

King David on Giving back to God. 1 Chronicles 29:1-22

Disclaimer: Material from this message was adapted in part from messages found on the Sermon Central website.

Dad was taking his son to McDonald's and for a special treat bought him a large order of fries. While they were sitting at the table, dad reached over to take a couple of fries and was shocked when his son pulled the fries away saying, "No. These are mine!" Reflecting on his son and the fries, dad thought,

- "My son has no idea that I am the source of his fries. I paid for them and the server gave him fries. I am the reason he has these fries."
- "Not only am I the source of the fries, but being the dad, I have the power to take those fries away from him. OR, I can go back to the counter, give the server \$50 and tell him to bury my son in fries."
- "My son doesn't understand, I don't need his fries. I can buy a large serving of my own."
- "As his dad I realized that I didn't want his fries as much as his willingness to share with me."

Can we relate this to our relationship with God?

God sends us gifts, or takes from us, or asks us to share and we pull back and say, "**No, this is mine.**" And God thinks, "*They don't understand, I am the source of everything they have. I have power to give or to take. I don't need their gifts, I want their willingness to share.*"

God wants us to give, to share from our abundance, not because He is needy, but because it is for our growth and good. God wants us to give because in our giving we become more like Him (for God so loved, He gave ...)

Our relationship with God is not contractual, not a hobby (until we find something more interesting), not a convenience, nor just a comfort. It is about experiencing the presence; power; provisions; partnership; and praise of God

As I was researching this morning's Bible story, I had not planned on it being a stewardship message, but an honest teacher must go where the text is leading. And since we are entering the stewardship season along with the approach of that great gifting holiday "HallowKwanzaThankMas," Today, King David's thoughts of giving back to God, seem appropriate and timely.

Since God had prevented him from personally doing so, David spent the final years of his life preparing to have on hand not only all the craftsmen and most of the material that Solomon would need to build God's temple, but also all the priests needed to serve in it. Then, in his last public proclamation, King David challenged all of Israel to join him in also generously giving even more for the Temple's construction. And while doing so, being the person he was, David lifted up a final prayer of thanksgiving for all the blessings with which God had blessed Israel. Inescapably wrapped throughout King David's final proclamation and prayer, was his deep felt desire to gift back to God from the abundance God had gifted him.

*King David said to the whole assembly ... **I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able, the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver,...**³ Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided for the holy house, **I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it to the house of my God***
(29:1-3)

Notice that David had at his disposal two tremendous sources of wealth. Through the years of his reign, he had not only procured an enormous amount of material from other nations and from his conquests which he dedicated for the Temple (22:14-16), but on top of that, he also gifted to it from his own personal wealth: three thousand talents **(110 tons) of gold** and seven thousand talents **(260 tons) of pure silver"** (vv. 3-4), which according to current prices was worth over **6.6 billion dollars**.

David then challenged the leaders of Israel to join with him in "offering willingly" even more for the Temple's construction, to which they added another **13.4 billion dollars**, along with a countless wealth of bronze, iron, wood and precious jewels. I am sure, when it was completed seven years later, that this was truly a magnificent Temple; one of the wonders of the ancient world.

How did that proclamation day end?

The people rejoiced because [all of Israel leaders] had given willingly, for with single mind they had offered freely to the Lord; King David also rejoiced greatly
(29:9) ... *And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king. On the next day they offered sacrifices and burnt offerings to the LORD, a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their libations, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel; and they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great joy* (29:20-22).

Wouldn't you have loved to have been there? Though David would never see God's Temple that he had so long desired to build for God, nevertheless out of his recognition of God's abundant generosity to himself and all of Israel David gave joyfully and generously to make it happen. And then led all of Israel to join him in doing the same. And the people rejoiced. And King David rejoiced in seeing them doing so.

So what lessons might we learn from David's last prayer concerning our own stewardship of God's resources and the art of "offering willingly"?

The first lesson is that our giving of tithes and offerings should flow from our loyalty to God.

David prayed,

*Lord, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts [of free and joyous offering] in the hearts of your people forever, and **keep their hearts loyal to you.*** (29:17-18 NIV) Because our finances are usually one of the last areas that we are willing to turn over to God, our offerings freely and joyously given are the evidence that our hearts are truly loyal to God, A pastor once said, "If God has their checkbook, you know He has their heart."

British explorer Samuel Hearne, who was the first European to reach Canada's Hudson Bay by land, wrote that a few days after they had started on their expedition, a party of Indians stole most of their supplies. His comment on the apparent misfortune was: *'The weight of our baggage being so much lightened, our next day's journey was more swift and pleasant.'* Since Hearne was on a quest of discovery, the loss of a few sides of bacon and a couple of bags of flour meant nothing more than an easing of the load. Had Hearne been holed in somewhere, in a cabin, resolved to spend his last days eking out an existence, and living on capital previously collected, the loss of some of his stores by plunder would probably have worried him almost to death." How we respond to "losing" some of our resources for God's work depends upon whether we are on the move or waiting for our last stand.

Loyalty and love is good, but why should we give? Many would say that they have worked very hard to earn their money and so why should they turn around and give it away to God. They worked for it. They earned it. It belongs to them. But as we delve into David's prayer, we quickly learn that this simply isn't true. If it really belongs to us, we can do with it as we please. But it doesn't really belong to us. **Because Everything Belongs To God.** As David prayed,

Yours, O LORD, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty;
for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours;"
1 Chronicles 29:11.

