

THE DONOR

Numbers 6:24-26 "The Lord bless you and keep you! May the LORD make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! May the Lord turn his face upon you and give you peace!"

What do the scriptures say about giving?

God is the ultimate giver!

It is necessary to have the desire to be like God, but without His transforming power, this desire can never be fully realized.

The Father is a wonderful example of a giver in at least three respects:

1. **Salvation**. He, in His immense mercy, has decided **to give His only begotten Son** so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life (Jn 3:16-17). Salvation from hellfire and eternal life cannot be earned by human works, because it is only and exclusively an undeserved gift we receive from God (Eph 2:8-9).
2. **Faith**. Although in (Eph 2:8) God's gift is salvation and faith is the human contribution to accepting that gift, in other passages of Scripture faith (not that necessary for salvation) is portrayed in some way as a gift from the Father: it is written, in fact, that the measure of faith is "assigned" by God (Rom 12:3) and that Christians have been "given" to believe in Christ (Phil 1:29). On the other hand, Peter's own confession of faith had not sprung from the apostle but had been "revealed" to him by the Father (Mt 16:17).
3. **All other good things** are given by the Father or at least can be (Rom 8:32), with particular reference to "those that belong to the Father" to

life and godliness" (2 Pt 1:3), that is, to the relationship with God and with the our fellow human beings. Psalm 84 (Ps 84:11) promises God's children that the Lord will "give grace and glory" and that he will "refuse no good," while the apostle Paul will remind the generous Philippians that God will "supply all your needs according to His riches, and with glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19).

The Son, what a sublime example of a giver! Jesus gave Himself so that we could be saved and filled with His presence! He came to serve men, as Isaiah had prophesied (Isaiah 42:1; 53:3) and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Jesus became man to take the form of a servant (Phil 2:6-7) and to give us an exuberant life (Jn 10:10). He gave gifts to men even after His resurrection (Eph 4:8). The Lord not only showed exceptional liberality: He also taught formidably on this subject. His teachings were of a general nature and even more specific:

1. "Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask from anyone who takes yours from you" (Lk 6:30);
2. "You received free, give free" (Mt 10:8);
3. "Give and it will be given to you" (Lk 6:38);
4. Speaking of the poor, Jesus said that unfortunately they would always be there but, turning to His disciples, He added: "Whenever you want, you can do good to them" (Mk 14:7);
5. In the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus referred to the hungry crowds and said to His disciples: "Give them something to eat!" (Lk 9:13; Mk 10:21);
6. "I leave you peace, I give you my peace; I don't give as the world gives..." (Joh 14:27).

The Holy Spirit, we can emphasize at least three aspects that distinguish

him as a Great Giver:

1. He first "**reveals the deep things of God**" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10), which is the means that the Father uses to reveal to His children the marvelous spiritual realities He has prepared for them.
2. Second, the Holy Spirit is characterized by the fact that He **bestows spiritual gifts** (1 Corinthians 12:1-11), which He "distributes as He wills" v. 11 for effective use for the edification of the church. It is interesting to note that, among the spiritual gifts listed in (Rom 12:6-8) there is also the gift of "giving" v.8: it is characterized by simplicity and unlimited generosity and means that God Himself can provide His children with the ability to give and to be liberal beyond all human expectations. The gift of "giving", for this reason, like all other charisms, is possessed only by a part of believers, even if the principle remains that all believers are called to give and the source of goodness or the intrinsic capacity to be liberal does not reside in us.
3. The "**fruit of the Spirit**" of (Gal 5:22-23) is also a typical gift of the Holy Spirit. What He wants to accomplish in the life of the believer is a multifaceted realization of God's own characteristics: peace, joy, love, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, patience, self-control, and kindness.

How should God's children give?

Giving is not an "option" for the born-again believer, but rather **a commandment of God**, given in the OT (Deut 15:10-11) and clearly reiterated also in the NT by Jesus himself (Mt 5:42; Lk 12:33).

Bestowal is and must be a characteristic of God's children, at whatever time and in whatever place they have lived or are currently living. Liberality is and must be a prerogative of those redeemed by the blood of Christ, a

prerogative willed and loved by God himself (2 Corinthians 9:7; Heb 13:16), which distinguishes them from the pagans (Ps 37:21; 112:9; Pr 31:20).

We cannot expect to receive from God if we are not first willing to give. Certainly the Lord, in His infinite goodness, gives even in the absence of a first step on the part of man, but at the same time He promises His most beloved creature special blessings as a consequence of His liberality.

Here are some of the principles that the Bible lays down regarding the ways in which each believer gives.

