

## THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: *Giving for the Tabernacle*

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### Give and Give

*Bill Brinkworth*

God had just given Moses the instructions for the construction of the first “church,” the Tabernacle. It was to be a beautiful place. It was a “tent” and very portable, as it would be taken up and down as the people of Israel followed God through the wilderness.

Although the tabernacle was a tent, it was a holy dwelling place for God. It would be richly laden with gold, silver, weavings, and precious stones. The place of worship would be a monument honoring God.

“Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord... (Exodus 35:5)” commanded God of His people.

The people of Israel had been delivered from the cruel clutches of the Egyptians. They had seen God open the sea so they could walk through it on dry ground! God’s people saw the pursuing enemy drowned by the waters that had been their escape route.

The Hebrews had seen the sky darken and the Earth shake as their leader, Moses, ascended a mountain to meet with God. They saw and felt the Earth tremble as Moses talked with God.

Israel felt the fury of God when they displeased Him. God was very real and wonderful to them. What a wonderful opportunity God’s people had to obey their heavenly Father and give back to Him!

So, the people gave and gave. Animals were skinned, and the hides were prepared for the Tabernacle’s outer coverings. Oil was readied for the tabernacle’s lighting. Wood was hewn. Gold and silver were collected and crafted. Furniture was constructed.

Women labored over weaving looms. Men collected precious stones and polished them. The people had a mind to work. All continued to give of themselves and their possessions with which God had richly blessed them.

Rich men contributed. Leaders donated. Socially important men and women shared. Families sacrificially offered what they could. Poor men and women gave.

What a sight it must have been to see the pile of goods given to the service of God continue to grow. How it must have felt to feel the air of unselfishness and zeal amongst God's people.

One day, Moses stepped out amongst the people and commanded their attention. "... Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary ... for the stuff we have is sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Ex. 36:6). The people were restrained from giving as they gave more than enough!

Oh, Christian, if only we would have the same spirit of giving today. Many today stop short when giving has anything to do with their pocketbooks.

There is not one person who has anything that God has not given or allowed them to have. Still, it is hard for people to give.

"Well, God had nothing to do with the new car I have sitting in my garage," retort some. Not true. God blessed them with the job to earn the money to buy it. He allowed them to have the health to be able to work. Their heavenly Father blessed them with the intelligence to learn the skills that enabled them to earn money.

King Nebuchadnezzar once said almost the same thing. He was proud of what he had done and gave God no credit for his accomplishments.

Within one hour, God removed the leader's intelligence. High and mighty King Nebuchadnezzar was not so high and mighty any longer. He ate grass and crawled on all fours like cattle.

The once powerful ruler stayed that way for four years. After finally recognizing that God had used him in doing all the marvelous things, God restored his sanity, and he became the leader again.

Do not learn the hard way, as did Nebuchadnezzar. If you have anything, it is through God's blessing. Be a cheerful giver and give unto the Lord. The most you can give is only part of what He has allowed you to have anyway.

We are responsible for being good stewards with our money, helping others, and seeing that the Gospel is carried throughout the country and world. You can give of yourself, talents, time, and money to see that God's will and way are accomplished. He could do it Himself, but he chose to allow us.

We also have the opportunity now to give and give. Would it be wonderful for our spiritual leaders to get us to stop giving because we had given too much? Oh, for giving hearts, as Israel once had.

**“It is possible to give without loving, but it is impossible to love without giving.”**

— Braunstein

## **Before Anyone Gave**

*Bill Brinkworth*

After fleeing Egyptian slavery, one of the most significant accomplishments of Israel was building the Tabernacle. That portable tent was a God-designed place of worship for the over two million refugees seeking a new land God had promised them.

All gave to support the monumental task that was to be laden with gold, silver, woven materials, and other materials (Exodus 35:5-19). However, giving did not come naturally to those people. Before they would provide, a change had to be made in their hearts.

Their leader, Moses, gathered the people together and pronounced they would head to a new land of great wealth and opportunity, but God would not lead them. Moses highlighted their sin as a reason for God's not guiding them. He said they were a “stiffnecked people” (Ex. 33:3, 5, 34:9).

Their stubbornness and hard-heartedness cost them God's protection, provision, and other blessings. They immediately knew what angered God. It was their clinging to ornaments (jewelry) they had brought from their bondage in Egypt. What in particular about their adornments was sin is not clear. The decorations were somehow tied to Egyptian idolatry and false worship.

God had them gather these treasures from Egypt in the first place for His pre-known purpose of decorating the Tabernacle. Most likely, the pagan etchings and engravings on the rings, earrings, bracelets, and necklaces depicted idolatrous images they were to flee from, not covet.

Israel removed their jewelry (Ex. 33:4,6), which was a remnant of their ungodly past. The realization that they were still hanging on to the old world and life they had been delivered from broke their hearts (they “mourned” – Ex. 33:4).

Turning from their sin changed their heart about giving. Those “treasures” of ungodliness lost their luster and value. The things became a tool to glorify God.

People then gave so willingly that Moses did what every pastor dreams of doing; he commanded Israel to stop giving as what they had given was “sufficient” (Ex. 36: 5-7) for the task God had for them. It is also recorded that they not only gave the valuables they were allowed to have while in Egypt, but many gave themselves to the task of building the place of worship.

This remarkable change in heart was all because they recognized their sin and desired to flee from its clutching grasp on their lives. When they truly repented, their giving and service to the Lord were given more willingly (Ex. 35:21, 22, 29).

Hearts were changed as their selfish priorities changed. They were more united because they now had one important goal, and they accomplished what God had for them to do.

Too many today also have barriers that will keep them from living for God and serving Him. It may be the pull on their lives of coveting, idolatry, dishonesty, or another sin. They may have moments of “religious” activity, but a relationship between them and the Lord is missing.

Unless sin is recognized, confessed, and repented of, people will not have the Lord’s leading in their lives. Not until they get to the place of being grieved over the waywardness from obedience to God will anything change. It is never too late to have the right change of heart! It will change many things, including one’s giving.

**“The manner of giving is worth more than the gift.”** — *Corneille*