This is the fundamental flaw in the world views of most people including many Christians: our possessions and our money really belong to God and not to us. Since it doesn't belong to us in the first place we have no right to hoard it for ourselves. As the

term “**STEWARDSHIP**” implies, we have actually been given responsibility for the management of another’s property. In the parable of “One, Two, and Five Talents,” Jesus gave a powerful lesson in our responsibility to wisely manage, improve upon, and then give back, all that God has entrusted to us. (c.f. Matthew 25:14-28)

Because, not only does God own all things, but also everything we have came to us as a gift from God.

David’s prayer continued... *Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. **Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand***’ (1 Chron. 29:12-14 NIV) We give back to God because in reality He is both the owner and gifter of all things. This, David clearly understood. And so should we also realize that when we give we are not giving God what belonged to us, but giving back to God what He had gifted to us in the first place.

For David, his gift given for the Temple was a matter of gratitude. He prayed, “*and now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name*” (v. 13). We are often guilty of viewing the singing and praying as our acts of worship. But our offering is every bit as much an act of worship. In fact, if we sing and pray to God, but do not back this up with giving to God, our songs and prayers mean little.

And did you know that it is not enough to simply give to God, but that there is both a right and wrong way to give? It is important that when we give to God we do it not only for the right reason – acknowledging His rightful ownership – but also in the right way. As David encouraged all of Israel, **our giving back to God should be done willingly and generously.**

David prayed, “*But who am I, and who are my people that we should be able to give as **generously** as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand*” (v.14 NIV). We give generously because God has given generously to us.

Now you heard how generous were David’s and the peoples’ gifts: 6.6 billion of his personal wealth along with another 13.5 billion from other’s wealth. That is some very generous giving. But before you get overwhelmed with those massive numbers remember that they were able to generously give to God because God had given generously to them. The Bible teaches that we should give to God in proportion to how we have been blessed (2 Corinthians 9:6-11). We give to God generously as He has blessed us.

Our giving not only should be generous, but also willing. Would you be able to give as generously and as willingly as the people of Israel, or would you have to be coerced? There are many examples throughout history of kings collecting money from the people by force. But David did not have to send out the army to go collecting at the

point of a sword. "the people rejoiced because [their leaders] had given willingly, for with single mind they had offered freely to the LORD;" (v. 9).

*I know, my God,
that you test the heart
and are pleased with integrity*

David also prayed. *I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people*

who are here have given to you. (v.17 NIV). This is what David then prays might always be the desire of the people; that they would always desire to give to God both generously and willingly.

We have learned why we should give to God and how we should give to God. Now let's consider what we should give to Him.

We should give from our wealth. David and the people gave God their gold, silver, jewelry. They gave to God financially. To be clear part of their financial giving was a requirement as part of their obligation to God. Having placed them in the Promised Land, God let Israel know that the land would always be His, and in their acknowledgement of this they were to faithfully return back to Him a 10% tithe of all they produced (Leviticus 27:30).

So their tithe was not an offering. The tithe was what they contractually owed to God. It was given for the priests use and livelihood. Their offering was what they chose to give above their tithe. David's and their gifts for the temple were offerings given generously and willingly above their tithes.

Now I know a lot of Churches teach that tithing is still a mandate for Christians as it was for the Hebrew people. But honestly, the New Testament writers never mentioned the tithe when asking for offerings from believers. Instead, they taught that such offerings should be done **willingly** and **generously** from the giver's **abundance** to meet **others needs** so that there might be **sufficiency** for all. (2 Corinthians 8:12-15, 9:6-11)

This is the principle I have always followed. While giving at least a 10% tithe in acknowledgement of God's overall ownership is still a worthy goal for us – some can even give far more than that – **the Christian principal of giving back to God is our willing and generous offerings given from our abundance to meet other's needs so there might be sufficiency for all.**

And this of course includes not only our wealth, but also our time and talent.

The people gave gold and silver so that the craftsmen would have the necessary provisions to work with, but the craftsmen were also giving their talent to God. We should be doing the same. You may not think of yourself as particularly talented, but everybody has something they are good at and that they enjoy doing. These are the talents that God has given you and you have a responsibility to give them back to God

by using them in His work. You may think of your talent only as a way to make a living, but you should also see such as a way to do ministry as well.

Of course along with giving our talent must also come our time. If the craftsmen were to give God their talent in constructing the temple, then they were going to have to give Him a good amount of their time as well: apparently it took seven years of their time to build the Temple.

Next to our money, our time is probably our most precious commodity. It seems like we never have enough time. But if we are to give our talent to God, we must also give our time to God. It takes time to prepare for and teach a Sunday School class or Bible study. It takes time to clean the church. It takes time to make repairs. It takes time to minister to our community. Everything takes time and so we must be willing to carve the necessary time out of our busy schedules. God expects us to generously and willingly give Him our offerings, our talents and our time. All this is the sign of our love, loyalty, and gratitude to God for all that He has gifted us. As Jesus taught, this is how we lay up our treasures in heaven. (Matthew 6:19-20).

So, from David's final prayer, what might we take home with us today?

Simply, that David's grateful heart along with his willing, generous offerings might become ours as well.

Let's pray.

Yours, O LORD, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head above all.

Riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all. In Your hand are power and might; and it is in Your hand to make great and to give strength to all. We give thanks to You and praise Your glorious name. For all things come from You.

Dear GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Father of our Savior and Lord, Christ Jesus keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of Your people, and direct our hearts always toward You --Amen.