1. If there is no love, giving is useless. In giving, we must have God's agape, otherwise "it is of no avail" (1 Corinthians 13:3).
2. In giving, the will of the donor is important. It takes a definite deliberation of heart and mind for which we choose to be generous and to use our money for the glory of God (2 Corinthians 9:7). Money is neutral and is neither good nor bad in itself. They can be used in many different ways (Ec 10:19) and in the Bible we find some splendid examples of this: in the OT, in the case of voluntary offerings for the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex 35:5,21,22,26,29); in the NT, for the episode of the collection for the poor church of Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:2; Rom 15:26).
3. You must always give, without ceasing. In other words, giving subsists regardless of external situations, whether positive or negative. In (Ec 11:6), for example, there is an order from God that concerns sowing in agriculture but also has a spiritual application to Christian liberality: "From the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not lay down your hands; for you do not know which of the two works will succeed better...". If the farmer stopped sowing, he would no longer reap; so we too must always give, without ceasing.
4. One gives according to one's means. This is a principle attested to several times in the New Testament, which does not conflict with the

previous principle: for example, ([Ac 11:29](#)) speaks of the Christians in Antioch who sent a grant to the brothers in Judea, "each according to his powers." Furthermore, the apostle Paul commanded the Corinthians to do the same, "according to the prosperity granted" ([1 Corinthians 16:2](#)) and reminded them again ([2 Corinthians 8:12](#)), when he affirmed by the Holy Spirit that readiness to give is pleasing to God "because of what one has and not because of what he does not have." The underlying reason is obvious: if it is true that all believers are called to give, it is also true that God knows hearts and also wallets, and those who have more should give more ([Ex 35:5](#)).

5. We must [give from the heart](#). It is a complementary aspect with respect to that of the will: biblical giving is the fruit of a heart docile to the commandments

and is the expression of a precise desire to contribute, even economically, to the advancement of the Kingdom of God. In the episode of the offerings for the construction of the Tabernacle, the Lord asked for a "willing heart" from those who wished to contribute to this spiritual work [v.5](#) and the offerings came from "all those whom their hearts impelled and all those whom their spirits made willing" [v.21; v.26,29](#), that is, from men and women united by "a willing heart" [v.22](#).

6. You must [give in secret](#), without ostentation. In Jesus' time, the great Religious gave their alms to be observed and praised by men, but the Lord stigmatized their behavior and commanded His disciples that "the left hand should not know what the right hand does," because all alms must be given "in secret" ([Matthew 6:1-4](#)).

7. You have [to give with simplicity](#). This is a principle highlighted in some biblical passages, such as ([Rom 12:8](#)) "He that gives, let him give with simplicity";

True liberality does not prefer large charity parties or mega-concerts for the Third World; giving according to God's will does not like the complications of today's world and is simple, modest, unpretentious.

8. We must **give with joy**. It is no use to make offerings for the Lord's work if our faces are frowning and our hearts are sad: the Lord of the harvest "loves a cheerful giver" (**2 Corinthians 9:7**), whose generous liberality is not dictated by external constraints but rather is joyful and moved by deep inner convictions. Those who give according to the Bible do not grumble and do not repent but, far from having doubts or perplexities, when they give they have a smile on their lips and joy in their hearts!

9. You have **to give abundantly**. Generosity is another necessary ingredient in true Christian giving, even if it must always be related to the economic substances possessed. In the Old Testament, for example, the people of Israel gave in great abundance for the construction of the Tabernacle (**Ex 36:5**) and for the reorganization of the Levitical cult in the time of King Hezekiah (**2 Chr 31:5**). In the NT, then, the apostle Paul exhorts the Corinthians to "abound in this work of love" (**2 Corinthians 8:7**). The Lord, however, does not exhort His children to give generously only because it "supplies the needs of the saints" (**2 Corinthians 9:12**), but also and even more because it "produces an abundance of thanksgiving to God" and an abundance of prayers with which "God is glorified by the obedience with which you profess the Gospel of Christ" **v.13**.

What to donate?

Following Christ's example, we must first give **ourselves to God and for our neighbor**.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. (**Lk 10:27**).

I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies, which is your reasonable service, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. ([Rom 12:1](#))

For I testify that they willingly gave, according to their means and even beyond their means, begging us very earnestly to accept the gift and to participate in this grant for the saints. And not only did they do as we hoped, but [they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us](#) by God's will. ([2 Co 8:3-5](#))

By this we have come to know love: he gave his life for us; we too must lay down [our lives for our brothers and sisters](#). ([1 Joh 3:16](#)).

No one has greater love than this: to lay down [one's life for one's friends](#). ([Joh 15:13](#)).

