

**Lesson Title:** Habits of Effective Disciples – Giving

**Key Concept:** When we implement effective habits into our lifestyle, we become closer to God and grow to our full potential in Christ. Giving strengthens our ties to the kingdom and weakens the hold of materialism.

**Scriptures:**

And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

(Acts 20:35 *New Living Translation*)

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!

(Matthew 10:8 *New Living Translation*)

<sup>6</sup>Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. <sup>7</sup>You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

(2 Corinthians 9:6–7 *New Living Translation*)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

(Romans 12:1 *New Living Translation*)

**Context Scriptures:** Exodus 20:17; Esther

**Lesson Thoughts:**

Why must we, as Christians, make giving a priority? It is a powerful weapon in the ongoing struggle with covetousness. It is a natural part of humanity to be

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selfish – think of two-year-olds and toys. Giving breaks the hold greed has on us. We are not just talking about money, although that is a part of giving. Time and talent are also commodities that can be given. In addition to time, talent, and money, we should place our very lives on the altar. Esther is a good example of total dedication, to the point of potential death, for the good of the people of God and his work. Had God not blessed us, we would have nothing to give. So, in giving our time, talent, treasure, and lives to God, we are simply returning what we have first received.

Nature teaches us the lesson of proportionality. The farmer who sows scantily cannot hope to have a large harvest. Musicians who do not invest time in practice will plateau early in their careers. So also for the Christian who neglects to become involved in the work of God. A minimal investment produces a minimal return.

Giving freely is an indicator of life. For example, fruit trees produce fruit available to all without a test of worthiness. Flowers perfume the atmosphere without regard to whether there is anyone around to smell their sweetness. The giving of a disciple is a sign of spiritual life. Pulling back on giving is often an early indicator that one is veering from the path of discipleship.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) In what way is giving important in relation to witnessing?
- 2) Is it important for one member of the body to be more giving than another? Who would that be?
- 3) In what ways can we practice giving?

**Next Lesson:** Habits of Effective Disciples – Contentment

### **Notes and Reflections**

- 1) Read the story of Esther and note the part giving played in the drama starring Esther and Mordecai.
- 2) Read 1 Corinthians 9 and 2 Corinthians 9 and contemplate the parallels between Paul's teachings about payment of workers and giving generously.
- 3) Are there instances in your life when giving has rebounded to you in unexpected ways?