

A Call To Give – 6 Principles Of Generosity

For the next couple of weeks, we are collecting pledges and donations towards the exciting work of renovating and ultimately occupying our own mid-week meeting space. A place that will not only serve our own needs but also serve the community as a waypoint in their journey to Jesus. More about the vision for this space, as well as the specific needs, can be found over here: <http://citygates.ca/90okr>

To help us approach this appeal from a place of real faith, I've highlighted 6 ways in which we should give towards a project like ours. These lessons are drawn from 2 examples in the Old Testament where we see God's people bringing their resources to help construct and complete a structure. In [Exodus 25:1-9](#) God asks Moses to collect contributions for the building of the tabernacle. In [1 Chronicles 29:1-19](#) we see David asking for a generous offering from the people after having given generously himself towards the construction of the temple.

Why not give these passages a read before you move one? This is what we learn from them:

1. They gave wholeheartedly

1 Chron 29:9 *"Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for **with a whole heart** they had offered freely to the LORD"*

Ex 25:1 *"From every man **whose heart moves him** you shall receive the contribution for me."*

This is listed first because all the other lessons are a product of this one. When God has access to our hearts, He then has access to the rest of us ([Prov 4:23](#), [27:19](#)). Part of the promise of the gospel is that we get our old, stubborn and stony hearts replaced with new ones that are committed to God ([Ez 11:19](#))! Giving as a result of a moved heart is **giving with conviction, and not giving under compulsion.**

An amazing thing happened after people were invited to give from their hearts in Exodus 25. The outcome is recorded for us 11 chapters later:

Ex 36:3 *"... They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning,... [6] ... So the people were restrained from bringing,..."*

When God moves our hearts, He literally puts them into motion – with plenty of momentum to spare! Clearly, an ongoing appeal to be generous is not required when the heart is stirred. King David knew this, which is why he prayed in [1 Chron 29:18-19](#)

for the continuous stirring of the hearts of his people, and ultimately, the heart of his son and successor, Solomon.

This is why we don't prescribe how much you should give towards this cause, as that would feel more like a forced hand than a moved heart. Rather, check your heart and ask God to do the same ([1 Chron 29:17](#)).

2. They gave willingly

1 Chron 29:9 *"Then the people rejoiced because they had given **willingly**..."*

I personally believe that being *willing* is not exactly the same as *wanting* to do something. Willingness involves the will, and *wanting* depends more on how one feels. A genuine willingness to do something will override those fickle feelings which often become our excuses and reasons *not* to.

The new testament puts it like this:

2 Cor 9:7 *"Each one must give as he has **decided** in his **heart**, not **reluctantly** or under **compulsion**, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

To be reluctant is to be unwilling. This verse also shows us that willingness is clearly a by-product of wholeheartedness.

3. They gave unconditionally

The Bible is clear about sowing, reaping and seeing a return on our faithful kingdom investments – regardless of the resource sown. But it never teaches that we should give with that outcome as our sole motive!

King David is an incredible example to us here. Although David has the desire to build a temple for God, we learn in [1 Chronicles 22](#) and [28](#) that this was not God's will. Instead, it would be his son who will get to do the work. Amazingly enough, **David still gives towards the work, even though he would not live to see it finished.** That's unconditional giving. The irony here is that Solomon eventually became the richest king in his day ([2 Chron 9:22](#)) and could easily have provided for the temple fund without the help of his father David.

May our giving glorify God through generosity that has no strings attached. If we do give with conditions, then strictly speaking it cannot be called a gift! This type of giving brings us to our next point:

4. They gave sacrificially

David starting giving towards the temple long before we arrive at 1 Chronicles 29. On one earlier occasion, David needed to build an altar and offer sacrifices in order to atone for a sin he committed which had put the whole nation at risk. The land which David was on at that stage belonged to a man named Aranuah (also known as Ornan). Aranuah offered his land, wood, grain and oxen to David for free, because after all, David was king. David responded brilliantly: *“No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing.”* (1 Chron 21:24 NIV).

Ultimately, this became the very place where the temple was built! We could argue that David gave 3 times towards this project: From his Kingdom’s resources, from his personal treasury, and even here when he purchased the land years before!

6. They gave cheerfully

*1 Chr 29:9 “Then the people **rejoiced** because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the LORD”*

*2 Cor 9:7 “Each one must give as he has **decided** in his heart, not reluctantly or under **compulsion**, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

Reluctant giving under a heavy burden of compulsion is never a joyous experience. Yet a stirred heart results in willing hands that give unconditionally and sacrificially. Amazingly enough, such a giver is also a cheerful one!

6. They gave faithfully

*1Chron 29:12 “**Both riches and honour come from you**”*

*1Chron 29:14 “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For **all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.**”*

David understood that **whenever we give, we are being faithful with God’s possessions, not ours**. Even the contributions brought to Moses for the building of the tabernacle in Exodus 25 did ultimately not come from the Israelites! They left Egypt as newly liberated slaves, yet God orchestrated for the Egyptians to give the Israelites whatever they asked for and in doing so they *“plundered”* the Egyptians on their way out ([Ex 12:36](#)).

It’s worth noting that before we see Israel giving faithfully towards the building of the tabernacle in Exodus 36, rather than waiting patiently for God to finish his talk with

Moses on a mountain, Israel used their gold to make an idol for instant false worship instead ([Ex 32:1-8](#))! And in the same way, much like the Israelites, we also have 2 options when it comes to our wealth: ***We either worship it, or use it to worship.***

When we faithfully and worshipfully steward God's possessions, it comes with a great promise. In a parable told by Jesus in [Luke 19](#), those who were faithful with the master's money were given authority over *cities*! Jesus said in Luke 16:11 "*So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?*" And it's in this context that Jesus said "...*You cannot serve God and money.*" (Luke 16:13)

As we are faithful with the God-given earthly riches, I believe we'll see God entrust us with true riches: **People who will find and follow Jesus through the radical resourcing and generosity of his people!**

Conclusion

Ultimately, the gospel tells us that God in Christ gave wholeheartedly, and was moved with compassion for us. He gives unconditionally, offering the gift of eternal life freely to those who by faith will believe and receive. He gave sacrificially, literally spending Himself for us. He did it cheerfully, "*for the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross*" (Heb 12:2). And He gave faithfully, fulfilling His promise to redeem us.

As you reflect on the example of David, and ultimately the example of our greater David, Jesus Christ – **I trust you will be moved to give in the same way towards this exciting next season of "building" at City Gates Church!**

If you haven't yet, head out to <http://citygates.ca/90okr> and make your pledge!

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