

11-14

SEASONS OF GIVING 3: Giving Back to God

What does it mean to 'give' to God, how can we give back to God?

In this session we are looking at the idea of giving back to God and what God might ask of us and what we can practically do about it.

ACTIVITY 1

1. On a scale of 1-10, how good of a gift giver do you think you are? Why?
2. Have you ever given a gift that you were particularly proud of?
3. At Christmas, is there anyone you buy for? Who?
4. Have you ever thought of giving God a gift at Christmas? Why/why not?

The idea of giving God a gift might seem a little strange. Sometimes the Bible talks about 'giving' to God and 'giving back to God'. In the Old Testament, people would literally give God some of their crops, animals, wine or many other things as a form of worship.

Equally, we can give things to God as a form of worship, thankfulness and expression of our love to Him (although it looks a bit different now to what the Israelites did).

In this session we'll be looking at this idea of giving back to God who gives us so much in more detail. We'll think about what we can give Him and what He might ask of us.

ACTIVITY 2

Read Psalm 116:12

What shall I return to the LORD

for all his goodness to me?

1. What are some things that God has done for us? What can we be thankful for?
2. Can you think of anything you might be able to give God?
3. What sort of things do you think He might ask of us?

ACTIVITY 3

Read Luke 18:18-23

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

¹⁸ *A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

¹⁹ *“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and mother.’^[a]”*

²¹ *“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.*

²² *When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

²³ *When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.*

1. What are your first thoughts about this story? What do you think it's saying?
2. In the story, the rich young ruler asks Jesus what is required of him, but he doesn't like the answer. Have you ever found that you didn't like what

someone told you even though you asked? (Eg. Asking parents what you can do to help around the house etc)

3. Why do you think the rich young ruler walked away sad?
4. Why do you think it was hard for the rich young ruler to give up his wealth?
5. Think of your most prized possession or something that means a lot to you. How would you feel if God asked you to give that up in order to follow Him? (then ask...what if you knew for certain it would definitely be worth it?)

In this story we see the ruler asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus replies and the man says he is already doing those things. Jesus then says he should sell everything he has and give to the poor and he will have treasure in heaven. This is when the man walks away sad.

All good things come from God and we see here a conversation about eternal life – all that Jesus offers us has infinite value. Yet in this story we see a man who, in his heart, has placed more value on his wealth than on following God.

This story is not about us selling every single thing we have to follow Jesus but reminds us to value God above all else, in a way that other things don't matter as much to us as our faith in God. Sometimes God asks things from us because he knows they get in the way of a totally free relationship with Him, but it is also the way to true joy and freedom.

Following God is not easy, but it is worth it. The question is 'are we prepared for what God might ask us to give Him?'

WATCH

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyXe25LycY>

ACTIVITY 4

Read Romans 12:6-8

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

This verse talks about a different kind of gifts. The kind that are more to do with who we are, our personalities, our skills, our talents and what we enjoy doing. Who you are is a gift. You are a unique creation that has much to offer the people and the world around you.

However, it's up to you to choose to use all of who you are and what you can do for God. By using the gifts God has given us we are giving back to God. We can do this as a sign of worship but also an expression of our thankfulness and love to God.

What does Romans 12:6-8 tell you about what you should do?

- Write down 2 ways you think you would be able to share the news about Jesus. Maybe ask others to help you come up with ideas of what your gifts may be, sometimes its hard to see these in ourselves.

PRAY

Spend time quietly with God thinking about the people you know who don't know Jesus. Ask God to help show you how you can use your special gifts to share the news of Jesus.

How about writing the names of these people down and popping them up somewhere so you can think and pray about them every time you see their name, (short one sentence prayers are fine).