

Senior & Founding Pastor Dr. David Anderson
Bridgeway Community Church
Series: “The Better Gift”
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**THE BETTER GIFT:
“Giving From Your Faith”**

Happy Thanksgiving Weekend!

I hope you have enjoyed time with family and friends. Did you eat well? Does anyone need to repent over the sin of gluttony? :-) In a moment I will pray for the sermon. At that time, you can repent for your overeating and waking up “*the itis*.”

Speaking of the sermon...

- Last week’s sermon was “*Giving From Your First*”.
- Next week’s sermon is “*Giving Beyond Your Fears*”.
- But today it is “***Giving From Your Faith***”.

Let’s pray!

I. INTRODUCTION

One of my brothers in the Lord tracks with me in the Spirit through prayer and texts regularly. Over a year ago, we were tracking together spiritually when he told me that God was laying on his heart to give a financial gift to someone anonymously.

He sent me a scripture from 1 Peter 5 that had to do with young people going through a trial to humble themselves in the test and trust that God would get them to the other side. He didn’t know who the gift was supposed to be for, but he knew he was called by God to give from his faith. So he asked me to pray about it.

I did.

Shortly thereafter, a young couple who was struggling in their marriage mentioned to me that they were in desperate need of marriage counseling. Financially, they couldn’t afford the price tag for such counseling they needed at the time. After praying about it, my brother in the Lord and I agreed to bless this couple so that they could pay for their counseling for a season of time.

Fast forward.

Just this past week, the man from that marriage came to me and reminded me of the financial gift that I had forgotten about from a year ago. He wanted to give me a personal report and accounting for the money that had been given.

He said something to this effect:

- *“Pastor, I want to thank you and the donor(s) from your secret generosity group for investing in my marriage. The counseling really got me and my wife back on track and our marriage is really good now. I just wanted to pause and say thank you.”*

This young man returning to say “thank you” really touched my heart. I passed on his gratitude to the anonymous donor as well.

Question:

Why did this man’s intentional effort to say “thank you” touch me personally?

1. I had forgotten about this gift and interaction. It is always nice to be reminded of some way God has used you in the past.
2. I was able to report back to my brother about what God did through him and his financial gift. He was grateful to see how God has used him.
3. The most important, a marriage was strengthened because of the generosity of others in the body of Christ.

God received the glory and many others will be blessed in the future by this newly strengthened, biblical marriage.

Transition:

This story is a direct reflection of the passage that I want to read today.

II. 2 CORINTHIANS 9

2 Corinthians 9:12 (NIV84) says:

- “*The service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.*”

When we give from a heart of faith, we help supply the needs of others and they end up overflowing with thankfulness to God. Remember last week we talked about “*overflow*”?

When we give to God, He not only gives us overflow, but when then bless others who “overflow” with thanksgiving to God!

Question:

How many of you are overflowing with thanksgiving to God because of how He has supplied your needs?

He often uses *other people* to help supply your needs. Money doesn’t just drop into your life without human & divine movement behind it!

God uses people to create opportunities; to hire you; to write the checks; to discount the cost of goods; to make decisions for grants, scholarships, bonuses, awarding contracts, etc. *God uses people to bless people!* And God wants to use YOU to be a blessing to others!

It begins with Giving to God from your *First-fruits*, and then Giving to God from your *Faith*!

Verse 13 goes on to say:

- “*Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.*” (2 Corinthians 9:13 NIV84)

Lastly, I love **verses 14-15**, which basically says that your generosity to other people, who you have given to in faith, *will cause them to pray genuinely from the heart for you.*

Check out what it says...

- 14 “*And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*” (2 Corinthians 9:14-15 NIV84)

In other words, the recipients of your generosity will *not only Praise God* but they will *Pray to God* genuinely because of your generosity.

I TRULY BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO I HAVE BEEN KIND AND GENEROUS TO WHO PRAY FOR ME OUT OF A GENUINE HEART.

I am a kind and generous person.

Amber and I have done our best over the years with the little that we had for the first 20 years of our married lives to help people even when we were struggling.

I believe this has caused many people (not everyone) to truly be grateful to God for us and they pray for the grace of God to continue in our lives.

For example, I received a call from a man in July last summer who used to live in the area and attended Bridgeway for a couple of years.

He was on staff for a professional football team and was going through marital difficulties. I remember praying with him, talking to him, walking with him through the hard times.

When he called me I thought that He may have needed some more encouragement. But that wasn't why he called.

Question:

Guess why he called?

He said: "Dr. Anderson, you were there during my first marriage and you walked with me during the most difficult challenge of my life. Even though I don't live in the area any longer, I am remarried and am doing well. After all these years I wanted to call to say thank you and I want to give you a financial gift."

I told him that it wasn't necessary for him to do that...(but then I asked, "How much?" :-)
I was like, "Here, let me give you my Cash App!" He then told me if I ever wanted to learn about crypto his wife does this for a living now. I told him to put the money that he was going to send me into the crypto thing.

Within 4 months of the money being invested in July, it had doubled by October.

