greatest motivator for encouraging others to give is to hear the stories of those who are doing it – who have already stepped out in faith and are doing some extraordinary and extravagant things with their giving – and have actually lived to tell about it!

Let me encourage those of you who are already extravagant givers to not mistakenly believe that by sharing your exciting giving stories with others that you will somehow “lose your heavenly reward” for doing so. If you are sharing your giving stories to stimulate and incite others to give more and not doing

it to draw attention or praise to yourself, you are doing a very good thing. Share your exciting and often amazing giving adventures with others. Share how it tested your faith. Share the joy you have found in your giving. Invite and incite others to “come on in, the water is fine!”

I was at a conference a few years ago and a young man shared that at the previous year’s conference he had been deeply challenged by the giving stories he heard. He told us that he wanted to experience the hand of God working through him like those he heard sharing their amazing giving stories.

So now, a year later, he was asked to share his giving story that was the direct result of him being provoked to give the year before. He shared that one day he was walking down the street and he saw an extremely needy man crouched down on the sidewalk, just trying to stay warm. He walked over to the man and offered to take him to a restaurant for dinner. After dinner, he then took him to a clothing store and bought him a completely new set of clothes, a new coat and even new shoes. He then took him to a local hotel and told him that he could spend the night at the hotel, take a hot shower, sleep in a warm bed and enjoy a hot breakfast in the morning.

Then he went a little crazy according to his wife. This good Samaritan then told the hotel clerk that the man could stay at the hotel longer if he needed to and the clerk should put whatever room charges the poor man incurred on his credit card. He prayed a blessing over the poor man and left. I sat there listening, absolutely dumbfounded. This young man’s compelling story of generosity simultaneously shamed and inspired me. It shamed me because even though God had given me hundreds of identical opportunities to be generous to a poor stranger, I had never even considered doing anything like what he did. It also inspired me because I wanted to experience the overwhelming joy that this young man had received from this selfless act of kindness. His giving story provoked me to get even more attuned to what God might want me to do with what He had me managing. You see, an expectant giver should always be attempting to provoke others to “*love and good works.*”

We Can Expect to be Rewarded

One of the most overlooked teachings on giving in the New Testament is on its rewards. The New Testament is abundantly clear that we can expect to be rewarded by God in both this life and the next for what we faithfully deploy as He directs.

Consider just a couple verses:

1 Timothy 6:19, “*Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*”

Matthew 6:20, “*But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...*”

Notice, who are we told to be storing up our treasures for. Not for God? Not for others? “*For ourselves!*” We get back in *heaven* what we give up on *earth*! What an incredible deal! You see, we don’t really ever

give anything away, we just send it on ahead. Even while our earthly balance sheet is being reduced by our giving, our heavenly balance sheet is being increased by the same amount. And now instead of only enjoying our stuff for a short time here on earth, we will instead get to enjoy it forever in eternity.

Here is the startling reality. *Whatever we give away, we do not give up.* When we give something away, we are guaranteed to have it for eternity! Absolutely incredible!

Now, contrast this “treasures in heaven” mindset with the mindset of the rich farmer in Luke 12 who decided that he was going to store up “for himself” treasures on earth instead of in heaven. God declares this man to be a “fool.” He had the right idea, storing up treasure for himself. However, he chose the wrong location to store his treasures. You see, where we choose to store our treasures makes all the difference in whether we will be viewed by God as a wise man or a fool.

But not only is there an eternal reward in our giving, there are also temporal rewards as well, Jesus is quoted by Paul in Acts 20:35 that “It is more blessed to give than it is to receive.” In other words, the giver gets back more than he gives. Solomon in Proverbs 11:25 confirms this as well, “A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.” The giver is prospered as he gives what he has away.

It is clear, we should expect to be rewarded for our giving. It is part of God’s stewardship “deal.” God says, “You take care of others and I’ll take care of you!”

Giving is the one area of our lives where we should have exceedingly high expectations! We can expect to be resupplied for more giving; we can expect to be provoking others to greater giving; and we can expect to be rewarded for our faithful deployment of His material resources.

If we will focus on incorporating all six of these Better Way Giving characteristics into our everyday lives, we can undoubtedly expect to someday hear from the Owner, “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” May we all learn to both live and give with this ultimate day in mind!

Discussion Questions

1. What is your initial reaction to this lesson?
2. What most amazes you about the whole idea of the Law of Resupply?
3. How does fear override faith and render the Law of Resupply inoperable in our lives?
4. Respond to R.G.Letourneau's comment, "I shovel it out and God shovels it back, but God has a bigger shovel."
5. What is the triggering activity for the Law of Resupply to kick in? Have you ever experienced the Law of Resupply operating in your life and giving?
6. How can you share your giving stories with others so they will become excited to experience what you have experienced in your giving?
7. Share what has been the most over-the-top giving story of your life.
8. How do you respond to the statement, "Whatever we give away, we do not give up" – that they are returned to us as our reward for our faithful deployment of them here on earth?
9. What made the rich farmer a "fool"? What do we need to do to be sure we will not, like him, someday be considered a "fool" as well?
10. How do you respond to the idea from God that, "You take care of others and I'll take care of you!" What is for us the upside and the downside of this being true?
11. Share what is going to change in how you think and how you give because of what you have learned in this lesson?