

It Is More Blessed to Give . . .

What can you give the person who has everything?

Claudia was troubled.¹ The year's biggest celebration was coming and she had no gift to give her host family. An exchange student from a Europe still struggling to rebuild after World War II, her wealthy host family seemed to her to have everything in the world anyone could ever want.

What can you give people who already have everything?

Her host family had been so kind and generous to her. She knew in the up-coming celebration they would shower her with gifts as they did their own children. What did she have to offer people who had no needs and could buy for themselves anything that struck their fancy?

The big day drew closer and closer. Finally, two days before, Claudia knew just what



she could do. Taking a bus downtown, she went to a nice department store and bought the prettiest baby dress her money could buy and had it gift-wrapped. Leaving the store, she approached the doorman and asked, "Pardon, but you know where I can find where poor family live?"

He looked at her askance and turned away. She approached a policeman.

"A poor family? You don't want to go there, miss. That part of the city isn't safe. You go on home now and have a nice holiday."

New York City is busy at any time of year and two days before a major holiday is no exception. Claudia felt very alone as busy shoppers rushed past. She began walking not knowing where to go next to finish her plan, worried that she would fail.

After awhile, she came to streets that were not as affluent as those she had been used to since coming to America. Here, the buildings were more run down; the people, not so nicely dressed. She heard the tinkling of a bell and, to her relief, saw a man in a red uniform ringing a bell next to a Salvation Army offering bucket. She knew the Salvation Army. They were in Europe, too.

Hesitant, shy, fearful of being rebuffed again, Claudia approached the man. "Pardon, but you know where I can find poor family?"

The man, a kindly grandfather sort, sensed there was more to the question. At his encouragement, her words, in stumbling English, fell on sympathetic ears.

The Salvation Army officer understood. "Yes, I do know a poor family. Too many, in fact. My shift is almost over. If you can wait a few minutes, I will take you to one."

Hailing a taxi cab a little while later, the man gave directions to a tall tenement building. It certainly was poor. Claudia had not known such poverty even existed in America. The Salvation Army officer got out and held the door open for Claudia. She shook her head.

"No. Please, *you* take gift to them. It is not mine to give. Please explain: it is gift from someone who has everything."

The cabbie drove her safely home but would not let her pay for the fare. He had listened to their conversation and was a man of understanding as well.

The big day of celebration arrived. The piles of presents did not disappoint. Claudia, as she had expected, received many generous gifts. When all had been opened, shyly, hesitantly, she tried, in her halting English, to explain why there appeared to be no gift from her.

"Please understand. I want to give you very *special* gift. But you have so much already. You need nothing I can give. Nothing *I* can buy can show my thank you from my heart for all you do for me. So, I buy prettiest baby dress I can find and give it to very poor family. They need much. I give it in *your* name. Is gift from *you*."

The gratitude of the poor family was for *them*, Claudia explained, not her. This was her gift to them, who had everything.

Silence enveloped the room. Tears stood in the eyes of her host family. The beauty of her love gift was remembered long after Claudia returned home and continued on, as it inspired them to “go and do likewise” in the years to come.

A heart that loves, wants to give. Gratitude for love received finds its expression in giving in return.

But what do you give the one who has everything?

Yahuwah has everything. In fact, He is the *source* of everything! What can a human give his Creator when everything is His to begin with?

Yahuwah Himself has told us the sort of gift He values most:

Pure and undefiled religion before Yahuwah Elohim is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (See James 1:27.)



Yahuwah does not need a new shirt. He has no use for a book, a watch or the latest computerized gadget. The gifts Yahuwah cherishes are those gifts He would give were He on earth: loving, kind deeds; words of cheer and encouragement; food and clothes for those who need them; heavenly truths for the hungry soul. “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” (Matthew 25:40, NKJV)

Anything that is done to relieve the suffering or the ignorance of another is accepted by Yahuwah as a personal gift, given to Him. Yahushua assured: “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to . . . [Me], assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” (Mark 9:41, NKJV) Even alleviating someone’s thirst, is accepted as done for Yahuwah!

The reason is simple: Yahuwah and Yahushua *feel* everything felt by Their earthly children. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are.” (Hebrews 4:15, KJV) Therefore, if someone is suffering hunger, Yahuwah *feels* the pangs of hunger as well. A gift of food provides relief from the pain felt by the hungry person which, in turn, relieves the pain Yahuwah feels when one of His children is suffering.

