

## SABBATH THOUGHT 2024-02-10—GIVING & RECEIVING #5

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Previous Sabbath Thoughts explained that God established the principle of Giving & Receiving as an statute separate from tithing, which provided for the temple work of the Levites and priests. Taking care of the poor and needy is not only independent of tithing<sup>1</sup>, it is a very serious and personal responsibility levied by God that provides for the needs of family and neighbors<sup>2</sup>. In fact, it is not only a commandment (statute) of God, in the NT it is called an Administrative Service to provide for ALL the saints<sup>3</sup> in the Body of Christ.

To that end, God gives blessings of abundance to some and that abundance is intended to be used for the needs of others<sup>4</sup>. That abundance is not to be withheld from the poor or needy out of selfishness or greed. Givers are to be “ready and willing” to share<sup>5</sup> and do so with a cheerful heart<sup>6</sup> out the joy for helping others. Praying and asking God for the means and opportunities to serve and give to others is a sign of agape love. On the other hand, an attitude of reluctance or resentment may result in losing that abundance—Job 1:12 says, “... The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away ... .”

Trials, grief, sadness, illness, disease, sickness, or poverty are experienced by everyone at times in their lives. Some are short-lived while others can last a lifetime. Regardless, these things are all aspects of being poor or needy. When those things come upon us, our first response should be to pray and ask God for relief<sup>7</sup>. Jesus Christ absolutely PROMISED that “whatever you ask in My name, that I will do.” (John 14:13-14). But many are not willing or able to RECEIVE God’s help if it comes through the hands of other *people*.

Receiving can be difficult. Pride, or not wanting to be indebted to others, can prevent us from accepting help; however, there are other obstacles that show just how hard it is to let agape love abound in our hearts<sup>8</sup> whether we are giving or receiving.

An example might serve to illustrate the roadblocks that we create in our minds. When someone causes an offense, it is hard to admit a wrong and sincerely apologize (repent to the victim). But it can also be just as difficult for a victim to receive it. But this exchange is required if the offender and victim are to reconcile.

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 15:7-11.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 25:35.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 9:8-13.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. 9:8

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. 9:7.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. 4:16.

<sup>8</sup> Phil. 1:9; 1 Thess. 3:12.

Too many times the offender cannot or will not repent and the victim too often continues in their anger or disappointment rather than to accept the apology.

It is not surprising that many do not even know HOW respond to offenses. Saying "I'm sorry" requires humility and love, something that has 'waxed cold'<sup>9</sup> in this day and age. Humility and love are required of the offender to repent but they are also required of the victim to forgive (even though the victim is required to be *willing* to forgive whether or not the offender apologizes<sup>10</sup>).

Although the above example is about reconciling offenses, there is a similar problem with Giving & Receiving. When an answered prayer is not due to a direct miracle from God but comes at the hand of people, many may find it hard to receive it. Not knowing how to receive help from others, pride, not wanting to feel indebted, or just being unwilling are many times a problem. However, rejecting the help of others can also be a rejection of God's answer to prayer.

Regardless, both giving and receiving are outward expressions of agape love between people. However unintentional, the walls that are raised when it comes to Giving & Receiving also cause something else. In the time just before the birth of Jesus Christ, the Israelites knew His appearance was imminent<sup>11</sup>. But when God finally came the people did something unbelievable:

JOHN 1:10-11 He [*Jesus*] was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and **His own did not receive Him.**

What does the rejection of Christ by the nation of Israel have to do with Giving & Receiving? Everything. God gives an abundance to some to be received by the poor or needy. When someone refuses to *give* of their abundance OR declines to *receive* it from others, they can be rejecting Jesus Christ! Notice:

MATTHEW 10:40 "**He [the receiver] who receives you [the giver] receives Me [Jesus], and he who receives Me receives Him [God] who sent Me.**

MATTHEW 18:5 "Whoever **receives** one little child like this in My name **receives Me [Jesus].**

ROMANS 15:7 Therefore **receive one another, just as Christ also received us,** to the glory of God.

To "receive one another" requires someone who gives and another to receive. It may not be intentional, but refusing to give or receive can be a rejection of our Lord and Savior! How can that be? Because it prevents a very special connection between

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<sup>9</sup> Matt. 24:12.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to the booklet *Offenses—Ordinance of God* on the [website](#).

