

Back Up!

Wait A Minute! Back Up!

"...Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over..." (Luke 6:38)

As a pastor, I have often heard people ask, "I have given and given and given through the years. Why have I seen so little in return?" Dedicated tithers and givers have struggled with little or no harvest in their financial life. They question, "Doesn't the Bible say if we give, it will be given back to us?" The answer is "Yes".

But let's back up a bit and get a running start with verse 38 by looking at Luke 6:35. The thought of this passage actually begins at verse 35 with the teaching to *"love your enemies."* Love toward friends is often not difficult. But love toward our enemies takes a great deal of faith. This is the true love of Jesus. He loved His enemies so much He died for them. If Jesus so loved the world and we have His Spirit living inside us, we can love our enemies too! The purpose of the Holy Spirit in us is for us to shed the love of God from our hearts toward others.

Secondly, in verse 35, we are told to *"do good"*. This refers to the daily production of good works in our life. James told us that faith that stands alone is dead. Good works should accompany our faith. Our light is to be seen by the world, not just by God Himself.

Thirdly, in the same verse we are told to *"lend, hoping for nothing."* How many people out there owe you? You loaned them something and they have never given it back. Forget it. Forgive them. God will take care of you. God's return is far greater than the few dollars or possessions they owe you. A heart of peace will always accompany the person who forgives his debtors. Once the weight of unforgiveness is gone, a good night's sleep will be the result.

Verses 36 and 37 tell us we are to *"be merciful"* and *"judge not"*. Instead of rising up with a critical attitude, be merciful to those who have spitefully used you. This

can be tough. A critical heart never hurts the person you are angry with; it can only hurt you. Treat those who have hurt you with mercy and you will fulfill Proverbs 25:22 by heaping coals of fire on your enemy's head. Those coals are the fire of conviction that will touch their lives when they see your attitude of forgiveness.

“Condemn not” and “forgive” are the next commandments. Both your mouth and your heart are connected in this thought. Let your attitude and words be gracious as you forgive others. Forgive them and then act like they are forgiven. Forgive as you would want to be forgiven.

Let's put this all together to find God's plan for financial prosperity. *“Love your enemies, do good, lend, be merciful, judge not, condemn not, forgive...give and it will be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over shall men give into your bosom.”* With your life in order, how could you *not* prosper?

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