

14-18

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 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, honor your father and mother.’^{1a}”

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 it was hard for the rich young ruler to give up his wealth?
4. 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?)
5. Have you ever felt like being a Christian has asked too much of you? Or has meant you've had to do things you didn't want to? Why/why not?
6. Do you think it's worth giving things to God?

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 3

Read Psalm 24:1, 1 Corinthians 10:26

Psalm 24

*¹ The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;*

1 Corinthians 10:26

²⁶ for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.

These verses tell us that everything on the earth is God's. All the people we know, the places we live, the things we own, even us!

1. Think of everything you have and own in your life. Does it change how you view them knowing that they're God's?
2. How do you think it would affect how we live if we remembered everything on earth belongs to God?
3. If God created everything and is technically ruler of everything – why do you think He might be pleased when we give to Him?

ACTIVITY 4

Read the verses below, as you do think about what God is asking us and what we could do to give to God bases off the verse.

- **Micah 6:8**

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly^[a] with your God.

- **Romans 12:1**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

- **Hebrews 13:15-16**

¹⁵ Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. ¹⁶ And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

ACTIVITY 5

When we have a gift we are able to use it. We know...it sounds obvious! But, when you get chocolate you can eat it, when you get paint you can create a picture and when you get an Xbox you can play video games. Although, it's totally up to you if you decide to use it or not. And what you cannot do, is use a gift or item that you haven't been given and do not own. However, what is in your possession, you can do all sorts with.

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.

ACTIVITY 6

When we think of giving, we often think of physical objects or items but there are so many ways we can give to God. We can give through our time, talent, money, objects, relationships, life choices and so on.

For example, giving our time might be to volunteer at church helping the kids or serving drinks or it could be helping our mum who struggles to keep on top of things at home. Giving our money could be fundraising for charity, or using some of our pocket money to buy food for the local foodbank. Meanwhile our talents might see us making art that brings people joy or expresses our faith, or it could see us standing up for those who are downtrodden.

Giving and using our items and gifts could see us sharing what we have more and life choices might see us talking to God about big decisions and even choosing future careers based off how we can serve God and others.

There are so many ways to give to God. To love Him and others through what we have.

Something that God loves is when people give their lives to Him and get to know Him, and He loves when we want to see this too.

PRAY

Spend some time quietly with God thinking about your gifts and asking God to show you how to use these.

Write God a Christmas card (you could make one if you want), in it commit to giving God something this Christmas.