[Voluntary offerings for what purposes?](#)

Let us consider at least seven biblical examples on the subject:

1. To provide for [one's family](#).

[1Tim 5:8](#) "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever."

2. For [the service of God](#) in places of worship.

The Old Testament is full of passages that speak of offerings intended for the service of God: the normal conduct of ritual activities in the Tabernacle and, later, in the Temple, would not have been possible without an active economic contribution of the entire people of Israel, with voluntary offerings. Let's see four passages on the subject:

- [Ex 25:1-2](#) The general principle is established that God is pleased with offerings made from the heart, here especially for the construction of the Tabernacle.
- [Ex 35:5,21-29](#) "Each son of Israel offered willingly and from the heart what he could, some in material goods and some in labor, and in the end there was also an excess of offerings, so much so that the rulers were even forced to ask the people to stop the flow of their liberalities ([Ex 36:6-7](#)).
- [Ed 2:68](#) Even during the return to Canaan with Nehemiah and Zerubbabel, some of the leaders of the people gave "voluntary gifts" for the rebuilding of the destroyed Temple.
- [Ed 3:5](#) When they returned to their cities [v.1](#) and the altar of burnt offerings was restored, upon which sacrifices were immediately offered to the Lord [v.2](#), the Israelites who returned to Jerusalem celebrated the feast of Tabernacles [v.4](#) and offered the burnt offerings prescribed by the Law, including those that were not obligatory "of anyone who made any voluntary offering to the Lord" [v.5](#).

Anything that is volunteered today can be used to create or restore a place of worship with everything needed to form a common meeting.

3. [For leaders in the faith.](#)

[1 Tim 5:17-18](#) "Let elders who exercise the presidency well be counted worthy of a double honor, especially those who labor in speech and teaching. For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox that threshes," and again, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

[1 Corinthians 9:9-14](#) For in the law of Moses it is written, "Do not muzzle the ox that threshes." Does God give thought of oxen? That is, does it say all this for us? Surely these things are written for us, for he who ploughs must plough with hope, and he who threshes must thresh with the hope of having what he hopes for. If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it

a great thing if we reap your material possessions? If others have such a right over you, wouldn't we have it much more? But we do not make use of this right, but we endure everything so as not to put any obstacle to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who do the sacred service eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar have a share of the goods of the altar? So also the Lord has commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should live by the gospel.

Gala 6:6 "Now let him who is instructed in the word share of all his goods to him who instructs him."

4. For traveling missionaries.

There are men and women today who give up secular jobs to devote themselves full-time to evangelization and/or other aspects of God's work, they certainly do not have to claim to be supported by others (2 Corinthians 11:9), even though they would have every right to do so (2 Corinthians 9:1), but in reality the initiative to provide for the material needs of the so-called "Samuels 9:1". "full-time servants" must be of other believers (2 Corinthians 11:9). A splendid example of this is the Philippians, who were very generous to the apostle Paul and as a result received precious promises of great spiritual and material blessings from the Lord. Phil 4:19.

Phil 4:15-16 "Now you also know, Philippians, that at the beginning of the preaching of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had any part of me in anything as regards giving and receiving, except yourselves alone, for even in Thessalonica you sent me, not only once, but twice, to provide for my need.

5. For the needy and marginalized.

God's fatherly heart is very sensitive to the material and spiritual needs of God.

who is poor and marginalized: therefore He gave precise orders to Israel

so that he would provide with voluntary offerings for these types of needs, especially if they occurred within the chosen people.

At least four passages of the TA talk about this aspect:

- **25:35** The principle is established for the first time that the "impoverished brother" must be helped and supported by the rich one,

even if the poor person is a foreigner or an adventitious.

- **Deut 15:7-8:11** Here is the general principle of the duty to concretely help the "brother in need": the Israelite was not to harden his heart before a needy person, nor to close his hand, but rather was exhorted to lend and give in order to concretely provide for the material needs of the poor (**Jom 2:15-17**).

- **Deut 16:9-15** "In this passage there is talk of the Feast of Weeks, in which, with voluntary offerings, all the people would rejoice before the Lord, and even the categories of the marginalized (the stranger, the orphan and the widow) would rejoice and eat, taking advantage of the voluntary offerings of the wealthiest Israelites.

- **Pr 19:17** Finally, in the Wisdom Books we also find an exhortation to have mercy on the poor, not only the Jew: he who gives to the needy and offers freely is the recipient of the divine promise that he is giving to the Lord, who will repay him for his good work.

- **1 Jn 3:17-18** "But if anyone has the goods of this world, and sees his brother in need, and closes his bowels to him, how does the love of God dwell in him? My little children, let us not love in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth.