Words of hope and faith spoken to encourage a troubled, hurting soul, eases the emotional pain felt by Yahuwah when one of His children is sad and discouraged. Probably the greatest gift of all that can be given is the knowledge of truth. Multitudes are living in sorrow and the blindness of error and superstition. Giving them the gift of truth, so that they can rejoice in Yahuwah’s salvation and be saved into His eternal kingdom, is a gift especially treasured by the Heavenly Father.



It is important for people who home church and have no organized structure to which to give their monies to understand the *principles* of returning tithes and offerings. WLC does not accept tithes or offerings and if a person has no church affiliation, it can be hard to know what to do with such funds. There are a number of ways one can return to Yahuwah what is His – even when one is home churching.

There is a difference between *tithes* and *offerings*. **Tithes** are given to Yahuwah for the express purpose of advancing His work on earth, either in the support of His servants, or in the spread of the gospel. **Offerings**, on the other hand, are gifts given to Yahuwah, out of gratitude and love. These love-gifts may take a variety of forms and include much more than money.

Offerings

Yahushua was not just our Redeemer. He was also our example of how to live. He was the world’s greatest teacher, but before teaching the people the truths of salvation, He first met the *physical* needs of the people. He healed their diseases, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, relief to the demon possessed, and courage to the faint of

heart. When needed, He even provided food for them! Once their hearts were warmed with gratitude, the people were more open to hearing the words of divine truth He wanted to share.

In following His example, it is perfectly acceptable for believers to use their offerings in alleviating suffering around them. Scripture is full of admonishment to show mercy and kindness to those in need.

Thus says Yahuwah of hosts: Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. (See Zechariah 7:9, 10.)

If you know an elderly man who does not have enough to eat, a gift of food to help him in his distress, is an offering of love Yahuwah delights to receive. It was the custom of devout Israelites to take food to beggars on the sixth day of the week so that their wants could be met and they would not have to beg over the holy hours of the Sabbath.

If there is a single mother struggling to support her children, gifts of winter coats and boots that meet a specific need are an acceptable offering to Yahuwah, for when the distress of His earthly children is comforted, His own suffering with them is comforted.

Yahuwah's heart of love is always touched whenever there is suffering. His attention is focused on those in need, and anyone who works to alleviate that need, works with Yahuwah and the gifts thus given, are truly offerings given to Him.



He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Yahuwah; and that which he hath given will He pay him again. (See Proverbs 19:17.)

A gift is different than a loan. A gift is given without any expectation of return. A loan, on the other hand, is merely lent for a specified period of time with the expectation that it will be returned to the owner at a later date. It is impossible to out-give Yahuwah. He is the source of all generous giving. Offerings given to the poor and needy are considered

by Yahuwah to be a loan. He will make sure that the giver is never left in want, but will more than restore anything given to help another. Yahuwah even keeps an accounting of food and hospitality that is given to bless His saints, and will make sure the giver receives a full reward. “He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.” (Proverbs 22:8, KJV)

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”² These words have lost none of their force through the lapse of time. Our Heavenly Father still continues to place in the pathway of his children opportunities that are blessings in disguise; and those who improve these opportunities find great joy. “If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and . . . [Yahuwah] shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”³

To his faithful servants today . . . [Yahushua] says, “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” No act of kindness shown in his name will fail to be recognized and rewarded. And in the same tender recognition . . . [Yahushua] includes even the feeblest and lowliest of the family of . . . [Yah].⁴

In our modern world, it is easy to take too limited a view on just what constitutes “tithes and offerings.” It is easy to think that unless it is *money* given to support an *organization* it cannot count as tithe or offering. However, this is not consistent with Scripture.

Ancient Israel was an agrarian society: the people were, for the most part, farmers, ranchers and shepherds. Tithe could be paid in animals, jugs of oil, bushels of fruit, bags of grain or barrels of flour. Offerings could be anything one desired to give Yahuwah.



A woman who was good with needlework, could embroider a fine piece of cloth, or weave something on her loom. When her family traveled to the tabernacle for the Feast of Tabernacles, her husband might bring bags of grain as tithe on the increase of his

farm, but she could also bring a personal offering: a love gift to show her gratitude to Yahuwah for His blessings throughout the year.