<sup>11</sup> Luke 2:25-26—Simeon had received a prophecy that he would see the Christ before his death.

people. If the whole purpose of God's Law is agape love out of a pure heart<sup>12</sup>, then the statute of Giving & Receiving is the fulfillment of the two Great Commandments of Love. In other words, Giving & Receiving bonds our hearts together.

Having abundance from God to give to the poor or needy brings a feeling of utter joy. From that comes thanks-GIVING to God, especially if it is an answer to the prayers of a giver to have the means and opportunity to help others.

Those who receive the things they prayed for know it was from God and they give thanks to Him for His mercy and compassion. They also give thanks to the GIVER, which is an expression of agape love for their help and generosity. Grateful thanks back to the giver is heartfelt affection and gratitude.

And THAT is the whole purpose for the Administration of Service<sup>13</sup> called Giving & Receiving! If everyone had exactly what they need and no one lacked anything, what kind of relationship would God's children have with each other? Giving & Receiving is not only about exchanging physical things, it is about the giver showing love for someone in need and the one in need reciprocating that love.

Who has given to someone and not been overwhelmed by the thanks, gratefulness, and appreciation they receive? Who has received from someone in a time of need and not felt utterly blessed with love, mercy, and compassion of such acts of kindness? Giving & Receiving draws people together like nothing else. It does not matter what is exchanged—it can be physical things, money, emotional support, spiritual help, etc.

Giving & Receiving is The Way and The Life of the eternity to come. Jesus said He went back to God to prepare a place for His people but He also mentioned something quite interesting:

JOHN 14:2-6 “In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place [in the Kingdom]** for you. 3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. 4 “And **where I go you know**, and **the way you know**.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “**I am the way**, the truth, and **the life**. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus said the disciples KNEW where He was going and the way to get there. But Thomas countered and said that they did NOT know. The disciples were obviously thinking of a physical place and wanted directions to get there. But Jesus said HE is BOTH “... **the way**, the truth, and **the life**.” Jesus IS the direction and the destination—The Way and The Life! He was not talking about a physical place with a better political, economic, and judicial systems. He was talking about a spiritual Kingdom

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Tim. 1:5.

<sup>13</sup> Refer to the Sabbath Thought [Giving & Receiving #4](#).

based upon HIMSELF! Who is He? HE is The Way = AGAPE LOVE! HE is The Life = GIVING & RECEIVING!

The Way is AGAPE LOVE and The Life is GIVING & RECEIVING!

If eternity is nothing more than endless learning to sing or play an instrument, construction of planetary cities and gardens, or permanent sightseeing trips to the ends of the universe there will eventually come a point when there is nothing that has not been learned, built, or experienced. Perhaps it will not happen for the first few billion or even trillion years, but eternity is a very long time. Still, surely a time must come when everything is either built or, after a few billion cities, it becomes boring and uninteresting.

Those were my thoughts in times past, gloomy as they were. But then I realized that eternity is not FOUNDED upon those things. God IS agape love and we are to BECOME as He is! Eternity will be founded upon RELATIONSHIPS with billions of God's children. If a mere million years is spent getting to know ONE of them, that is a lot of zeros—15 of them to be exact (1 billion people times 1 million years/person = 1 trillion years). Peter said that receiving the salvation of our souls will be a "joy **unspeakable.**"<sup>14</sup> I truly believe he was describing an eternity of relationships alongside developing talents and doing whatever works will exist in the New Heavens. It will be a time of *the way* of agape love and *the life* of Giving & Receiving. It is spending time loving and being loved, talking and listening, learning and teaching, helping and being helped, serving and being served—all in the unimaginable fullness of the agape love of God our Father and our Brother Jesus Christ! Notice what Paul said:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:28 Now when all things are made subject to Him [*Jesus*], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [*God the Father*] who put all things under Him, **that God [*the Father*] may be all in all.**

And so ends this series on Giving & Receiving. There is so much more that can be said and, yet, we can never truly imagine the fullness of it. When the Kingdom has fully arrived, God will be ALL—His perfect agape love and way of life—in ALL!

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 Thanks *be* to God for His **indescribable gift!**

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>14</sup> 1 Pet. 1:3-9.