

GIVING LIKE JESUS

Those who desire to be Jesus's disciples must endeavor to learn Jesus's teachings and ways and imitate Him by walking as He walked (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:1). One aspect of Jesus's life that must be imitated is the way Jesus gave. Therefore, we must consider the Scriptures that give us insight into the way Jesus gave of Himself and what He had to God and others so we can learn how to walk in His footsteps in the way that we give.

MATTHEW 14:15-21

Jesus saw the physical need of this multitude and had compassion on them. Then, working a miracle, Jesus took five loaves and two fish and fed the entire multitude that had followed Him (5,000 men, plus women and children). Notice how, in this, Jesus gave food to those who were physically hungry. Although disciples of Jesus cannot multiply food today as Jesus did on this occasion, we can still imitate Jesus's example to give from what we do have to help supply the physical needs of people around us (Matthew 25:31-46). Then, Jesus went further with these people and taught that He is the Bread of Life from Heaven who gives eternal life (John 6:32-35). Similarly, giving sacrificially to help the physical needs of people around us can provide opportunities to point them to Jesus as the Source of eternal life!

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Jesus saw the heavy burdens people were under and offered to give them rest. The people had certainly been burdened by sin that they could not escape by themselves. Furthermore, the Jewish people had been burdened with a heavy yoke of tradition placed on them by the religious leaders that they could never satisfy. However, Jesus offered rest for their souls (and ours) through what He gave! Through His sacrifice, rest from sin can be found for those who come to Him. Then, rest from oppressive religious tradition can be found in that He has provided the only way people must follow. Although there is still a yoke and burden, His yoke is easy and burden is light in comparison with

the complicated systems of laws and traditions that people often devise. While we can never provide rest to people's souls like Jesus, we must imitate Jesus's care for those who are weary and burdened by giving of ourselves to point them to the true rest Jesus has made available to all (2 Corinthians 12:15)!

JOHN 17:6-8

Jesus came to this earth giving the words of God (John 12:49-50; 14:10). Although God had spoken to people in this world in various ways in the past, He has now spoken by His Son who is heir of all things and the exact expression of God's nature (Hebrews 1:1-3)! The words Jesus has given us from the Father (recorded in the pages of the New Testament, John 14:25-26; 16:12-15; Ephesians 3:3-7; 1 Corinthians 14:37) are spirit and life (John 6:63), truth (John 17:17), eternal (Matthew 24:35), the standard for our judgments (John 12:48), powerful and effective (Hebrews 4:12), etc. These words are, therefore, crucial to the wellbeing and salvation of our souls! We must commit ourselves to learning and obeying them if we desire to be true disciples of Jesus and have eternal life (John 8:31-32; Matthew 7:24-27). As Jesus sacrificed Himself to give the words of God to mankind, His disciples must also do what they can give God's eternal life-giving words to others today (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2, 24-26)!

JOHN 13:12-17

After Jesus had served His apostles by washing their feet prior to His own betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion, He called attention to what He had ultimately done for them by this act: Giving them an example to follow. While this example was focused on their need to serve each other on this occasion, Jesus gave them many examples throughout His time on earth. In fact, Jesus gave them what many other rabbis at the time would not. This was an example of someone who lived exactly what He taught (Matthew 23:1-4)! Similarly, Jesus calls on His disciples to not just teach the words He has revealed from the Father, but to be the light of the world through the ways in which we live (Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12)!

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

Although this passage does not specifically use the word "give," it does use the word "grace," which refers

to an unearned gift or favor. In the context of this passage, the apostle Paul was urging the Corinthians to give financially to help the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). He encouraged this giving through the example of the disciples in Macedonia, who had given according to and even beyond their abilities (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). Now, he encouraged their giving through the giving Jesus demonstrated. Although He was rich in living in Heaven with the Father, He became poor by coming to this earth and sacrificing Himself so that we (through what He accomplished by His poverty) might become spiritually rich and have eternal life in Heaven! For, Jesus did not come to this earth to be served and given things, but to give Himself as the ransom sacrifice for many (John 10:27-30; Mark 10:45). Similarly, Jesus's disciples are expected to sacrificially give (even when it costs us dearly) to help others who are in need, both physically and spiritually (2 Corinthians 9:6-7; 12:15)!

EPHESIANS 5:1-2

This passage further shows the concept of Jesus sacrificially giving Himself for us by His death on the cross (so that we may be saved from our sins). But, it also demonstrates how this was also a sacrifice that was given to God (Hebrews 9:14). Ultimately, Jesus's sacrifice pleased God. So, rather than God seeing the sins we had committed against Him and His holy wrath burning against us, Jesus's sacrificial gift provides a sweet-smelling offering to God that satisfies His wrath (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-9; 8:3-4)! His earthly life and sacrifice were, thus, committed to being given to God. Therefore, Jesus has left the perfect example of sacrificially giving ourselves to do the will of the Father, even when it results in suffering on this earth (Galatians 2:20)!

CONCLUSION

Imitating Jesus requires that you give like Jesus gave. Although there is much more that could be discussed, we have seen Jesus's giving demonstrated toward both God and other people. Ultimately, He gave Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of mankind to please to the Father and to provide us with the way to eternal life in Heaven. Therefore, disciples of Jesus must sacrificially give themselves to do God's will and serve others both physically and spiritually!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

How did Jesus give to the 5,000 men, plus women and children?

How has Jesus given to those who are weary and burdened?

How has Jesus given God's words?

How has Jesus given an example to follow?

How has Jesus given in connection with His own poverty?

How has Jesus given Himself both for us and to God?

What does Jesus's example teach you about giving to others?

What does Jesus's example teach you about giving to God?

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