

# **“Giving and Receiving”**

## **Part One**

The Apostle Paul quoted Jesus in Acts 20:35 when he said: *“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

During the Christmas season, when we think of giving, we usually think about giving gifts to others, always hoping to find that “perfect” gift for someone. I think more often than not, as our families age, we find gift cards to be the best gift, allowing the recipient to choose something themselves, which is somewhat impersonal, but sure saves us all some frustration, and makes for fewer returns.

Going back to what Paul said, I think the Lord would like us to consider a different kind of giving - the giving of ourselves, and not just to the poor and needy, but to our families, in our workplace, our schools, our neighborhoods, and in the church, and I believe the Lord is not merely talking about what is “expected” of us.

Dads (and often Moms) are expected to work, and then at home they hopefully share in the cooking, cleaning, laundry and other duties around the house, as well as helping their children with homework and sharing in parenting and discipline duties. Kids are expected to go to school every day and do their homework in the evening and are also expected to help in some way with household chores.

So here’s a thought as we enter the Christmas gift giving season - why not do unto others more than is expected of us?! Only giving what is expected of us is simply a duty, giving “above and beyond” is a blessing - for everyone! What might happen if we would give our spouse, our kids, or our parents more of our time? More of our (undivided) attention. More genuine interest in what they are saying or feeling? More respect and honor? More appreciation and less criticism?

In John 15:13, Jesus said: *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”* Hey - what might happen if we gave Jesus more than the basic minimum requirements? More of our hearts? More of our undivided and uninterrupted attention? *“Give, and it will be given to you...for with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*(Luke 6:38)

I believe God is saying to us if we will learn to lay our lives down for others, denying self and taking up the cross of Christ daily, we will begin to see a gradual, wonderful transformation in our lives, and we will truly begin to understand what Jesus meant when He said *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* Amen!