

When Giving, Include the Three R's

While motivations and amounts of giving differ greatly with each believer, giving opportunities and patterns can generally be recognized by the three R's—required, responsive and revelation.

Required Giving. Required giving represents a covenant amount we have entered into with God and God with us. The Bible is clear and unequivocal about this type of giving. Malachi 3:8 says, “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings.”

Obedient giving is a discipline that needs to be taught to our children, preached from the pulpit and put into practice. Many believers struggle with discipline in their Christian lives. Discipline in finances should include a tithe of all our increase, no matter how great or small. It becomes the foundation for good stewardship and giving opportunities.

Responsive Giving. God often impresses upon us to respond to a particular need. Missionary support, benevolence and scholarships are all forms of responsive giving and are ways to share with others what God has blessed us with. We may even make a responsive gift “sacrificial” by giving up something to respond to expressed needs.

Luke 6:29-30 says, “If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back” (NIV). Responsive giving must be preceded by the discipline of required giving. The theology that states “I will give when I want, where I want” is unbiblical and interrupts the flow of God’s blessings. On the other extreme, some disciplined tithers never experience the joy and freedom of responsive

giving other than “token” amounts.

Revelation Giving. Revelation giving can be defined as committing more than your known available resources. God impresses you to commit “more than you can afford.” This adventure may mean giving an ever-increasing percentage of your income: 10 percent, 20 percent, 30, 40 or even 50 percent.

Revelation givers have experienced the absolute joy of progressing in their giving far beyond what they ever dreamed possible. Faith promises for missions or capital campaign pledges for church facilities are expressions of revelation giving, challenging us to step out in faith as God reveals to our hearts to commit more than we can afford over one, two or even three years.

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-3a, the Bible teaches, “And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.”

What an example! Required and responsive giving must precede revelation giving. A life undisciplined with tithing will rarely (if ever) experience the faith journey of revelation giving. Someone who has never responded and given to special needs will usually not step out in revelation giving.

Our stewardship lifestyle should include these three R’s—required, responsive and revelation giving. Let me challenge you to go beyond the discipline of the tithe and experience the heartfelt joy of responding to the needs of others and witnessing God’s provision through revelation giving.

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