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# Words of Truth

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## **Saints Should Not Do Things Only If There Is Something To Gain**

*By: Brian A. Yeager*

There is a very old fact that has been true for many generations of mankind. When people have something to offer to others they are often well-liked. Solomon wrote: *“The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends... Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour”* (Proverbs 14:20 and Proverbs 19:4). If you foolishly want to be surrounded with “friends”, who are takers rather than givers, make sure you have something to offer them. Again, Solomon wrote: *“Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts”* (Proverbs 19:6).

In addition to that, you have “do-gooders” that only do good if they have something to gain in return. Jesus had to address this mindset when He was walking this earth. Notice what He taught: *“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 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. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful”* (Luke 6:31-36).

We know the world is wicked (I John 5:19). We know that we must not pattern our lives after what we see in this world (I Corinthians 3:18-19, Colossians 3:1-4, and James 1:26-27). We know that we are to pattern our lives after our Lord, as revealed through His word (Luke 4:4, Luke 11:28, John 6:63, and I John 2:3-6). As we study through the Scriptures, do we learn that we should be doing good things only if we can gain something carnal in return?

### **It Is Better To Give Than To Receive**

When Paul was visiting with the brethren in Ephesus, He said this: *“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35). Do you think Paul was just an exceptional person with a higher than expected mentality? Was he just super special in his thinking? Was he higher than the expected standard? The answer to all three of these questions is: NO!

The words of Paul are consistent with many Scriptures found in the Law of Moses and in the Law of Christ. Notice a few: *“If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth... I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed... A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour... And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise... Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just... Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth”* (Deuteronomy 15:7-8, Psalms 37:25-26, Psalms 112:5-9, Luke 3:10-11, Luke 14:12-14, and I John 3:16-18).

After reading through the Scriptures above, you should see that God wants His people to be selfless givers. Looking out for the well-being of others is what we learn when we study about our Lord (Philippians 2:3-8). What will you do with this brief study? Believing it, as it is the truth, is not enough. You have to believe it and do it as you are able (James 2:14-26).

### **Conclusion**

All of the benefits we shall receive for our good works are ahead of us (Romans 6:22-23, Titus 3:7-8, I Peter 1:3-9, I John 2:25, and Jude 1:21). Therefore, we should not have one hand out to help, with the other hand out ready to receive a return on that help. If you study through the Scriptures you will find that your obedience to the Lord's will is what will determine your reward or punishment (John 12:48). Part of that Judgment will be whether or not you were willing to give, with qualifiers (i.e. II Thessalonians 3:10); to those whom you have had the means and opportunity to help (Matthew 25:31-46 and Luke 10:25-37). So, there is much to gain if you are a giving person. There is much to lose if you are a giving person only if you can materially gain from your good deeds.