- **Ac 4:32-35** "And the great number of those who believed were of one heart and soul; no one said that what he had was his, but all things were in common with each other. And the apostles with great power bore witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.

For there was no needy among them, for all who owned farms or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of the things sold, and laid it at the feet of the apostles, and it was distributed to each one according to his particular need.

6. For the poor saints of Israel.

Rom 15:26-27 For those of Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make contributions for the poor who are among the saints in Jerusalem. Now it has pleased them to do this, because they are indebted to them; For if the Gentiles have had a share of their spiritual goods, they must also help them in material goods.

7. For one's enemies.

- Those who have not experienced God's love may find strange or utopian what Scripture commands in (Prov 25:21), where it is written: "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, if he is thirsty, give him water to drink...". In this way, the Lord continues, burning coals will be gathered on his head, and the Lord will reward the good work v.22.

- In the New Testament, Christian liberality towards enemies is also provided for, even if a more spiritual character prevails. In (Rom 12:20) the verse of (Pr 25:21) is quoted and Jesus himself, in (Mt 5:44) and in the parallel passage of (Luke 6:27-28), exhorts His disciples to love their enemies, to pray for them and to do good for those who hate them, blessing those who would curse them. A Christian who has this spiritual attitude is likely to have no problem giving even material possessions for his enemies, obeying both (Pr 25:21) and (Rom 12:20).

What are the blessings promised by God to a giver?

In His Word, the Lord commands generosity in giving and bestows wonderful promises of blessing on those who earnestly set out on this path

of obedience. Below we will see the main divine promises in this regard that manifest all the approval of the Lord for His children who give generously.

1. General promises.

God promises in general to **bless every work** undertaken to give generously to his brother in need (**Deut 15:7-10**) and to those who give his bread to the poor (**Pr 22:9**). The generosity shown toward the marginalized and oppressed moves the hand of God, who **heals and answers the prayers** of the generous believer, because He is close to the giver (**Isaiah 58:7-10**).

2. Those who give receive the return from God.

In (**Pr 19:17**) it is written that "he who has mercy on the poor lends to the Lord, who will repay him the good work", while the (**Ps 126:5-6**) reminds us more generally that he who sows seed with tears then reaps with joy. The Lord Jesus himself will say in (**Lk 6:35**): "lend without expecting anything and **your reward will be great**", while in **v.38** he adds: "give and it will be given to you: a good measure will be poured into your bosom, pressed down, shaken and overflowing".

3. He who gives receives in the proportion he gives.

The passage from (**Lk 6:38**) continues: "For with the measure with which you measure it will be measured up to you."

This principle, which is not only "spiritual," is reiterated in (**Galatians 6:7-8**) and especially at (**2 Co 9:6**), where it is written: "He that sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and **he that sowing freely will also reap liberally**."

4. The more you give, the more you prosper.

The Bible speaks truth when it says that when **the Son of God gives in abundance and deprives himself of possessions, instead of impoverishing himself, he will find himself richer** (**Pr 11:24-25**) and will never be in need (**Pr 28:27**).

It is exactly the opposite of what the world teaches, which lies in the evil one; the Lord does not call us to saving for its own sake or to selfishness from the economic point of view, but rather it is written: "Throw your bread on the waters, for after a long time you will find it again. Be part of it to seven and even to eight.." ([Ec 11:1-2](#)). The Christian who gives generously exposes himself to wealth and not to poverty, as the NT teaches in ([2 Corinthians 9:10-11](#)) where we find four promises of God for those who exercise liberality: he will "provide the seed" and also "multiply" it, and he will "increase the fruits of righteousness" so that generous believers will be "enriched in all things", so that they can in turn "exercise a wide liberality". It is the "virtuous circle" of Christian giving, in which the believer gives and then receives from the Lord and in the end gives even more.

5. [Giving produces spiritual fruits.](#)

In the passage of ([2 Cor 9](#)), the apostle Paul states that these spiritual fruits occur both for the giver and for the recipient of the gift: the former [will see the seed provided and multiplied](#) (in the sense of the money spent) but also the fruits of his righteousness [increased v.10](#), while the latter will see his material need satisfied and for this he will thank God abundantly [v.12](#) and will glorify Him for the help he has received [v.13](#).

6. [Those who give infect others.](#)

In ([2 Corinthians 9:2](#)), for example, the apostle Paul praises the readiness of the Corinthians to give for the poor of Jerusalem, also stating that their "zeal has [stirred up very many](#)." There is no doubt: if we too begin to give more and better for God's work, without even realizing it, others will do the same, and Christian liberality will develop even more in our community.

[2 Corinthians 13:13](#) "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Amen.