Question:

Why am I telling you this?

Answer:

Because you can't beat God's giving, no matter how hard you try!

In July someone was led by God from another state to bless me because I was a blessing to them over 10 years ago, and now that money is growing in an account that is doubling.

According to the text, we have already learned 2 things already about generosity.

Generosity causes others to:

1. PRAISE GOD BECAUSE OF YOUR GIVING (2 Corinthians 9:13)
2. PRAY TO GOD BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE IN YOU! (2 Corinthians 9:14-15)
 - When you give to God's people, you are giving to God.
 - When you give to someone in need, you are giving to God.
 - When you can give to God's church, you are giving to God.

SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

When you give to God from your faith and with a heart of gratitude, God is glorified, others are overflowing with thanksgiving, and you are blessed.

Question:

The question for some people is HOW do I give?

Let me share with you Five Ways to Give from Your Faith...

III. FIVE WAYS TO GIVE FROM YOUR FAITH

All 5 ways spell out the word F.A.I.T.H. to make it easy to remember.

In fact, we will have fun by giving you a multiple choice quiz for each word and you can tell me *which word will build the outline for our message today.*

The first way to Give from Your Faith is?

The word begins with an F.

Here are your 4 choices:

1. GIVE F - _____ (FIRST)

- Quiz
 - A. Fast
 - **B. First**
 - C. Freely
 - D. Fancy
- Scripture - **1 Corinthians 16:1-2:**

“Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the FIRST day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collection will have to be made.” (NIV84)

2. GIVE A - _____ (ANONYMOUSLY)

- Quiz:
 - A. Anxiously
 - B. Ably
 - C. Attitudinally
 - **D. Anonymously**
- Scripture - **Matthew 6:1-4**

“Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (NIV84)

3. GIVE I - _____ (INTENTIONALLY)

- Quiz:
 - A. Instantly
 - B. Inspiringly

- C. Intentionally
- D. Ignorantly

In **1 Corinthians 16:1 (NIV84)**, the writer said to “set aside a sum of money” in keeping with one’s income. This speaks to intentionality, doesn’t it?

- Scripture - **2 Corinthians 9:1–2, 5**
 - “There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. 2 For I know your EAGERNESS to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were READY to give; and your ENTHUSIASM has stirred most of the to action...5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be READY as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.” (NIV84)

4. GIVE T - _____ (TITHE)

- Quiz:
 - A. Tithe
 - B. Time
 - C. Talents
 - D. Triple
- Scripture - **Malachi 3:10-12**
 - “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit. Says the Lord Almighty. 12 Then all nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land, says the Lord Almighty. (NIV84)
- 3 PROMISES of Malachi 3:10-12:
 1. I will *pour* out much blessing (v.10)
 2. I will *prevent* disaster (v.11)
 3. You will *possess* delightful land (v.12)

5. GIVE H - _____ (HILARIOUSLY)

- Quiz:
 - A. Holy
 - B. Healthy
 - C. Hungry
 - **D. Hilariously**
- Scripture - 2 Corinthians 9:7
 - *“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a CHEERFUL giver.” (NIV84)*
 - Greek word for Cheerful is *“hilarious”*

Review:

Five Ways to Give from Your Faith

1. Give *First*
2. Give *Anonymously*
3. Give *Intentionally*
4. Give a *Tithe*
5. Give *Hilariously*

Sermon in a Sentence:

When you give to God from your faith and with a heart of gratitude, God is glorified, others are overflowing with thanksgiving, and you are blessed.

IV. CLOSING STORY

A Woman was paying her tithes to the Lord and loved going to church. Every morning she would wake up and walk out to the porch and scream out, *“God is good, all the time. Praise the Lord!”* Her atheist neighbor would scream out of his window, *“There ain’t no God!”* The woman kept going to church and kept paying her tithes. And each morning she would come out to the porch and praise God loudly. *“God is good. All the time. Praise the Lord.”* Her atheist neighbor would scream back, *“There ain’t no God!”*

The woman ended up losing her job because the local factory shut down. Word got around that she didn't have much money left and was even struggling to make ends meet. But each day the woman still came out to the porch and said: *"God is good, all the time. Praise the Lord."*

The atheist neighbor was so tired of this that he thought he would play a trick on the woman.

He went to the grocery store and bought a bunch of groceries. He placed several bags of groceries on the woman's doorstep, rang the bell and ran to hide in the bushes. When the woman came to answer the door she noticed the groceries. She started praising God loudly.

"Praise the Lord. God is good. Hallelujah. Glory to God." It was then that the atheist neighbor jumped out of the bushes and said, *"You see lady. There ain't no God. I was the one who bought you those groceries and delivered them myself!"* The woman started praising God even louder. She started dancing and worshipping the Lord right there on her porch.

The atheist neighbor didn't understand. He said, *"Lady, it was me. So you can stop all that praising. There ain't no God. It was me."* To which the woman said, *"Praise You, Jesus! Praise you, God! You not only gave me free groceries, but YOU GOT THE DEVIL TO PAY FOR IT!!! :-)"*