Because not everyone could travel every year to Jerusalem for the feasts, allowance was also made for those who, for whatever reason, could not make the journey. A second tithe was saved for the express purpose of hosting the poor in one's own home for an annual feast. Yahuwah cares for the poor, the sick and the elderly. He made provision for all to share in the blessings of the feasts.

Those who were too poor to bear the expense of traveling to Jerusalem could still enjoy the blessings of a bountiful harvest and the spiritual feast by accepting the hospitality of those who had more. Thus, the entire Hebrew economy was based on a system of generosity and helping the poor and needy. Such gifts, although not monetary, were considered offerings and were accepted by Yahuwah as gifts given to Him.

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse. (Proverbs 28:27, KJV)

Tithes

Unlike offering, tithe is not a gift one gives to Yahuwah. Tithe already belongs to Him! In fact, *everything* belongs to the Creator. He owns it all because He made it all!

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith . . . [Yahuwah] of hosts.
But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

Will a man rob . . . [Yahuwah]? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say,
Wherein have we robbed thee? *In tithes and offerings.* (Malachi 3:7, 8,
KJV)

Yahuwah graciously allows us to use 9/10s of everything He gives us. His only request is that we return 1/10 to Him. While offerings may be any gift given in love to Yahuwah, in the person of His saints, tithe is for the express purpose of advancing His truth in the earth.

This can be done by supporting His servants directly; either with money, food, or whatever else one has that can provide for their support in their work of spreading the gospel. Tithe can also be returned in a number of other ways. Any expenditure that supports the spread of truth qualifies as giving tithe. This includes purchasing Bibles and other spiritual materials to be shared with others.

Those who do not have their own printers, can return their tithe by printing off truth-filled articles at Internet Cafés and having them copied at copy shops. These can then be shared with others. The WLC Store also has a section of Truth Sharing Tools that can be useful for spreading truth, as well. The work of salvation can be greatly advanced if all who have tithe would put it directly into the work of advancing truth within their own circle of influence.



Yahuwah has promised to bless *abundantly* those who return to Him the tithe that belongs to Him.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith . . . [Yahuwah] of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith . . . [Yahuwah] of hosts.

And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith . . . [Yahuwah] of hosts. (Malachi 3:10-12, KJV)

Yahuwah has promised a *supernatural* blessing on all who trust Him enough to unselfishly return to Him tithes and offerings. No one should feel that his tithe is too small to count, or that her gift will not make a difference. It is Yah who gives the increase! (1 Corinthians 3: 6, 7) Regardless of the work one does, or the amount of tithes and offerings he returns, Yahuwah looks upon the heart, and in proportion to the desire of the giver, He supplies the increase.

A small gift, given from a pure heart of love, in humble faith, will receive a greater reward than thousands of dollars given from a motivation of self-seeking and pride.

Yahushua wanted to make sure everyone understood this point. One day, as He was in the Temple with His disciples,

He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites.

So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for . . . [Yahuwah], but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." (Luke 21:1-4, NKJV)

The wealthy who were giving a lot of money, had plenty of money left over. The poor widow had only two mites to give. However, she gave more than all the rest put together, because she "put in all the livelihood that she had." In other words, the small amount of money that she had to sustain her for that day, was what she gave: she gave *everything*.



As a result, her reward will be that much greater than the wealthy who put in a lot, but had much more left over. Someday in Heaven, the Saviour will show her what was the result of her unselfish giving: missionaries and doctors were sent to all parts of the world, hospitals were built, schools and orphanages were supported. What began as a tiny trickle with two mites, grew and

grew until it swelled into a mighty ocean of benevolence and generosity, all inspired and made possible by her example of self-forgetful giving. How *great* will be her reward!

What is in *your* hand? What is in your power to return to Yahuwah? The *form* of the love-gift does not matter. The *amount* of the tithe makes no difference. All that counts is the love that prompts the gift. All that matters is the desire to work with Yahuwah in spreading His truth.

Not even the smallest gift will fail of receiving an abundant return. Great will be the reward of all who give of what they have to the Master.

¹ Name has been changed to protect privacy.

² Hebrews 13:2

³ See Isaiah 58.

⁴ E. G. White, "The Reward of Hospitality," *Review & Herald*, August 28, 1913.