

Loving Leads To Giving

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

Luke 6:35 (KJV)

Ministers often use verse thirty-eight in this sixth chapter of Luke as a "Scriptural" authority to motivate people to give more than perhaps they planned into offerings they are requesting; "...give and it shall be given unto you...". The greater their need, lends to their urgency to motivate people to give. To many of us (ministers) we think Jesus addressed this subject so we would have an appropriate introduction for our offerings. However, the context (that which surrounds this "giving" text) shows us that Jesus was saying things considerably different than the *narrow* application we often attribute to this passage.

Here is a list of what Jesus was actually saying in this passage:

1. Because we are blessed (as found in verses 20-26) we can give out of the resources of our relationship with God, not simply out of or restricted to the resources of our financial reservoir.
2. Jesus gives us a list of ways to respond to the negatives in the world and people around us.
3. Don't attempt to be self-defensive but respond by giving...
 - a. From hate?...love, bless, and pray for your enemies.
 - b. From mistreatment?...turn your cheek.
 - c. From theft?...give them more than they took.
 - d. From goods not returned?...don't ask for them back.
4. Conversely Jesus encourages us to be proactive in our behavior...
 - a. Give treatment you want before you receive it.
 - b. Love without thanks.
 - c. Lend resources without expecting a return of goods or money.
 - d. Give mercy.
 - e. Don't judge hearts to the point of rejecting the person even though you have identified their misconduct.
 - f. Don't condemn.
 - g. Forgive before apologies are received from offenders.

This is part of Luke's recording of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It's a major challenge for us to comply with, but if we have a willing heart we will be empowered by the Holy Spirit and will succeed in doing what Jesus has instructed us. This is the essence of Kingdom-living instructions for the believer.